BRIEFING NOTE: RESPONSES TO COVID-19

30 March 2020

BACKGROUND

Since January 2020, the spread of COVID-19 has affected Members of the Federation in their work to support the arts and culture sector through investment, promotion and policy in their countries. Sharing global knowledge on the development of arts and cultural policies is at the core of the Federation’s work and this Briefing Note is intended to provide National Members of the Federation with an overview of measures and policies put in place by national public agencies in response to the COVID-19 crisis. It focusses on the actions of National Member institutions to date (30 March 2020), so that members can identify peers within the Federation that may be able to offer insight and advice. It does not include whole-of-government stimulus packages, except for where they include dedicated funding for arts and culture. Where relevant, it also includes measures from Affiliate Members that have a national remit, as well as notable examples from non-member agencies. We will continue to monitor and share further examples as members make more information available to the Secretariat and the public. Given the focus on financial responses, the Briefing Note includes standard currency conversion into Euros for figures provided; these figures are approximate and current at the time of publication.

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## Redirected and New Funds

**Australia**
The Australia Council for the Arts has released its first [Response Package](#) which repurposes all available uncommitted funds from this financial year (ending 30 June 2020) and will redirect approximately $5 million (€2.8 million) to new programmes designed to provide immediate relief to artists, arts workers and arts organisations to support their livelihoods, practice and operations.

**Chile**
The Ministry of Cultures, Arts and Heritage, Chile has [redirected investment from existing programmes and initiatives to allocate CLP$15 billion](#) (€16.2 million) to support copyright payments, to promote cultural content, and protect affected cultural spaces and organisations.

**Colombia**
The Government of Colombia has [committed COP$120 billion](#) (€26.8 million) for the Ministry of Culture to support the arts and culture sector. It has secured a relief fund of COP$80 billion (£17.8 million) to support senior artists and cultural workers as seen as the most affected by the health crisis, amongst other measures.

**England**
Arts Council England has announced a £160 million (€178.7 million) [emergency response package](#) to support individuals and organisations across the cultural sector, which includes £90 million (€100 million) National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs); £50 million (€55.9 million) for organisations outside of the National Portfolio; and £20 million (€22.4 million) for creative practitioners and cultural workers. This funding has come from reallocation of National Lottery Project Grants, Developing Your Creative Practice and our Development Funds for the 2020-21 period, and uses up almost all of its reserves.

**Germany**
The Minister of State for Culture has worked with the Minister of Economic Affairs, Finance and Labour and government to develop a [rescue package for the cultural, creative and media sector](#) worth €50 billion. The package is intended to respond to the specific living and working conditions of those working in the sector. This include helping small companies with operational security, securing personal living conditions and alleviating hardship through individual legal measures. The package includes emergency grants to support immediate operating costs, as well as loans for business premises or leasing instalments, with an emergency aid for self-employed and small businesses totalling up to 50 billion euros paid. These are not redirected funds.

**Luxembourg**
The Government of Luxembourg has released a [framework for stabilising the economy](#) with nine objectives, one of which is specific to the sustainability of the arts and cultural sector. In view of the widespread cancellation of events due to the COVID-19 epidemic, and the precarious situation that this can create, particularly for independent professional artists and intermittent performers, the government is doing everything possible to rescue the cultural sector. Announcements on how are yet to be made public.
N.IRELAND  The Communities Minister of Northern Ireland has announced an initial package dispersed to the Arts Council of Northern Ireland worth £1 million (€1.1 million), to support artists, performers and creative producers across the arts and creative sector.

NEW ZEALAND  Creative New Zealand has announced the first phase of its developing Emergency Response Package, which includes a $16 million (€8.7 million) investment comprising NZ$4.5 million of new money (€2.5 million), plus NZ$11.5 million (€6.25 million) repurposed from other programmes.

NORWAY  Arts Council Norway will manage a compensation scheme for the cultural sector, with approximately NOK 300 million (€25.7 million) allocated by the Ministry of Culture to address the loss of revenue from ticket sales and participation fees, as well as additional expenses as a result of events having to be cancelled or postponed. The Ministry is currently drafting regulations. In addition, the Arts Council has allocated NOK 30 million (€2.6 million) of its existing funds for a separate grant scheme for affected art and cultural projects, including projects that have already been completed.

SINGAPORE  The National Arts Council of Singapore is distributing S$1.6 million (€1 million) allocated by the Ministry of Culture Community and Youth (MCCY). On 26 March, the government announced that the arts and culture sector will receive an additional support package of S$55 million (€34.6 million) intended to save jobs and support upskilling and digitalisation of the sector.

SWEDEN  The Swedish government has allocated SEK 500 million (€45 million) in urgent support to the cultural sector to support organisations, associations and individual cultural creators who have been directly affected by cancelled performances and assignments. The Swedish Arts Council will soon announce its role in distributing these new funds.

SWITZERLAND  Pro Helvetia - Swiss Arts Council has worked with the Federal Office of Culture and other government departments to advise the Federal Council on its package of emergency measures, which includes CHF 280 million (€264.4 million) in emergency aid and loss compensation for the cultural sector. The funding is intended to prevent permanent damage to the Swiss cultural landscape and preserve Switzerland’s cultural diversity; and cushion the economic effect on the sector from cancelled events.

USA  The National Endowment for the Arts will distribute US$75 million (€67.4 million) in funding provided by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. These funds have been allocated in recognition that the arts contribute US$877 billion (€790.6 billion) to the national economy and is the source of 5.1 million American jobs. The Arts Endowment will award funds to non-profit arts organisations across the country to help these entities survive the forced closure of their operations.
**EMERGENCY FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS**

**ARGENTINA**  The Ministry of Culture of the Nation, Argentina has allocated ARS$30 million (€420,000) in emergency funds for cultural centres. It has also made emergency increases in investment for programmes that strengthen community organisations and groups; literature programmes; as well as the National Arts Fund, which supports scholarships, competitions, subsidies and loans. It will also allocate ARS$7.2 million (€100,400) to employ artists to develop content that it will transmit via its digital platforms.

**DENMARK**  On Friday 27 March, the Ministry for Industry, Business and Financial Affairs announced that it will lower the threshold for aid through its compensation scheme for the self-employed, freelancers and artists to DKK 10,000 (€1,340) to broaden support for these workers.

**ENGLAND**  Arts Council England has allocated £90 million (€100 million) in emergency funds for its National Portfolio Organisations; it is being flexible in how NPOs can use these funds; and will expect NPOs to demonstrate support for freelance creative practitioners. It will make available £50 million (€55.9 million) to organisations that are not NPOs to support the resilience of their businesses and support public facing activities during the COVID-19 emergency. It will also make available £20 million (€22.4 million) to individuals working in the cultural sector, including artists, creative practitioners and freelancers. Artists and creative practitioners will be able to apply for grants of up to £2,500 if they have a track record in publicly funded culture. It is also looking to provide £4 million (€4.5 million) from this £20 million budget for grants to benevolent funds targeted at other cultural workers.

**FINLAND**  Arts Promotion Centre Finland has announced that it will distribute approximately €1.5 million in initial emergency aid to the arts and culture sector. The emergency fund comprises contributions from public and private actors including the Ministry of Education and Culture (€500,000), the Arts Promotion Centre (€100,000), the Finnish Cultural Foundation (€500,000), as well as the Jane and the Aatos Erko Foundation, the Saastamoinen Foundation, the Svenska Cultural Foundation, and the Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation (€100,000 each). The support is targeted primarily at short-term grants to freelance artists whose work has been materially affected by the crisis.

**FRANCE**  Ministry of Culture presented its first action plan in favour of artist-authors whose economic situation has been directly affected by the pandemic and the measures taken to limit its spread. The approach is to ensure that whole-of-government measures in place are specific to ensure that artist and authors that meet the criteria receive economic support through: mobilisation in favour of artist-authors of the support systems put in place by the Government in the context of the state of health emergency; and implementation of sectoral, complementary and subsidiary measures to guarantee that all artist-authors find an answer adapted to their situation.
KOREA (Rep of) Since February, Arts Council Korea (ARKO) has announced a series of measures to advise and support the arts and culture sector in relation to the health crisis. On 9 March, it released an Emergency Support fund for victims of COVID-19 that includes dedicated arts loans.

MEXICO The Secretary of Culture, Mexico has initiated a National Agreement with secretaries and heads of culture throughout the country to continue support for culture and allocate up to MXN$1 million (€38,000) of the resources of the Support to State Institutions of Culture (AIEC) for artists and local creators totalling MXN$32.0 million (€1.2 million) nationwide. It has also opened a call for applications to the programmes Life to the cultural infrastructure which will offer up to MXN$200,000 (€7,606) for cultural programming and up to MXN $1 million (€38,000) for the rehabilitation or equipment of buildings dedicated to cultural activities; and Strengthening of the cultural infrastructure, which will offer up to MXN$5 million (€190,000) for financing cultural construction projects and equipping buildings dedicated to cultural activities. It has also opened calls for its programme With you in the distance: Art Movement at Home which offers successful applicants MXN$20,000 (€760) in exchange for contents created with specialised programs for video and audio editing; or produced with mobile applications for social networks such as Instagram and Tik Tok.

NEW ZEALAND Creative New Zealand has allocated NZ$16 million (€8.9 million) to its Emergency Response Package. Its initial investment of NZ$4.5 million (€2.5 million) will provide support to its existing investment clients; as well as resilience grants for artists, arts practitioners, arts groups and arts organisations which are open to eligible, non-investment clients. These include an Arts Continuity Grant (up to NZ$50,000), supporting the creation of new work or the reframing of an existing project in light of COVID-19, including creative and professional development, promotion and distribution; and an Emergency Relief Grant (up to NZ$10,000 per individual), for eligible artists and arts practitioners, collectives and groups who we know may be experiencing devastating loss of income and opportunity and an uncertain future, and who have applied for the announced government support. It plans quick turnaround for applications and rolling weekly decisions, but it will monitor its commitment and the rapidly changing environment.

SCOTLAND Creative Scotland has launched three funding programmes: a £2 million (€2.2 million) Creative Scotland Bridging Bursary Fund to help sustain creative practice by freelance creative professionals who have lost earnings due to the cancellation of work; a parallel £1.5 million (€1.7 million) Screen Scotland Bridging Bursary Fund to provide similar one-off bursary support to self-employed screen sector workers; and a £7.5 million (€8.9 million) Open Fund: Sustaining Creative Development to provide support for individuals and organisations to sustain their creative development in the coming months, which will support up to 12 months of activity with a maximum award of £50,000 (€56,000).

SINGAPORE The National Arts Council of Singapore is distributing S$1.6 million (€1 million) allocated by the Ministry of Culture Community and Youth (MCCY) through two new initiatives. The first
is a Capability Development Scheme for the Arts (CDSA) which is open to arts organisations and individuals to encourage upskilling and grow organisational capabilities, including NAC’s Major Companies and Seed Grant Companies (MCSSG); Non-MCSSG arts organisations and companies either registered with the Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA) or with the Registry of Societies (ROS); and Arts Self-Employed Persons (SEP) and sole proprietors who are Singapore Citizens or Permanent Residents that reside in Singapore and work in the local arts scene. The second is a 30 percent subsidy for venue rental and associated costs for arts and culture activities, including productions, workshops and masterclasses taking place from 7 March to 30 June 2020. Read more

On 26 March, the government announced that the arts and cultures sector will receive an additional support package of S$55 million (€34.8 million) intended to save jobs and support upskilling and digitalisation of the sector, with three areas identified:

- support for major companies and leading arts groups, to help them safeguard jobs and retain capabilities in the local arts ecosystem
- enhance the National Arts Council’s Capability Development scheme for the Arts to deepen skills and support the professional development of arts organisations and practitioners
- step up digitalisation efforts to build the sector’s digital capabilities and establish more digital arts platforms to reach audiences.

SWITZERLAND Pro Helvetia - Swiss Arts Council has worked with the Federal Office of Culture and other government departments to advise the Federal Council on its package of emergency measures, which includes CHF 280 million (€264.4 million) in emergency aid and loss compensation for the cultural sector. Measures include emergency aid to cultural companies and creative professionals; repayable interest-free loans to ensure non-profit-making cultural companies can maintain liquidity; and non-repayable emergency aid for culture professionals to claim cover for immediate living costs, provided that this is not ensured by the new compensation for loss of earnings based on the income replacement regulations. The process is being carried out via the cantons (cultural companies) or via Suisseculture Sociale (creative artists). Cultural companies and creative artists can request compensation from the cantons for the financial damage associated with the cancellation or postponement of events or the closure of companies, with default compensation covering a maximum of 80 percent of the financial loss. The Confederation bears half of the costs that the cantons award. And associations in the fields of music and theatre can be supported with a financial contribution for the financial damage associated with the cancellation or postponement of events. Read more
SERVICE DISRUPTIONS AND OPERATIONAL CHANGES

AUSTRALIA  The Australia Council for the Arts has suspended investment programmes that were open or due to open, in order to concentrate on responding to the crisis faced by artists and arts organisations and sustaining the sector in the immediate and short term.

CANADA  The Canada Council for the Arts has initiated a blackout period that will continue until further notice. During this period, it will work with the Ministry of Canadian Heritage and the federal government on practical and immediate measures to help the arts and culture sector. It has also extended deadlines, suspended funding for public events and will allow grantees to postpone events.

CHILE  The Ministry of Cultures, the Arts and Heritage of Chile has announced it will close its Culture Fund division for three months - with the possibility of subsequent re-evaluation - of their calls for applications to their quick response fund that support the national and international circulation of artists and their works. The objective is to safeguard the safety of representatives of the artistic and cultural sector circulating in the country and internationally. This measure will reallocate remaining public funds to new funding mechanisms that support the digital circulation of content, which will be announced soon.

ENGLAND  Arts Council England has delayed the publication of its Delivery Plan element of its new strategy until later in the year and has communicated that its ambitions for the strategy will be reviewed in the coming months. It has also suspended its National Lottery Project Grants, Developing Your Creative Practice and Grassroots Music funding programmes. While new applications and those that have not been decided will not be considered at present.

ESTONIA  The Estonian Ministry of Culture and its subsidiary bodies have temporarily suspended open application rounds, until one month after the emergency period has ended (currently due to end 1 May 2020); and will allow applicants to rounds that have closed to modify, withdraw or deliver.

SOUTH AFRICA  The National Arts Council of South Africa has suspended funding due to a national 21-day lockdown, from Thursday 26 March. It is encouraging applicants to submit applications as scheduled so that funding activities can resume as quickly possible.

WALES  Cygnor Celfyddydau Cymru - Arts Council of Wales has announced that it will not accept new applications to funding programmes for the next three months; and will keep the situation under review over the coming weeks and announce any changes to its approach in due course. It has also postponed for one year its five-yearly Investment Review, the process for which was scheduled to take place during 2020, in the interest of focussing sector efforts on the immediate crisis and ensuring the process is viable and fair.
REVISED CONDITIONS FOR EXISTING SUPPORT & REPORTING

AUSTRALIA The Australia Council for the Arts is adopting a flexible approach for existing supported organisations and individuals. It will remove requirements on meeting audience KPIs; bring forward payments; delay or simplify reporting requirements; vary the purposes and outcomes of funding; extend timelines for projects; and allow organisations to use money provided to be repurposed to pay essential bills such as wages, rent or utilities.

CANADA The Canada Council for the Arts has suspended funding for projects that rely on domestic and international travel for a four-month period to limit sector and public exposure to the virus. It will allow applicants to withdraw applications for activities that would no longer be eligible so that they will not count against an applicant’s annual application limits. Successful applicants whose existing grants include funding for travel; public events that must now be cancelled; or that unspent funds may retain funding and apply them to other eligible expenses, on the basis that that their final grant reports detail the impact of COVID-19 on the funded activity and how the funds were used. The Canada Council has also relaxed its policy regarding the reimbursement of grants affected by COVID-19. Core funded organisations are not required to replace programmes, events and activities affected by changes related to COVID-19. However, they are required to address the effects of COVID-19 on their work and their response in annual reporting. The Canada Council is also allowing flexibility in reporting deadlines. It has also relaxed penalties for reporting deadlines not being met.

DENMARK The Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces has advanced the payment of its annual funding to libraries, at the request of the Ministry of Culture.

ENGLAND Arts Council England has relaxed funding conditions for up to six months for its NPOs and will advance grant payments to assist with cashflow where possible. It is also relaxing funding conditions for individuals and organisations that have received funding for projects affected by COVID-19.

ESTONIA The Estonian Ministry of Culture has announced plans to ease restrictions and broaden criteria who can apply for support under the Creative Persons and Associations Act (2004) which aims to support creative people who have lost income and guarantees a minimum wage and EHIF insurance for six months. The Ministry is working to increase the current funding available.

GEORGIA The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia has extended the deadline for submissions to its Culture Promotion Program Framework to 30 April 2020 and will allow those that have already submitted to amend their applications to response to the current context.

IRELAND The Arts Council of Ireland - An Chomhairle Ealaíon has announced that will honour all existing funding commitments, and allow grantees to draw down 90 percent of their funding to allow them fulfil in turn their own business commitments, especially to artists.
will not impose any financial penalties for organisations/individuals that are unable to deliver key activities/key services arising from the impact of the COVID-19 virus. The Council has closed its Travel and Training Award until further notice, to contribute to public health measures at a time when most countries are restricting international mobility.

LITHUANIA
The Lithuanian Council for Culture has confirmed that the proliferation of COVID-19 and related circumstances that have influenced the activities of institutions, organisations, and individuals may be considered force majeure, which may be subject to review of contract performance obligations; as such it will not demand reimbursement of funds already used to carry out activities that have been cancelled or changed.

MEXICO
The Secretary of Culture, Mexico has confirmed it will fulfil its contractual commitments with artists, regardless of the date on which their presentations are carried out.

NEW ZEALAND
Creative New Zealand has suspended all funding programmes currently open, due to open or applications in process, in order to be flexible, responsive and responsible.

N.IRELAND
The Arts Council of Northern Ireland announced that it will honour all grants already made in 2019/20; issue any remaining balance of payments for 2019/20 as a matter of urgency; work flexibly with on contracts for next year (2020/21) which may include advancing grant payment to assist with cashflow. In exchange, it is also asking funded arts organisations to continue as far as possible to honour agreed contracts with artists and freelancers.

NORWAY
Arts Council Norway has announced that funding recipients will not have to return funds that have been used to plan events the scheme applies to cancelled activities due to take place between 5 March to the end of April. This period may be extended. Applicants are still required to document expenses in financial acquittals and reports.

SCOTLAND
Creative Scotland has announced that it will honour all funding awards already committed – regardless of whether the funded activity is cancelled, reduced or rescheduled. It has asked all recipients to honour contracts agreed with freelancers and artists and to think about what help they can offer their communities.

SLOVAKIA
Slovak Arts Council has suspended programmes for activities that involve public events and revised guidelines for how funds can be spent for a set period. It has released a detailed statement on changes, flexibility and extensions to existing grants programmes.

SWEDEN
The Swedish Arts Council has extended grant application deadlines for some current rounds in order to meet the changing needs of the sector.

WALES
Cynor Celfyddydau Cymru - Arts Council of Wales has relaxed its conditions of funding for Arts Portfolio Wales organisations for at least three months and may advance grant payments to support their cashflow. It will also honour all project funding awards already committed to cover costs, regardless of whether the funded activity has been cancelled, reduced or rescheduled. In exchange for its support, Arts Council Wales has asked recipients to honour contracts agreed with freelancers and artists and to think about what help they can offer to their communities.
MEASURING THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS

AUSTRALIA  The Australia Council for the Arts is working with existing organisers of sector surveys seeking to gather data on the impacts of COVID-19 on the arts and cultural sector in the country to draw together a national sector-wide summary; it also plans to convene a working group to collect data on longer-term effects.

CHILE  The Ministry of Cultures, Arts and Heritage, Chile has launched an online public consultation to gather data on the employment conditions and economic status of cultural agents and organisations, so that it can adapt its programmes in response to sector needs, as well as share information and coordinate with other portfolios such as social services.

CZECH REP  The Arts and Theatre Institute has conducted an online survey for representatives from umbrella organisation, professional association and individuals in the independent arts sector to map the impact of the Ministry of Health’s Extraordinary Measures. It has published a summary of its findings online.

IRELAND  The Arts Council of Ireland - An Chomhairle Ealaion will initiate a survey to complement ongoing research to help it plan with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht how best to support the arts sector.

PARAGUAY  On 27 March, the National Secretary of Culture issued an urgent call inviting and urging unions, associations and organisations of the different cultural sectors to provide the Secretary with a list of their representatives who are in a situation of economic vulnerability, in order to generate a database that allows the definition of immediate contingency measures, due to the state of emergency declared by the National Government.

SINGAPORE  The National Arts Council of Singapore has launched a survey for self-employed persons/freelancers working the arts.

USA  Americans for the Arts has launched a survey to gather data and stories to capture the effects of COVID-19 on sector operations caused by cancelled events, lost wages and additional expenses; as well as capture the narrative that will demonstrate how arts and culture workers survived the crisis. It is publishing the latest results from the survey on its online dashboard.
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ARGENTINA  The Ministry of Culture of the Nation, Argentina will deliver dedicated courses for the cultural sector through its Virtual Campus of Distance Education, taught by monitoring and evaluation by specialists ad focussed on Public Cultural Management, Museums and Heritage, Cultural Industries and the use of digital technologies.

AUSTRALIA  The Australia Council for the Arts will launch Creative Connections, an online webinar series for the cultural sector, offering practical, accessible and useful professional development. The content will be delivered by industry experts on key topics and emerging themes that will assist the sector to navigate the immediate and long-term impacts of COVID-19. Themes will include crisis management and communication, arts in the digital age as well as ongoing issues of climate change, intercultural working with First Nations and inclusive learning practices. These sessions will be recorded and published on the Australia Council website for public engagement and wider reach.

SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

AUSTRALIA  The Australia Council for the Arts has introduced weekly First Nations’ roundtables for artists, creatives and organisations for updates and discussion of the implications of COVID-19 for First Nations independent and small to medium sector, live performance and public gatherings. It has partnered with the Office for the Arts, Australia to deliver weekly support workshops with peak arts bodies, which have included representatives from the COVID-19 Business Liaison Unit, the Australian Banking Association and the Department of Social Services, who provided information on support available for creative and cultural organisations and their people. It has also launched new Facebook Group Arts and creative industry: digital support as the first stage of its digital support solution for individual artists and small to medium organisations that may not have the technology, skill sets or bandwidth to successfully present and represent their work online through live streaming or other methods.

SINGAPORE  The National Arts Council of Singapore is offering Arts Resource Hub (ARH) Drop-In Chats for Arts Freelancers so they can seek help and advice. Individuals can arrange for a 40-minute chat with the NAC’s Director for Sector Development (Visual Arts).

SPAIN  The Minister of Culture and Sport called for a series of roundtable discussions requesting proposals to help rebuild the cultural sector as a result of the current crisis. In parallel, the Minister has contacted all the Councillors of Culture of the autonomous communities, in order to guarantee coordination and collaboration between administrations, since culture portfolio is a shared between the State, autonomies and municipalities. USA The National Endowment for the Arts has created a resource list of other relief support programmes, contacts and centres for artists and arts organisations across the country in response to COVID-19.
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