Prince Claus Fund

Funding demystified

A WORKSHOP HANDBOOK FOR APPLICATION WRITING

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Fonds

Introduction

Over the years, artists who receive our support have frequently expressed their challenges with grant applications, describing them as complex and overwhelming. Additionally, our organizational partners have shared with us that young artists they collaborate with often struggle to secure funding due to a lack of familiarity with the intricate application processes they must navigate.

In response, at the Prince Claus Fund we have simplified our application forms and moved to a system of trust-based funding. The handbook *Funding Demystified* is part of our continuous efforts to provide useful resources and make the arts funding infrastructure more accessible to everyone.

In 2022 and 2023 we led three pilot workshops on writing grant applications, in collaboration with spaces in Lebanon, Indonesia and Colombia. These workshops were designed to give emerging artists the tools to engage confidently with funding applications. Besides the Fund-led sessions, our partners also guided sessions on their own specific funding landscapes, and how the general techniques we shared could be used in the local, national and regional contexts

Building on those pilots, this handbook is designed to allow cultural organisers and artists to replicate these workshops for their own communities. It contains the structure and content for a multi-day workshop based around practical tips and tricks for artists applying for funds.

By giving young artists the skills to write clearly about their work to funders, we hope that this handbook will serve as a contribution to the wider goal of making the global arts sector more open and equitable.

This handbook is designed to allow cultural organisers and artists to replicate these workshops for their own communities.

Who can use this handbook?

Experienced cultural organisers

The model developed during the pilot workshops can be used by experienced cultural organisers working with and for emerging artists in their communities. This might include cultural managers, educators, or employees of foundations, who can act as workshop facilitators. Facilitators should supplement the material provided in the handbook with their own knowledge of the relevant funding landscapes.

Emerging artists working collectively

If a suitable facilitator is not available, this handbook could also be used to structure a self-led workshop by a small group of practitioners or collective. The specific material presented in the handbook will be especially useful for practitioners whose work contains a strong social or political component. Artists using the handbook in this way should take **Block 1: Mapping the Local** as an opportunity to pool their collective knowledge or structure additional research. They should also pay close attention to the suggestions for feedback provided following each practice exercise, to give each other rigorous and useful feedback.

Practitioners working independently

This handbook is primarily designed to help structure group workshops, since working through material as a group and receiving feedback can be a very effective way to learn. However, it contains advice that could be useful outside the context of a workshop. For artists working on grant applications independently, it can be used as a reference text to help answer specific questions they might have.

Structure

The bulk of this handbook is written as a script for one or more facilitator(s) leading the workshop. Alongside the script you'll find suggestions for possible adaptations based on the needs of participants, as well as frequently asked questions that may come up in discussion.

The workshop is divided into five key blocks, which cover different topics. Each block is divided into shorter numbered sub-sections, each corresponding to one or two slides in the accompanying slideshow.

The five blocks are:

Block 1: Mapping the Local
is a framework for the facilitator to introduce participants to the key funders they should be aware of in their region and discipline

Block 2: Results Frameworks
covers how to describe a project using activities, outputs, outcomes and impact

Block 3: Writing
covers how to describe a project using activities, outputs, outcomes and impact

Block 4: Budgets
covers how these same skills can be used when reporting at the end of a project

Block 5: Reporting
covers how these same skills can be used when reporting at the end of a project

Following Block 4, you'll also find a homework exercise to be completed by the participants individually outside the sessions.

Practice exercises

Apart from Block 1, each block ends with a practice exercise. For these exercises, participants should split into small teams, in which they will practice using the material from each block on a hypothetical project.

During the pilot workshops, participants selected a work-in-progress of one team member to work on collectively. However if participants prefer, they can work on a hypothetical case provided by the facilitator, or work in smaller groups so that each participant is able to use the methodologies on their own work.

Based on the experience of the pilot workshops, around 45 minutes to an hour should be allowed for the participants to work on each exercise in their teams.

After they have finished working on the exercises, each team should present their work to the group and receive constructive feedback from the facilitator and their fellow participants. Suggested points for the facilitator to pay attention to when giving feedback are listed below each exercise.

After the presentation of the practice exercises, the group should try and take some time to collectively reflect on the material they have covered. The facilitator should encourage participants to share their response to the material, whether positive or negative, or to share any relevant stories from their own experience.

Practical needs

We'd suggest spreading the blocks out over four days, following the example schedule shown here. If it's not practical to devote four full days to the workshop, you could save time by encouraging participants to work on the practice exercises outside of the the sessions, or even skipping them entirely.

DAY 1

Introduction & icebreaker (45 minutes)	**Block 1: Mapping the Local** (30 minutes)	Reflection on block 1 (15 minutes)	**Block 2: Results Frameworks** (30 minutes)	Group exercise: Results Frameworks (45 minutes)	Team presentations (30 minutes)	Reflection on block 2 (15 minutes)

DAY 2

Block 3: Writing (30 minutes)	Group exercise: Writing (45 minutes)	Team presentations (30 minutes)	Reflection on block 3 (15 minutes)	**Block 4: Budgets** (30 minutes)	Group exercise: Budgets (45 minutes)	Team presentations (30 minutes)	Reflection on block 4 (15 minutes)

DAY 3

Participants work on homework independently

DAY 4

Homework reflection/feedback (30 minutes)	**Block 5: Reporting** (30 minutes)	Group exercise: Reporting (45 minutes)	Team presentations (30 minutes)	Closing exercise & reflections (45 minutes)

This suggested schedule assumes a workshop led by a facilitator with some experience writing and/or reading grant applications, leading a group of around 20-25 emerging artists and other cultural practitioners, particularly those with a socially or politically engaged cultural practice, and with relatively little experience applying for funds to support their work.

Larger or smaller groups should modify the timings suggested for the workshop, and consider working in differently sized teams during the practice exercises. If conducting this workshop with a larger group, there may not be time for each team to present and receive feedback in front of the entire group, and teams can submit their work and receive feedback by email once the block is over.

To run this workshop in person, you will need a space that can accommodate all the participants as a group, as well as additional room for them to work in independently when they split into smaller teams during the practice exercises. The main space should also have a projector and screen, to display the slides that accompany this handbook and for teams to present their work following the practice exercises.

If meeting in person is not possible, the workshop could also be conducted online. In that case, the five blocks should ideally be spread out over a number of separate sessions, to allow for full concentration.

Take this workshop apart

Take this workshop apart

There's no one-size-fits-all answer to anything about applying for funding, and the techniques presented here are drawn from a specific perspective. While we believe the basic skills will be useful across many contexts, this handbook represents a generic base for a facilitator to supplement, based on their own experience.

You'll find suggestions for adaptations based on context throughout the handbook, while the first block, Mapping the Local, is not a script but a structure of questions about the local funding landscape. These can be answered by the facilitator in preparation for the workshop, or collectively by participants during the session, pooling their knowledge to support each other.

A further limitation is the workshop's focus on project grant applications. Missing from this handbook (for now!) is guidance on the preparation of strong portfolios, artistic statements, and digital presentation, as well as advice on applications to artistic residencies or exhibitions.

We encourage facilitators using this handbook to take what is useful and discard the rest.

Based on the particular needs of communities in different disciplines or geographies, this basic handbook can be adapted, translated and modified. Translation especially is severely needed, to support artists shut out of much global arts infrastructure by the hegemony of the English language.

Above all, these modifications should be shared. If you create an adapted version of the text for a particular community or need, we encourage you to share it with friends, collaborators and strangers, so this handbook can be an open resource for everyone.

If you are interested in publishing a translated or adapted version of the text for a particular community or need, please let us know and we will help if we can!

Workshop Content

Block 1:
Mapping the Local

Block 2:
Results Frameworks

Block 3:
Writing

Block 4:
Budgets

Block 5:
Reporting

Participants will be working together a lot during the workshop, so it makes sense to begin with a round of introductions. As well as breaking the ice in the group, an introductions exercise is an opportunity for participants to practice presenting themselves in person.

Breaking the Ice

While this workshop focusses on written grant applications, how you present yourself in person can also be crucial when funders include an interview portion in their procedures, or when networking with people who can help you get funding.

For this brief exercise, ask all participants to take a few minutes to introduce themselves and their work to the rest of the group. In their introductions, they should try and briefly answer some or all of these questions:

What media and materials do you use in your work and why?

What are the themes that you express in your artistic work?

What is the meaning of your artistic work in your context?

What are the key moments of your artistic story that have led you to this moment? (For example, studies, exhibitions, experiences, recognitions, whatever else is important to you.)

If they feel comfortable, participants should also share some of their experiences up to this point applying for or receiving funding for their work.

This opening exercise also acts as a baseline for the closing exercise of the workshop. In this final exercise, participants will introduce themselves again, incorporating the techniques they have learned during the workshop.

The key funders that emerging artists might want to apply to will depend on the local, national and regional context they are working in.

Block 1: Mapping the local

There may also be opportunities for them to apply to based on the discipline in which they work.

Unlike the other blocks, this first block doesn't offer a script to present. Instead it takes the form of a suggested structure for facilitators to share knowledge based on their experience and the experience of their friends and colleagues. In preparing for this workshop, the facilitator should try and gather together as much of the following information to share with the group. They can then add this information to the accompanying slides before or during the workshop session.

Alternately this section can be run as a knowledge-pooling exercise in which participants share their own knowledge and experience in order to produce a collective mapping of their funding landscape.

1.1 Who are the funders?

In this section, provide an overview of organisations or bodies that offer funding opportunities for which the participating group would be eligible. Try and share as many names as possible!

These might include:

— Public funds available from local or national governments

— Private foundations operating in your area

— Any relevant corporate sponsorship that might be available

— International foundations or NGOs that include your area in their scope

— Any platforms on which artists can find information on relevant opportunities

1.2 What do they do?

For each funder you have in your overview, share basic information on what they do.

This should include:

— What is their geographic (local, national, regional) and disciplinary scope?

— Are there any other eligibility criteria or focus areas? (for example artists under a certain age, or working on a certain theme)

— Do they offer support to individuals or organisations, and do they require organisations to be officially registered?

— What kind of work do they support? This workshop focuses on applications for artistic projects, but there are other forms of opportunities, including residencies or exhibition calls for proposals as well as awards you might be eligible to apply to.

Much of this information should be available on the organizations' websites.

1.3 What are they like?

This information is less likely to be publicly available, but anything you can share based on your experience or the experience of your friends and colleagues is useful. Participants who have received funding in the past can share their own experiences to complement the knowledge of the facilitator.

— What kinds of procedures do each of these organisations use to make their selection? How open or bureaucratic are their application and reporting procedures? How long do their selection processes tend to take?

— What kind of language do they expect – are they very formal, or more relaxed? Do they prefer very practical language, or something more flowery and artistic?

— What are they like to work with after the approval is made – demanding or easy going? Are they strict about changes to the project from the original proposal? Do they respond quickly to emails?

1.4 Extra useful information

Artists may have additional administrative needs around applying for and (especially) receiving funds. From high banking fees for independent practitioners, to political restrictions on receiving funds from abroad, to access in contexts where young artists may not always have access to conventional banking, practical challenges can get in the way of artists benefitting from the infrastructure of funding.

Since the nature of these challenges varies from place to place, there's no advice that will apply across the board. Take this moment to share any advice you can on navigating the specific administrative context in which participants are situated. This might include answers to questions like:

— Are there particular ways of registering with banks or national tax authorities that are best suited to the needs of independent artists?

— Are there relevant regulations around registering an artistic organisation, and what can you recommend for artists considering officially registering an informal collective?

— Are there themes or topics that present particular administrative challenges because of political sensitivities? Are there techniques that artists working with these subjects can use to evade these challenges?

— Is there any information you're able to share about the reputation or track record of the funders you introduced in section 1.1 when it comes to supporting artists through these challenges? To what extent can they be flexible with their administration based on the needs of artists?

Reflection

Take a moment at the end of this block for participants to reflect on the content of this first block, and to share any additional organisations, experiences, tips or resources they would like to add to this mapping.

This block is in some ways the driest and most bureaucratic of the workshop. It tends to provoke mixed reactions – some people really don't like the feeling of putting their work in a table like this. So why start here?

Block 2: Results Frameworks

One of the most frequent problems artists have when they first start having to fill in grant application forms is that these forms are rigid, bureaucratic and filled with jargon. The language that is required by applications is often at odds with the way artists are used to talking about their work.

The goal of this block is to get the participants comfortable with the results framework structure, as a way to make the rigidity of an application form work for them. This structure can be a very useful way of stripping an idea down to its most basic components, and using that to communicate with a particular type of reader. Understanding this structure can be a "cheat sheet" to navigating formal application forms.

This block covers:

- An introduction to the results framework; how to describe a project plan using the structure of activities, outputs, outcomes and impact
- Explanation of why this structure is well suited to the needs of most application forms, even when it is not asked for explicitly as part of the form
- Examples to create a deeper understanding of the relationship between the four levels of the framework
- Thinking about the assumptions you're making to justify the steps in your framework
- Guidance on how to strategically adapt your results framework to meet the focus of a particular call for proposals
- Introduction of indicators and sources of information

2.1 Introducing the Framework

Translating your ideas into the structure of an application form means structuring the way you express your ideas differently from what you probably used to.

In this block we are going to look at a structure called a results framework. This is a basic structure you can use to formulate the most important information about your proposed project. You will learn how to identify the different levels of a results framework and use them to structure your thinking.

A results framework is essentially a way of taking everything you know so far about the project you have in mind and dividing it up into categories. These categories will become the building blocks of how you tell your story.

These categories can be represented in a table like the one below.

You may encounter application forms that explicitly prompt you to describe your project in these terms (especially if you are applying for organisational funding as an artistic organisation or space). But for more open application forms, filling in this structure is a useful exercise to carry out together with your collaborators, to clarify and organise the key points of information about your planned project.

	Summary	Assumption	Indicators	Source
Activity				
Output				
Outcome				
Impact				

Suggestion for Adaptation:

The extent to which funders use this terminology explicitly in their application and reporting forms varies a lot from region to region, and discipline to discipline. Depending on the context and the participants of the workshop, you can try and give a sense of what kind of forms the group is likely to be faced with.

2.2 Four levels

As you can see from the table, the results framework divides the idea for a project up into four rows; activities, outputs, outcomes and impact. These are essentially the answers to the questions: What will you be doing, what will you have when you've done it, what do you expect to happen once you've done it, and what is all of this for?

To explain in more detail:

Activities: The activities of your project are your answer to the most basic question: "What do you want to do as part of this project?" This is a very practical question about what you and your close collaborators will be doing throughout the project. You don't have to have every detail already decided, but you should be able to give a broad idea of what you see yourself doing at each stage of the planned duration of the project.

Outputs: The outputs of your project are, quite literally, what you are putting out into the world. What you define as the output of the project will be the final product of this funding, whether that is an artwork, a performance, an exhibition etc. If your practice is more experimental or multidisciplinary, you might not want to strictly define your final output so early in the process. However, without a description of a planned output, the person reading your application might find it hard to make a clear mental picture of the project. Describing your final outputs *as clearly as you can at this stage* makes the project proposal feel tangible.

Outcomes: The outcomes you expect to see from your project are your answer to the question: "What (good) thing will result from your outputs being put out into the world? " This is a question about the direct results of your project in the short to medium-term, so your answer will probably be about the effect on the project's audience and their environment, whether they are participants in a workshop for the local community or a group of online viewers spread around the world. The outcome is the immediate effect you want your project to have for them.

Impact: The impact you want your project to have is a longer-term change that you want to see in society. It is the solution to whatever problem is motivating you, from sharing knowledge of marginalised histories, to advocating for environmental change, to creating a kinder culture. Thinking of their work in these terms can sometimes make people feel vulnerable, as if too much is expected of them, but the impact is not something you will achieve on your own – it is a bigger change that you hope your project will form part of. Defining a hoped-for impact allows the person reading to understand the reasons why your project is important.

FAQ:

The impact is often the most difficult level to immediately conceptualise, and can make people feel vulnerable, as if too much is expected of them. Remember that the impact is not something you will achieve on your own – it is a direction you are part of. Essentially the impact of the project is the solution to whatever problem the artist sees around them.

To figure out what you want the impact of your project to be, examine your motivation in planning it – what change do you want to be a part of?

2.3 Progressions

As you move from activity, to output, to outcome, to impact, you can see several different progressions that order the four levels of the results framework.

Time
First of all, there is a progression through the framework in terms of time. In the story you are telling about the project that will take place, things happen in a linear chronological order, and each level is caused by the one before. So the activities lead to the output, which causes the outcome, and finally the impact happens because of the outcomes.

Specificity
At the same time, you can see how as you move from activity to impact, you gradually progress from very specific, concrete information to more general and abstract ideas. We can particularly see this in the jump from outcome to impact. Outcome is primarily about the people involved in the activity, impact is where you move beyond them to society. The beneficiaries in your outcome are specific people you can pick out, while the beneficiaries of the impact are a more general society or community.

Control
Finally, there's a progression in terms of control. Notice that the further you go in the framework, the more factors there are shaping whether or not the thing you have described will actually happen, and the less direct control you have. The activity and the output should be things you have control over. Once you receive the funding, you will be held accountable for realizing them. As you move to the outcome and impact, you are into the realm of things you hope will happen as a result of your actions.

Earlier — TIME → Later

Concrete — SPECIFICITY → Abstract

More control — CONTROL → Less control

2.4 Abstraction

It’s worth pausing here for a moment, to acknowledge that planning for artistic work does not actually divide neatly into four mutually exclusive categories like this. Real life is always going to be messier, and real creative ideas usually don’t fit perfectly into tidy little boxes like this.

Especially for artists with experimental or long-term processes, fitting ideas into these categories might feel difficult or limiting. There will likely be a certain amount of arbitrariness, and multiple possible ways of using this structure to describe the same project.

We will talk later on about how to use this arbitrariness to your advantage while writing an application, but for now it’s important to remember that that a project idea presented in this way is an *abstraction*.

Organising all of the information that you know about your planned project in this structure is a tool that helps you centre the information that is most important to the funder’s perspective; what you want to do, why and how.

2.5 Two examples

Here is an example of how you could use this framework to describe this workshop:

— **Activity:** Fundraising workshop for artists without much experience applying for grants

— **Output:** Around 50 artists have participated in the fundraising workshop and have a stronger understanding of how to apply for a grant to support an artistic project

— **Outcome:** Participants are more likely to apply for and receive grants for their artistic projects

— **Impact:** Improved access to grants for artists without much prior experience

This second example is more closely tied to work on an artistic project:

— **Activity:** Exhibition of work by young artists relating to the environment. During the exhibition there will be a series of workshops bringing together different local voices to tell their stories about the effects of climate change

— **Output:** At least 100 people of different ages from the local area have participated in workshops and talks, and at least 10 participating artists have shown their work

— **Outcome:** Nuanced and locally rooted discussions about the impact of climate change on the lives of people in the area. People feel empowered to speak up and demand more sustainable policies

— **Impact:** Local citizens have a stronger voice in fighting climate change, more sustainable policies implemented

Hopefully you can see how in both of these examples what is being describe progresses from earlier to later, from concrete to abstract and from more to less control.

2.6 Assumptions

Vital to holding your framework together is that the steps from one level to the next make sense. Together they tell a plausible story, that the person reading can believe is likely to happen if the funding is given.

Think about how a framework would look with steps that don't feel plausible. If the outcome in the first example said:

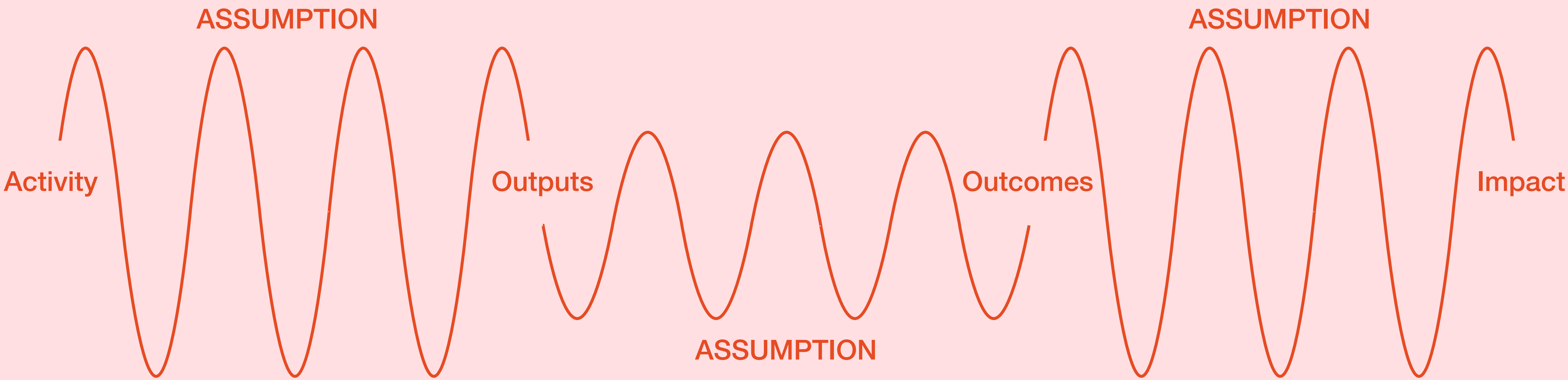
"All participants receive at least €50.000 in grants each in the year following the workshop"

Or in the second example:

"All 100 participants are elected to the city government within a year"

The story told by the framework would be difficult to believe. An application built on this framework would not be very persuasive.

A good way to check whether your steps are believable is to think about your *assumptions*. What facts about the world would have to be true for the story you're telling to happen in real life? Identifying these assumptions explicitly allows you to think about whether or not you think they are plausible.



Here you can see the examples again, with the assumptions that tie together each step. If these assumptions are all true, then the activities should eventually help bring about the desired impact.

1.	Summary	Assumption
Activity	Fundraising workshop for artists without much experience applying for grants	Planned time and location of workshop are convenient for target group to attend Workshop content is aligned with needs of participating artists
Output	Around 50 artists have participated in the fundraising workshop and have a stronger understanding of how to apply for a grant to support an artistic project	Participants are able to put the skills into practice following the workshop
Outcome	Participants are more likely to apply for and receive grants for their artistic projects	Lack of technical application-writing skills is a major factor in the lack of equal access to grants
Impact	Improved access to grants for artists without much prior experience	

2.	Summary	Assumption
Activity	Exhibition of work by young artists relating to the environment. During the exhibition there will be a series of workshops bringing together different local voices to tell their stories about the effects of climate change	A wide section of local public are interested in sharing their stories regarding local impact of climate change enough to attend
Output	At least 100 people of different ages from the local area have participated in workshops and talks, and at least 10 participating artists have shown their work locally	Bringing together different stories and voices allows people to deepen and strengthen their commitment to climate justice
Outcome	Nuanced and locally rooted discussions about the impact of climate change on the lives of people in the area. People feel empowered to speak up and demand more sustainable policies	There is space in the local political landscape for empowered voices to make a difference
Impact	Local citizens have a stronger voice in fighting climate change, more sustainable policies are implemented	

Hopefully all of these assumptions as written feel, on an intuitive level, like they could be plausible in a given context.

Assumptions can be plausible because they are rooted in observations or research, or because they are just common sense. If questioned, you should be able to defend your belief in these assumptions to a funder or anyone else.

This doesn't mean that they have to be perfectly certain facts – they are assumptions after all. Being ambitious with your work can mean being a bit hopeful with your assumptions, and going beyond what you're 100% sure of. But the claims you assume to make your project work should not go beyond the limit of what you would feel comfortable defending if challenged.

FAQ: *Sources for your assumptions*

If you are applying for a more complicated project, or a larger programme, you might be asked to name these assumption explicitly as part of the application.

For some kinds of context-specific assumptions, if there is space for it within the application, it can even be helpful to include references to any research you're aware of that supports your assumptions – particularly if you are applying to a fund where the person reading might not know your context well.

2.7 Being strategic

As discussed in 2.4, there is a certain arbitrariness to this framework, with multiple possible ways of describing the same project. You can learn to use this strategically, by finding ways to formulate your desired outcomes and impact that speak to the mission of the organisation you are applying to. This means using the framework, not just to tell the story of your project, but to tell the story of your project's alignment with the funder's own goals.

Finding a funding opportunity that's a perfect fit won't always happen, but there will be other opportunities that are close enough. When these come along, it's ok to be a bit tactical about how you articulate your outcomes and impact, or even your output, to make it align more with the specific funding opportunity you are applying for. Since there can be multiple ways of expressing your goal that make sense, you can focus in your writing on the ones that match most closely to the opportunity.

For example, the outcome of our first example is stated as:

"Artists who participated are more likely to apply for and receive grants for their artistic projects."

If this results framework was being prepared for an application to an organisation that was interested in capacity building, the outcome could read instead:

"Participating artists have a better capacity for planning and implementation of stronger projects."

This claim, while not entirely true to the original aim of the workshop, could be backed up with enough confidence that it might work for a particular application if needed.

You can easily go too far with this though. A results framework that is totally inauthentic to the real soul of the project will usually be transparent to funders (and therefore a waste of your time).

If the outcome for this example read:

"Participating artists will feel less anxiety about money, and so will have better mental health"

It would rest on assumptions about the most significant causes of poor mental health among artists that would be difficult to back up. It would be relatively easy for a funder with an interest in supporting mental health-related work to identify that this outcome was not authentic to the project.

The line between what is tactical and what is inauthentic can be difficult to describe, but practice and experience will make it clearer. Through experience you will learn better how to find the balance between shifting the focus slightly to take advantage of an opportunity, versus staying true to yourself and the soul of a project.

It can help simply to take a look online at other projects the funder has supported recently, and ask yourself whether you feel an affinity for these projects and would be happy for your work to be presented among them.

2.8 Indicators & sources

To round off this block we will briefly introduce indicators and the sources of information you use to observe them. We will come back this topic in more detail in the final block when we talk about reporting.

At every level of your results framework, but particularly on the level of the outputs and outcomes, indicators are the directly observable events or phenomena that will let you know to what extent you have succeeded in achieving these goals.

Applications might not ask you to name these explicitly, but identifying the indicators of your project will help you respond concretely to questions like “what would success look like for you?”

The source of information refers to what you will do to observe these indicators. A good indicator will be measurable in a way that is proportional to the project you are applying for. So, for a big, complicated project you might have specialised indicators that would involve hiring a professional researcher to measure, but for a smaller project it might be as simple as the number of people who come to an event or exhibition, or a short survey you send out to participants.

FAQ: *Indicators for impact*

On the level of impact, indicators can be very difficult to identify, because directly observing the influence of one intervention on a larger desired change over time is difficult to do and almost impossible without specialised researchers and resources you likely won’t have.

There's a lot of potential ways of making an observation, which we will come back to in our last session when we talk about reporting. For now, we can quickly look again at our two examples.

	Summary	Indicator	Source
Output	Around 50 artists have participated in the fundraising workshop and have a stronger understanding of how to apply for a grant to support an artistic project	% of participants report a clearer understanding of how to apply for a grant.	Compare surveys before and after the workshop
Outcome	Outcome: Participants are more likely to apply for and receive grants for their artistic projects	% of participants successfully applying for grants in the year following the workshop	Source: Survey 1 year after workshop

Note here that we've put a time limit of 1 year on the second indicator. 90 % of the time these time-limits will be at least a bit arbitrary, but they make the indicator *practically measurable*.

Depending on the type of grant, you might indicate numerical goals for these indicators, or you might just want them to improve from a baseline.

	Summary	Indicators	Source
Output	At least 100 people of different ages from the local area have participated in workshops and talks, and at least 10 participating artists have shown their work	#Attendance at the exhibition workshops and talks, disaggregated by age and gender	Registration list
Outcome	Nuanced and locally rooted discussions about the impact of climate change on the lives of people in the area. People feel empowered to speak up and demand more sustainable policies	Level of audience engagement with the subject under discussion, particularly from underrepresented groups	Observation of discussions, informal interviews/feedback from audience members

Practice exercise

To practice the skills that they have learned in this block, ask the participants get into small teams of four or five. They will work in these teams several times over the course of the workshop.

Once they have formed their teams, participants should take turns explaining a project idea to their teams, and then pick one project idea to work on. This will also be the hypothetical project they work on throughout the workshop.

Working as a team, they should write down at least one activity, output and outcome, and the impact these contribute to for their chosen project. If they have time after this, they can try to identify some assumptions that would have to be true for their output to lead to their outcome.

If possible within the venue, teams should spread out and find their own small working space to work collectively on the exercise.

We recommend allowing participants 45 minutes to an hour for the exercise.

Suggestion for Adaptation:

Smaller or larger groups might be better organized differently for these practice exercises. Dividing the group into smaller teams or pairs means that more participants are able to work on their own projects, while groups of four or five allow participants to practice using the framework to explain their thoughts to others. Bear in mind that the more distinct teams are working, the more time will need to be allocated for presentations and feedback.

Giving feedback

Once all teams are happy with their work on the exercise, teams should take it in turns to present their framework to the group. Ideally, they should do this by sharing their text with the facilitator digitally so that it can be projected onto the screen, then presenting the text in front of the group and sharing something about their experience of the exercise.

After each team's presentation, the facilitator can first invite other participants to give their own feedback on how well participants have used the results framework structure. Then the facilitator can give their own feedback.

Some points to keep in mind while giving feedback:

— Are the activities and outputs tangible and realistic? Do they give a clear idea of what will be done within the project?

— Is the benefit of the outcomes (for beneficiaries) and impact (for a wider society) clear? Is the impact presented in such a way that the value of the project shines through?

— Is there a clear, smooth and logical progression from the activities level, through outputs and outcomes to impact; in terms of chronology, causality, abstraction and control?

— If assumptions are given, do they provide clear connections between the levels of the framework?

— Are there major unstated assumptions that would need to be true for each level to lead to the following level?

Reflection

After the presentations, take a moment for all participants to reflect collectively and share their thoughts on the content of this block, and how they felt during the practice exercise.

What was surprising? What was easy? What was difficult? How do they feel thinking about applying this framework to their own work?

In this third block we will use the results framework as a scaffolding to construct clear writing in the context of an application form. We will also discuss application forms in more detail, and consider how they are constructed and what to keep in mind when responding to the questions in an application for.

Block 3: Writing

For the examples and practice exercise, we will focus on the construction of a short text concisely describing the proposed project. This block contains an example, which is a loose composite of several real life applications.

This block covers:

- Understanding the application form as a text, how it will be read and the importance of responding to the questions as written.
- Focus on clarity as the key need for a strong application, and how the results framework can help choose the most important points to include.
- An example of a short text that illustrates this the lack of clarity, followed by the same project described in a much stronger way.
- Acknowledging the arbitrariness in this approach, and how that can be a strength if you use it well.
- How the type of funding body you’re applying to can shape the language you use and which details you should share.

3.1 Thinking about application forms

In this block we're going to think more directly about the application form as a text.

It's important to acknowledge that application forms for different funders can be quite different from each other. Some will be tightly formatted, with lots of detailed questions requiring very specific answers, while others will be more open and narrative based.

The way an organisation puts together their application form will often (though not always) tell you something about who they are, what they value, and what they would be like to work with if you did get the grant.

Most importantly though, an application form tells you how the funder wants you to answer it. All of the texts made available by a funding organisation, from their website or social media, will be telling a story about what the funder wants to be supporting. The application form is your main opportunity to tell the story of your project and convince them it overlaps with what they want to support.

A good application form will make it clear what you should be writing in each section. It will be very important to read the application form carefully, and answer the questions that are there, instead of just writing what you want to write.

To understand why, think about the conditions under which your application will be read. In the context of an open call, the person reading your application will probably have a large volume of applications to read through in a relatively short period before sitting down with colleagues or advisors to make decisions. This means that they need to be able to form a good mental picture of every project, and find any particular information they need to reference quickly. A standardised form with a predictable structure helps them do that systematically.

Suggestion for Adaptation:

Throughout this block you can return to the funders you introduced in section 0.1 and use them as examples for how different funders can be in regards to application forms. Alternately, if there is a particular approach that is common in the relevant region or discipline, make that clear!

3.2 Clarity

In terms of problems that applications can have, obviously the most common issues are with the idea itself. An applicant's artistic work or project proposal can be derivative, poorly thought through or simply not that interesting.

However perhaps the most frequent problem with applications from artists whose work and ideas are otherwise strong is that they are not clear enough. Many talented artists submit applications which are not funded in large part because they are not clear about what exactly they want to *do*.

It can be difficult to communicate clearly about a project within the strict format of an application form. However, making sure the person reading has a clear and tangible idea of your project will help you as they go into the process of decision making.

3.3 Information

Applications can be unclear in a few different ways. Generally, lack of clarity comes because the application includes the wrong information in one of the following ways:

FAQ: *How much detail to give?*

Many application forms will include word counts – take these as an indicator of how much information is expected in response to particular questions. A suggested word count of 600 words, for example, is a message to provide the amount of detail that can be reasonably set down in 600 words.

— Application doesn't have enough information; that is, it misses out key points because the writer wrongly assumes some key point will be obvious.

— Application has too much information; for the team of the funding organisation, who will have to read a very large number of applications, having too much information can make it difficult to pick out the most important points that are needed to make a decision.

— Application has the right amount of information, but it's in the wrong order. A predictable structure makes particular points easy to find if the person reading needs to refresh their memory or check something. Sharing key pieces of information somewhere else in the document than where it's expected makes a proposed project more difficult to quickly grasp.

— A combination of the above

3.4 Telling the story

People often write proposals that mirror their thinking process coming up with the idea. They use the application form as a way to tell the story of how they got to the point of making an application. This story might start with their original inspiration, and go through their process and the related work they have done so far before describing what they are now applying for funding to do. Focussing on the past and the present in this way gives context, but deemphasizes the tangible reality of the project.

This kind of application is very heavy on the “**why**” – the personal or social/political context to communicate to the reader how the person writing the application sees the project. It neglects the “**what**”, “**where**”, “**who**” and “**how**”, and the reader is not left with a clear sense of the reality of the work.

This is not to say that the “why” is not important – it is extremely important. But it will be easier to understand if it follows a simple and direct statement of the project based on the results framework. Begin your response to open questions this way, so that the reader can always find it at the top of the page, and follow that with more contextual detail.

3.5 What not to do

The example on the slide illustrates this problem. Please take a moment to read it, and call out when you have an idea of something that is wrong with the way this applicant has answered this question.

Question: Short description of the project or activity for which funding is sought (max. 100 words)

This is a long-term project rooted deeply in the interest in literature as a platform for social emancipation towards solidarity with all forms of life.

Since 2017, this project has been evolving around our attempt to document an ecosystem of alternative literature productive in our city and others. The story about the marginalisation of non-hegemonic writers reflects a shift in paradigm, and the initiatives and time taken recently by young people organizing around independent publishing.

The goal is to emphasise the need for solidarity in today's individualistic societies. For this next phase of the ongoing project, a production of a publication is envisioned based on the voices and stories we gather from the community. The text will bring together all the separate steps taken so far in this developing story in a coherent form, thus the message of solidarity might reach a wider audience and achieve a stronger impact.

Some issues to point out if participants don't notice them themselves:

— The first mention of what the applicant would like to do through this project (activities and outputs) does not come until the final two sentences.

— The language is very vague and general – we learn that a publication will be produced, but no more information about what this this publication (the planned output) will contain or how it will be produced.

— Long and meandering sentences means that you have to read the text more than once to fully grasp the meaning.

— The text is around 150 words – 50 % more than the suggested word count given in the question

3.6 Doing it better

Compare with this answer to the same question for the same project:

Question: Short description of the project or activity for which funding is sought (max. 100 words)

The project will consist of an ethnographic field trip, during which we will interview individuals, collectives, and spaces who have worked in zines and independent publishing activities in four key cities in Mexico over the past decade.

Based on this research, we will publish a book on the politics and tactics independent publishing and the radical ideas associated with it. Launching this book, we will reach a new generation of young readers who have not been made aware of publishing practices outside the mainstream, provoking anti-hegemonic modes of thought and a more diverse public sphere in the country.

As you can hopefully see, this text, despite being shorter, gives a lot more concrete information about the project.

Having read this, you know a lot more about what the project is. Further context and background comes later in the application, so as you read it you can fit it around the basic points that you already know.

— What? A research trip, culminating in a publication on radical independent publishing in the country.

— How? Interviews with individuals, collectives and spaces related to this topics

— Where? Four different Mexican cities

— Why? To educate young readers on independent publishing and provoke modes of thought that lead to a more diverse public sphere.

This concrete information will likely be supplemented by more contextual details elsewhere in the application.

3.7 Making it work for you

If, like the artist in the example we just looked at, the way you're thinking about your work is in terms of a long-term development or you have an idea for something and you're not sure where it will end up, having to make these definite claims about the what, where, and when might feel somewhat arbitrary. Here's a secret – it (sort of) is!

However this doesn't have to be a problem, and you can actually make this work for you as long as you don't outright lie. Since the results framework creates an abstract version of a messier reality, you can strategically choose the boundaries of that abstractions. By defining the scope of the part of your work you're going to call "the project" in a way that fits in with what the funder is looking for, you can make the arbitrariness work in your favour.

Writing in this way might also feel difficult if you have a lot of unknowns in your project, or if you want to try something out and see where it goes. This kind of experimental approach can be an important part of artistic work. When you're writing an application though, you have to give the person reading something, to build that mental picture they need to make a decision.

The way to do that is to focus on what you do know, not what you don't know. For example, you might already have a sense of how you will go about finalising your planning, which could become a concrete plan for a research process.

FAQ: *Keeping your voice*

Following these guidelines around how you communicate your work does not mean that all applications should sound the same! These tips are based around funders need for clear information, but your application will be more successful if your unique voice also stands out from the writing, so be yourself!

3.8 Adapting the language to the type of funder

The information you include and the language you use in your application can also be adapted depending on the type of funder you're applying to. Individual funders may have preferences for what kind of points they like to see emphasized. You can likely figure a lot of those out based on their website and public communications and, if possible, talking to friends or colleagues who've received funding from a particular organisation in the past.

The type of funder is also relevant, whether it is big or small, local or international, focussed on a particular discipline or more general.

When trying to figure out what kind of information to give to a particular type of funder, try and imagine how much of the context they need to understand your application they might already know.

You can assume that the person reading applications for a funder with a tight focus on a particular discipline has certain technical knowledge that someone working for a more general funder might not. Someone working for a funder that focuses on a particular region or issue will also recognise the significance of certain names or concepts faster, while someone without that speciality might need to have the meaning explained to them further.

As you write, try to think about what a person reading your application needs to know, in order to understand it how you want it to be understood. Based on what you know about the organisation, you might be able to guess how much of it they are likely to know already.

Suggestion for Adaptation:

Again, it is helpful here to refer again to some or all of the funders you introduced in 0.1. What specific advice can you give for how to use language with them? Additionally, are there any good rules of thumb for big vs small funders, or national vs international, that apply in the relevant context?

Practice exercise

To practice the skills from this block, ask the participants to get back into the same small teams from the first exercise.

They should then look back at the results framework they defined in the pervious exercise, and try to write a description of the project in no more than 100 words. The text should contain all of the information contained in the results framework, but read smoothly and naturally as a text.

A few tips to help with this exercise:

— Put your most important point at the beginning

— Use short sentences

— Avoid jargon

Again, we recommend allowing participants 45 minutes to an hour for the exercise.

Giving feedback

Once all teams are happy with their work on the exercise, they can again take it in turns to present their work to the group, ideally projecting the text so that the whole group can read along. They can then receive feedback from the rest of the group as well as from the facilitator.

Some points to keep in mind while giving feedback:

— Does the text communicate the same information as the results framework did?

— Does it conjure a clear image in the mind of a person reading it?

— Does it flow as a reasonable paragraph and sound like it is written by a human?

— Does it include any relevant contextual details to help the reader understand?

Every word counts - are they maximizing what they can do with the space they have within the wordcount, or does the text contain filler sentences or words that don't give the reader information?

Reflection

Again, take a moment following the presentations for participants to share their thoughts and feelings regarding the content of the block and the practice exercise.

How have they written about their work in the past? What kind of thoughts does this way of thinking about writing provoke?

In this block we will go through a basic introduction to budgeting, which for many people is one of the most intimidating aspects of preparing an application. Almost all applications for funding will require a budget for the proposed project, and this budget serves several purposes.

Block 4: Budgets

Firstly, it is a statement of what exactly you are asking for. At the same time, a well constructed budget is part of signally competence and trustworthiness. Budgets that are clearly put together are part of the story an application tells, and worth approaching from that perspective.

This block covers:

- Introduction to preparing a basic project budget
- Understanding of budgeting as a way to reinforce the story you are telling and signal competence and reliability
- The importance of fair pay for everyone involved in a project
- Guidance on how much detail a budget should contain
- Guidance on how to group costs into distinct budget lines to effectively communicate needs
- Understanding of the budget as an approximation, and how to manage deviations from a planned budget

4.1 What is a budget for?

Most grant applications will require you to submit a budget as part of the application. In the simplest terms, a budget is a statement of the financial resources you need to carry out your plan, divided into a number of categories and subcategories based on how you plan to use it. These are your budget lines, and they contain an overview of everything you need that costs money.

The narrative application and the budget should complement each other. As a plan for your spending over a clearly defined period, the budget is another way of telling the story of what you plan to do. That means that the person reading your application should be able to roughly understand the intended activities and output *just from the budget*. When projects are not described clearly (like in the example we looked at in the last block), a well-defined budget can help give a clearer sense of a project.

A good budget also indicates to a potential donor that you have the capacity to implement the project competently. If your budget is well-planned and realistic, it indicates to the funder that you know what you're doing, and you can be trusted to responsibly manage this amount of money.

4.2 What should it look like?

Many application forms will include a template for the budget for you to fill in. If the opportunity you're applying to includes a budget template, you should follow this for the same reason you follow the format for the main application; ease of use for readers dealing with a large volume of applications.

However if you have already prepared a budget using a different format, you can often reach out and ask whether the funder is able to accept that in place of the format in their application form.

The complexity of the budget will depend on the complexity and scale of the project you are applying with. A multi-year, large scale project will likely require a complex budget with multiple sub-totals while a smaller project over a smaller timespan will have a much simpler budget to reflect the simpler planning process.

Budgets that are more complicated or detailed than they need to be can become hard to read, getting in the way of being as clear as possible.

Suggestion for Adaptation:

If you have any information on the budgeting policies/approaches of key local funders – eg "Funder X expects you to be very detailed with your budget", this is the moment to share it.

4.3 The size of your budget

When you find a funding opportunity, the funder will have indicated what range of grant amounts they want to give. One assumption people sometimes make is that if they ask for a smaller amount they might be more likely to receive the funding.

This actually isn't a good assumption. The funder you are applying to has budgeted a total amount they have to give through this opportunity, but also an amount of staff hours their team can allocate for the management of all of these grants. The amount of time their staff can devote to working on the opportunity will be based on the number of grants they expect to give. Since smaller grants don't take proportionally less time to manage, giving more but smaller grants than they planned would likely lead to structural overwork of their team, something they will want to avoid. For this reason, the total budget you are requesting should sit comfortably within the range stated in the text of the funding opportunity.

It should also be reasonable in relation to the activities that you're planning as part of the project. It's helpful to roughly calculate the budget you'll need before you start applying for funding. Knowing from early on in the process what your project will need in terms of resources lets you focus your energy on applying to the opportunities that would be a good fit for your project in terms of scale.

4.4 Starting your budget

The budget is an overview of everything you need that costs money. Depending on your project, that might include: equipment, venue, travel, accommodation, or people's labour.

So, you can start by making a comprehensive overview of everything that you'll need. Once you have that, you can start estimating the cost of each item based on your own knowledge, talking to people who've done similar work before, or looking prices up online.

When you are estimating all these costs, try and be as realistic as you can. Playing down the amount you need because you're worried about asking for too much is more likely to make your planning look unrealistic than increase your chances of getting the grant. And if you do get the grant, you'll be stuck trying to implement all the activities you committed to without the resources to pay for them.

FAQ: *Round numbers*

As we'll discuss more when we look at financial reporting, your budget is a useful estimate of what things will cost, not a completely detailed prescription. This means that when you are writing down your costs, it will usually make more sense to give each cost in round numbers of dollars, euros or whatever currency you're using, rather than giving a very precise figure.

4.5 Paying people

One particular challenge you might face while you're estimating your costs is having to decide how you are going to compensate the labour of everyone involved on your project.

It's possible you might want to hire specialists for certain parts of the work – a technician or a graphic designer, for example. In that case, the specialists you will hire will probably set their own hourly rate. You should find out, online or by asking friends or colleagues, what a reasonable hourly rate would be for this kind of work.

As well as budgeting an appropriate hourly rate, you need a realistic estimate of how many hours of work will be needed, to calculate how much you should budget for that work. Drawing on previous experience and advice from others can also help estimate this.

Just as importantly, you're going to need to decide how much to pay yourself and your collaborators on the project. Whether you do this hourly, or with a lump sum artist fee for the project, you should decide on a value that is fair and appropriate for your level of experience and needs.

Artists structurally underpaying themselves as a way to reduce total budget is common, and it can read to a funder as though you don't fully understand what work like this takes. Worse, when it happens a lot it distorts general understanding of the effort and skill required for artistic work. Knowing what your labour is worth is part of looking (and being) professional!

Suggestion for Adaptation:

What fair pay looks like will vary depending on context. Based on your own experience, try and give locally relevant suggestions for fair wages for creative work should look like in the local context.

Anything you know about local funders' reputations in terms of dealing with fair pay is worth sharing. In theory, no good funder will want to support a project that is based on exploiting the people involved – but if a funder in your area thinks differently, potential applicants should know that.

4.6 Budget lines

Once you have a list of everything you will need, and a rough estimate of how much each thing costs, you can start grouping similar kinds of costs into broader categories. These categories become your *budget lines*.

The most basic reason to group costs like this is to make the whole budget readable. If you are talking about even a few thousand dollars, listing every detail will quickly make your budget long and difficult to understand. Budget lines allow the reader to look at the broader categories, or the details based on what they need to know.

By grouping costs into wider budget lines, you also give yourself a bit of flexibility when you actually need to spend the money. Within the broad category of “technical equipment”, you don’t need to stick to the exact spending you planned.

Camera	100
Microphone	100
Editing software	60
Projector	70

Technical equipment
= 330

On the other hand, if you’re too broad in your categorisation, you run the risk of looking like you haven’t rigorously thought through what you need.

Camera	100	Paint	20
Microphone	100	Costumes	80
Editing software	60	Chair rentals	20
Projector	70	Batteries	30

Equipment
= 480

Finding the right mid-point of not too detailed or too broad takes practice. The main thing to remember though, is that that you want just looking at the budget on its own to give an outside reader some idea of your planned activities and outputs.

4.7 Funders' limits

Many funders may have restrictions on what kind of costs they will cover. These will be stated in the call text, so as with everything, you should read for this very carefully.

The most common limit that a funder may have, particularly for artistic organisations, is a limit on how much of the budget can be spent on *overhead*. Overhead just means the regular expenses of keeping an organisation going, which a lot of funders prefer not to cover.

A related restriction that is quite common is on the purchase of equipment that will last and be used beyond the duration of the project.

To a large extent, limits that funders have on the costs they will cover are unfortunately something you will have to learn to live with. However there can be a certain amount of flexibility with regards to what counts as overhead, as long as you don't cross the line into actual dishonesty.

4.8 Organising budget lines: two examples

Here you can see a simplified example of what the budget for a hypothetical project might look like. (The numbers here don't refer to anything real and there isn't even a currency indicated, so don't worry about the details).

This is an example of how you can group costs involved in a project to tell the story of what the project involves. Here, budget lines are organized into three distinct stages of the project; research, production and exhibition, so just from looking at the budget you can see the progression of the project from beginning, middle to end. These main budget lines are labeled A, B and C, and underneath them we see smaller sub categories of spending.

	Budget items	Quantity	Cost per item	Covered through other sources	Amount requested
A	**Research phase**				**1050**
A1	Researcher salary	3	200		600
A2	Transport	1	150		150
A3	Accommodation	3	100		300
B	**Production phase**				**1100**
B1	Technical equipment	1	600		600
B2	Editing software	1	100		100
B3	Performer salary	4	100		400
C	**Exhibition**				**400**
C1	Venue hire	1	950	950	0
C2	Documentation	1	400		400
	contingency (5 %)				**130**
	Total amount				**2680**

There's two additional features of this example budget:

It includes an additional column labelled "covered through other sources". If you have already received support to cover certain elements of the project, you can include it here without it contributing to the total budget you are requesting. In this example, the cost of the venue is covered separately, but including it in the budget makes it clear you have included a venue in your planning.

There is also an additional budget line marked "contingency", which is equal to 5 % of the total budget. This 5 % is intended to cover anything unexpected, and can give you a bit of flexibility if things change. Not all funders will allow you to include this in your budget, but if you can it is worth writing in.

This next slide shows the same budget, with the budget lines grouped instead by the type of cost. In this case that's Salaries, Equipment and Logistics.

Dividing the project in this way makes it easy to show clearly what kind of costs you are applying for, particularly if you have already received funding from elsewhere to cover one of those categories.

Dividing the costs in this way also allows you to show very clearly that you are abiding by any restrictions on the types of spending the funder will cover. For example, if the funder does not allow more than 40 % of the total budget to be for salaries, they can easily see here that the total amount that will be spent on salaries is 1000/2680 ≈ 37 %.

	Budget items	Quantity	Cost per item	Covered through other sources	Amount requested
A	**Salaries**				**1000**
A1	Researcher salary	3	200		600
A2	Performer salary	4	100		400
B	**Equipment**				**700**
B1	Technical equipment	1	600		600
B2	Editing software	1	100		100
C	**Logistics**				**850**
C1	Venue hire	1	950	950	0
C2	Transport	1	150		150
C3	Accommodation	3	100		300
C4	Documentation	1	400		400
	contingency (5 %)				**130**
	Total amount				**2680**

4.9 Double checking

There can be a lot of small details to check with budgets, especially if you have to give the budget in multiple currencies. This will often be the case with international funders, if the currency you use to calculate is different from the one that the funder calculates its budgets in.

It's good if you can learn to do this in excel or google sheets, using formulas to do your calculations for you. This will save you a lot of time, but do be in the habit of double checking everything. When you're using formulas to do your calculations, tiny mistakes can have very serious consequences further down the road. Ask someone else to take a look for you, a second pair of eyes is often useful!

FAQ: *Fluctuating exchange rates*

Especially if the exchange rate between the two currencies is prone to fluctuate, include the date of the exchange rate you've based your conversion on. This does unfortunately expose you to the risk that if the exchange rate changes suddenly you may end up with less resources in real terms than you expected (but you might also end up with more).

4.10 Using your budget

If and when you do receive the grant you're applying for, the budget you've shared will also become the basis for your financial report.

That doesn't mean that you're locked in to following the budget you have written down in every exact detail. Like the results framework, the budget in your application represents an approximation. Probably no project in history has ever followed the original budget in every detail.

As you implement the project though, keep track of your actual spending using the budget lines you wrote down. Your actual spending will almost never be exactly the same as the budget, but significant deviations from the budget have to make sense.

If there are any major changes to the budget, let your funder know beforehand. Some funders will have policies on how much of the budget you can change without their approval. We will discuss this further **when we talk about financial reporting**.

Practice exercise

To practice the skills from this block, ask the participants to get back into the same small teams from the first two exercises, and look back at the project they've written about so far.

By this stage they should have a fairly clear understanding of what this hypothetical project involves. They should try now to make an exhaustive list of everything that costs money that would be needed to make this project happen in real life.

Once they have this list, they should put these costs into three or four categories, either by project phase or by type of cost. If they have time after this, they should try and estimate rough totals in the relevant currency for each category.

Again, we recommend allowing participants 45 minutes to an hour for the exercise.

Giving feedback

Once all teams are happy with their work on the exercise, they can again take it in turns to present their work to the group, ideally projecting the text so that the whole group can read along. They can then receive feedback from the rest of the group as well as from the facilitator.

Some points to keep in mind while giving feedback:

— Is the list of costs associated with the project comprehensive? Are there any needs that would cost money that they have not included?

— Are the outputs of the project roughly apparent from looking at the costs identified?

— Are individual budget lines identified with an appropriate level of detail?

— Are the costs articulated in a way that clearly and concisely describes the need?

— (If they have estimated costs in numbers) are the costs estimated reasonable to the best of your knowledge?

Reflection

Take another moment following the exercises to collectively reflect on the discussion of budgets.

What do participants find most difficult about putting budgets together? Did anything surprise them during the practice exercise?

Between the fourth and fifth block, workshop participants should independently complete a short homework exercise in which they will use all of the skills covered in the first three blocks. This takes the form of a simplified application form for an artistic project – participants should take a few hours to complete it with information about a personal project they are currently working on or have worked on in the past.

Intermission: homework

Before the final block, facilitator can lead discussion of the homework exercise, in which participants share their experience applying the techniques from the workshop. What was easy? What was difficult? What surprised them about the process?

Homework exercise

1. Your name
2. Name of your organisation or collective (if applicable)
3. Give a brief introduction to yourself and your practice (max. 100 words)
4. Give a short description of the activities, outputs and outcomes for which funding is sought (max 100 words)
5. What is the final goal, or desired impact, of the project? (max. 100 words)
6. How will you observe and measure the success of the project? (max. 100 words)

7. Budget (add more rows if you need to)

	Budget items	Quantity	Cost per item	Covered through other sources	Amount requested
A					
A1					
A2					
A3					
B					
B1					
B2					
B3					
C					
C1					
C2					

What comes after you get the grant? Doing the project (obviously) and then reporting. In this final block we will move past the application altogether and look at the application form's counterpart, the reporting form.

Block 5: Reporting

Approaching reporting as seriously as applying is a way in investing in long term funding prospects. A thorough, reflective report at the close of a project leaves a funder with a positive impression and makes them more likely to fund you again in the future, or to recommend you to others.

However, just as the Results Framework techniques can help you in your planning beyond the application form, good processes of reporting can be useful for your own processes. Gathering and analysing the information that you need to make a good report is a moment for you to learn, putting you in a stronger position for the future. This is especially true when certain aspects of a project have not gone as planned. Being reflective about the reasons for a difficulty, and identifying the lessons you have learned from it, will strengthen your work in the future.

This block covers:

- The purpose of narrative reporting during and after a project
- How to use reporting to reflect and learn yourself
- Building on the earlier discussion of indicators to choose out which information to gather in order to make your report
- Thinking about how and when to gather information; some qualitative and quantitative methodologies
- Writing reflective reporting, particularly when projects have not gone as planned

5.1 What is reporting?

Reporting is how you tell the funder what you did, and how it went. The report is the official statement of what the activities, outputs, outcomes and impact of the project really were. It will usually (though not always) involve completing a form answering specific questions that the funder has sent you.

FAQ:

It's worth clarifying what we mean by "official" in this context. It's very possible you'll have other contact with the funder over the course of the project; by email, over zoom, or you might even meet in person, and of course you'll share information with them then, more informally. The report(s), however, will become part of the funder's institutional archive and will be looked back at if you apply for further funding in the future (particularly if your original contact person has left their role). It's worth being thorough in your report even if it means repeating some things you've shared already.

Often you will have to submit one or more reports, and a portion of the grant you received may be kept by the funder until after they've received and approved your report.

We can understand the report as the mirror image of the application form, in that it's a formally structured communication between the funder and the artist, where the form is determined by the funder and the content provided by the artist.

5.2 Why do you report?

There's a couple of reasons why funders ask for reporting:

Most importantly – they're interested. They funded your project because they saw potential in it, so of course they want to see how it worked out. Most of the time, they won't have the capacity (in terms of staff time, budget for flights etc) to come out and see many projects in person, so the report is the main way they find out about the work that you did. Related of course – they want to know what happened with their money.

Secondly, they might have to do their own reporting. Unless a funder is totally financially independent, there's a good chance that they will have to submit a report to wherever their money came from. Your reports give them the information they need to fill in their own reporting.

Thirdly, they want to learn. A good funder is constantly trying to be better, to improve their procedures, or get a better understanding of what people need. Reports sharing the final results of projects give them all kinds of information that they can use for their internal learning process.

5.3 Reporting forms

Like the application, the report will usually be done via a standardized form, with questions that might not always feel relevant to what you think is most important to share. You will receive the forms that you'll have to fill in in advance – usually along with your contract.

The reason funders have this standardized form is to make sure they have the same information on all of the projects they funded. Having the same information for every project makes it possible to compare between projects, or to aggregate to make more general points, which they may need to do to report to their own donors.

Reporting forms vary between organisations as much as application forms do, and the extent of the reporting that is expected will vary a lot depending on who you're receiving funding from.

In general, a funder's application form will be a pretty good sign of what kind of reporting they're likely to expect. You'll probably see that funders who use very technical or detailed application forms will be similar in their reporting formats, and funders with more storytelling-style formats will also ask for your story in the reporting.

Suggestion for Adaptation:

As with application forms, funders can differ a lot in their approach to reporting, with some focusing on strict quantitative metrics, and others more interested in storytelling.

Any information facilitators are able to share on the priorities of locally relevant funders will be helpful to the participants!

5.4 Results frameworks in reporting

It's in your interest to report well, as it will make the funder more likely to work with you again in the future. That's not the only reason though. In the same way that the results framework can help you see the structure of your project in a new way, thinking in a structured way about the process and results of your project will help you understand what went well and why, what you should definitely do again and what you would want to do slightly differently next time

Just as a well-developed results framework helps you to write a strong application, it will help you identify the key information to share through reporting, in a way that is clear and comprehensible to the funder. You can use the same table we looked at in **Block 2** to write clearly, not what you want to happen, but what has actually happened.

Your report should tell the story of the project in a way that includes the activities you and your collaborators did, the outputs you produced, the outcome you saw as a result and the impact you feel you are part of. It should cite the indicators you observed as evidence, and if anything went wrong it should identify which of your assumptions turned out not to be correct.

5.5 Planning for reporting

When you receive the reporting form, probably together with your contract, resist the urge to put in a drawer and forget about it until it's due. Read the form carefully and start thinking about what you will need to do while you're implementing the project to make reporting easier for your future self.

Because you have a perfectly worked out results framework that you wrote before you applied, you already know how you will observe the successes or failure of your project on different levels – through your indicators.

It's possible that funders will also ask you about specific indicators you might not have planned on measuring.
For example, a lot of funders will ask about the gender balance of the people you reached through the project. These will be things that are key indicators for them, that they will collect and aggregate across a lot of projects.

5.6 Ways of observing

As we mentioned when we first discussed indicators back in Block 2, the successes and failures of your project need to be observable in a way that is practical and proportionate to the scale of the project.

There's a lot of different ways to observe your indicators, and if you haven't already decided while writing your application, this is the moment to plan out in detail how you're going to collect information for the indicators that you want to report on.

FAQ: *Focus on the numbers?*

There is an unfortunate tendency in funding to see things that can be easily described in numbers as more important than other things. While numbers can be very useful on some situations, you don't need to stay within this paradigm. You can often write a more meaningful report by focusing on the indicators that feel the most important to you and finding a way to observe and describe them, even if that's not a quantitative description.

Depending on what you want to observe, you will likely want to use some combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, such as:

Media Scan – Collecting any responses to your project in the media. What kind of reviews did your project get? What have people said about it online?

Web statistics – If the outputs of your project are online, how many visits and interactions has the project had? Is there information you can collect about who your followers are?

Collecting feedback – Actively asking for feedback during and after events, in person or through a guest book that people can write comments in.

Self-reflection – Especially if you're working in a team, a lot of knowledge can be generated from sitting down and talking together about what went well, what didn't, and how you feel about the outcomes. Take good notes, or record the session, and analyse afterwards.

Surveys – Send out surveys after the project is done, or before and after to compare them. Everybody hates filling out surveys, so keep them short and sweet, try and know exactly what you're going to do with the answers to all the questions, and be transparent with the people you are asking to fill in the survey.

Interviews – Are there key people whose feedback you really want? Sit down for an interview with them. In some contexts, you could offer key interviewees the option to contribute anonymously.

Your choice of a methodology for collecting information should be based on the type information you want to collect. Make sure, however, that the effort involved is proportional to the size of the grant and makes sense for you. Don't try to measure something that would take a team of academic researchers to do well.

A good funder will never expect you to do anything that could cause harm while collecting information. In contexts where sharing the name or image of participants or attendees could expose them to risk (this can often be the case, for example, with projects targeting members of the LGBT+ community), your first duty of care is towards those people. If you feel comfortable doing so, share any concerns around safety with your funder and figure out an alternative with them.

At all times you should try to be open with anyone whose data (name or other personal details, image, words) you are sharing with your funder as part of the report, about what you are sharing, with whom and why. This is especially important if the feedback you've collected from them touches on any sensitive topics.

5.7 When do you measure?

The moments you choose to collect information can be as important as the methods you choose. As you plan your project, plan in when you will gather information based on what you are hoping to observe.

For example, if the outcome you hope for is a tangible change in a certain indicator following your activity, it makes sense to measure beforehand, so that you have a baseline to compare to, and then again following the project.

If you're looking for more reflective feedback, it will usually help to wait a little while before conducting interviews or sending out a survey. Most people find it difficult to share nuanced feedback during or immediately after an experience and will be more reflective after a few days or a week.

If you are interested in observing a long-term change, you will still have to pick a moment to gather information. The exact moment you pick might feel a bit arbitrary, so let yourself be led by the capacity you have – this does not need to be an depth research.

5.8 Writing

Sitting down to write, much of the advice on writing a good application also applies to the report. It should be concrete and tangible, allowing the person reading to form a clear picture of the project in their mind, even if they haven't seen anything else about it since reading the application form.

Any pictures you are able to share (with the consent of the people in them) will help the project come to life for the person reading the report.

As with the application form, the report will likely be divided into specific questions. A well written reporting form will be easy to understand and ask the right questions, but even if the form doesn't ask explicitly the questions you want to answer you should try and answer the questions that are there, to help out the person reading the report.

You might assume that the person reading will already know your project well from the application, and often this will be true. However, they may also need to refresh their minds after a year or more, or there may have been staff changes that mean the person reading the report is new to your project. Recap the core activities and outputs of the project in your report, even if they feel obvious.

5.9 Being reflective

A good report gives all of the facts about what happened. But a great report will go beyond just sharing information by reflecting on what has been learned through the project.

This is especially true when certain aspects of the project haven't gone according to plan.

For example, maybe one of the assumptions that you made turned out to be wrong, or you didn't have enough time or budget to do certain things you wanted to do. Or possibly something completed unexpected happened that derailed the project (as the covid pandemic did in 2020).

When things go wrong, being transparent is a stronger strategy than hoping the funder won't notice. In this situation, your report should share what went wrong, followed by an explanation of why you think it went wrong, and what you would do differently next time.

Being reflective about things that didn't go according to plan is an opportunity to show how you are learning and growing, especially when you're relatively early in your career.

FAQ:

Thinking about things that went wrong as opportunities to learn is not just a way to write a good report, it is also a genuine way to make sure things go better next time. Reflect honestly with your collaborators, without blaming anyone – what was the root cause of things not going as planned? What could have been done differently, in terms of planning, allocating resources, or communicating?

Building these insights also allows you to share with your friends and community, so you can all learn together.

5.10 Financial reporting

Alongside your narrative report, you will likely have to submit a final financial report. This report is a record of your actual spending, following the budget lines of the budget you originally submitted.

However, as we mentioned when **we talked about the budget**, your real spending will deviate from the original budget in its details. Actual spending will never be exactly the same as a budget on paper – life is just messy like that. A financial report that matches the budget to the cent is the financial report of a liar!

Different funders will likely have different policies on how much deviation from the agreed budget they permit without prior approval. Check this in your contract as soon as you receive it.

FAQ: *What kind of deviations from a budget make sense?*

Either a well-argued change in the activities being conducted, such as "based on the results of the research phase, we realized that a larger number of workshops aimed at smaller groups would be more impactful" or an external change that affects the feasibility of the project, such as "The price of the sound equipment we need for the event has risen by 40 % compared to when we wrote the budget"

In both cases, you would also make clear where in the budget you will be making cuts to compensate for this change. For example "We will conduct certain key interviews online instead of travelling to meet in person."

Practice exercise

To practice the skills from this last block, ask the participants to get back into their small teams. They should look back at the project they're described so far and imagine that they have received the funding for and implemented it. They should then prepare two shorts texts of around 100 words, each presenting a short summary of the results of the project

For the first short text, teams should describe the best-case scenario version of your imagined project; what went well, and how do they know that it went well?

For the second, they should describe the worst-case scenario version of your imagined project; what went badly, and why do they think it went badly? Is there something they could do differently next time?

As with the other exercises, we recommend allowing participants 45 minutes to an hour for the exercise.

Giving feedback

Once all teams are happy with their work on this final exercise, they can again take it in turns to present their work to the group, ideally projecting the text so that the whole group can read along. They can then receive feedback from the rest of the group as well as from the facilitator.

Some points to keep in mind while giving feedback:

- Are successes and failures reported on the level of activities, outputs and outcomes?
- Do they connect things that went wrong to the assumptions they made not being correct?
- Are they reflective about the causes of what they have observed?
- Are they describing tangible indicators they observed directly, or only the conclusions they've reached (in the hypothetical scenario) based on those indicators? For example, "attendance at the exhibition was around 40 % lower than we had expected, which we believe was due to our marketing not reaching the correct target audiences", rather than "marketing didn't reach people"
- Does it seem like the proposed solutions to the problems would genuinely help with the issues they identified?

Reflection

Following this final round of presentations, take one last moment with the group to reflect on this block.

How do they understand reporting? What was the process of doing the exercise like? For those who have received grants before, have they ever had to report something that didn't go as planned?

This is also a good moment for everyone to share their thoughts and feelings about the workshop as a whole.

What feedback do they have? What worked for them and what didn't? How do they feel about the prospect of using these techniques when they apply for funding in future?

Closing exercise

Although the techniques in this workshop have primarily been focussed on written applications, the general technique of prioritising clarity by dividing communication up into clear blocks can be applied verbally as well.

Close the workshop by asking the participants to repeat their introductions to themselves and their practice from the icebreaker exercise, this time using the results framework methodology to make sure they touch on an activity, an output, an outcome and an impact in their introduction. Ideally, they should not use these exact words, but weave the information together in a natural, conversational way.

Glossary

Activities: The actions you will undertake as part of a project, if you receive the funding to do so.

Assumptions: The beliefs you have about things in the world that would need to be true for each level in your results framework to bring about the next level.

Application form: A structure of open or closed questions put out by a funder, which dictates the information that your application must contain.

Budget: A table laying out in an organized way every item a project requires that needs to be paid for, alongside the estimated cost of each item.

Funder: A public or private institution which has as one of its activities the financial support of artistic work.

Impact: The change in the world to which a work directly or indirectly contributes to.

Outcomes: The immediate change that results from the outputs of a project being encountered by others.

Outputs: The concrete products that are created through the activities of a project.

Overhead: Regular running costs of an organisation or team, including offices, salaries and regularly used equipment.

Project: A planned artistic or creative work with a defined beginning, middle and end and clearly defined goals.

Report: The official statement of the results of a project, submitted during or at the end of project implementation, typically by completing a form issued by the funder.

Results Framework: A conceptual tool for formulating a project plan in terms of activities, outputs, outcomes and impact, as well as associated assumptions and indicators.

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Fonds

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