SUSTAIN THE ARTS (stART) FUND OPEN CALL GUIDELINES

What is the stART Fund?

The Sustain the Arts (stART) Fund is an initiative by the National Arts Council (NAC), supported by the private sector to boost the long-term sustainability of small arts organisations, and to nurture a culture of giving to the arts.

Established in 2021, the stART Fund is the first arts philanthropic fund supported by the private sector and administered by the National Arts Council (NAC). The fund supports smaller arts organisations in scaling up their operations and establishing robust governance structures. It helps these organisations create and present quality programmes that enrich Singapore's arts and culture ecosystem, including initiatives with community impact that broaden access to the arts, enhance audience experiences through digital technology, and encourage reflection on Singapore's cultural identity. Beyond funding programmes, the stART Fund aims to catalyse philanthropic giving and strengthen the organisational capabilities of small arts organisations, ensuring they are better equipped to sustain their practice over the long term.

What does the stART Fund Support?

The stART Fund supports arts organisations which meet the following criteria:
- Registered with the Commissioner of Charities (COC), Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA) [1]or the Registry of Societies (ROS); and
- Total Operating Expenditure (TOE) of less than $1 million.

Eligible art organisations can receive funding from the stART Fund through either one of the two tracks: **Organisation funding** or **Programme funding**
- For **organisation funding**, awarded arts organisations would receive funding from the stART Fund to scale-up their organisations to attain a Charity and/or IPC status.
- For **programme funding**, arts organisations are encouraged to submit proposals that align with any of the stART Fund's major donors' support areas (refer to Table 1 for donors' interest areas). Arts organisations with Institution of a Public Character (IPC) status [2]may also apply if they meet the eligibility criteria.

Proposed projects can take place in one of the following formats:
- Physical
- Digital
- Combination of physical and digital platforms

All digital presentations must adhere to NAC's funding guidelines and IMDA's Internet Code of Practice.

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[1] Arts organisations registered with the Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA) must be registered as non-profit companies limited by guarantee (CLG) to be eligible for the Organisation Track.

[2] Support for arts organisations with IPC will be capped at one cycle of support.

Digital content should be suitable for the general public, with priority given to projects that are appropriate for General Audience viewing. Applicants are encouraged to consider inclusive practices such as subtitling, close-captioning and sign language services to cater to diverse audiences.

Table 1: Programme Track - Donors' Award

Award	Areas of support
E.R. Club	Young aspiring musicians.
Dymon Asia Emerging Arts Organisations Award	Emerging artists and their Singapore gallerists to participate in residencies and strong presentation platforms.
Sands Innovative Arts FundSands Innovative Arts Fund	Emerging artists tapping on new technologies and/or innovative ways that challenge traditional artmaking and audience engagement
Singapore Oceanarium by RWS Sustainability Arts Fund	Programmes of various art forms relating to oceans, marine biodiversity, and sustainability.
Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan Traditional Arts Fund	To preserve and promote Singapore's unique multicultural heritage through its support of programmes featuring the traditional arts.
The Lyman Fund	Traditional Chinese arts organisations.
The Yong Hon Kong Foundation Inclusive Arts Award	Programmes that bring the arts to underserved communities such as seniors, people with disabilities and special needs and youth-at-risk.
Tote Board	For arts organisation to scale-up their organisation status to charity/IPC status and support programmes that bring the arts to the communities.
UOB Digital Art Award	Development of digital art and new talents beyond traditional visual art formats to embrace the vibrant, burgeoning digital art stage.

What is the level of funding support under stART Fund?
The stART Fund offers funding through two tracks:
- **Organisation Track:** $30,000
- **Programme Track:** $20,000 to $50,000

Each proposal should reflect:
- The artistic strength of your proposed project;
- Your project's reach and quality of public engagement;
- Your ability to execute the project;
- A realistic estimate of your budget

Projects proposed by for-profit entities must have significant development benefits for Singaporean artists, bring high quality arts to audiences and should achieve financial sustainability with time. In addition, the stART Fund will prioritise funding to companies whose core business is in the arts.

What are the assessment criteria?

The application will be assessed in the following criteria:

Programme Track:

40%	40%	20%
Strength of proposal and relevance to donor's and stART's objectives	Capacity and commitment to execute project	Attuning to the needs of the intended audience

Organisation Track:

50%	50%
Readiness and Capacity	Governance

Arts organisations are highly recommended to go through Charity Portal's checklist for Charity and IPC status applications before applying for organisation track.

Who is not eligible to apply for stART Fund?

NAC will not be able to support the application if the group/organisation:

- Proposed project has already commenced prior to the time of approval and taking place before 1st August 2026.
- Does not have a clearly defined arts component, including projects primarily aimed at promoting religious causes;
- Is held at a religious venue;
- Is not intended for public consumption;
- Is intended for fundraising purposes;
- Is presented under the auspicious of a school or tertiary institution, or is part of its curriculum;
- Is intended specifically for academic purposes;
- Has pending/outstanding:
  - Evaluation reports on the use of previous grants from NAC;
  - Debts with NAC (you are eligible to apply once you have cleared your outstanding debts).

A note on Funding Guidelines

While we celebrate diversity of expression and open, balanced dialogue in the arts, as a statutory body disbursing funds in line with Government policies, NAC has to prioritise funding to proposals which do not:

- Advocate or lobby for lifestyles seen as objectionable by the general public;
- Denigrate or debase a person, group or class of individuals on the basis of race or religion, or serve to create conflict or misunderstanding in our multicultural and multi-religious society;
- Undermine the authority or legitimacy of the government and public institutions or threaten the nation's security or stability.
- The stART Fund complements NAC's existing funding schemes to broaden support across the arts sector. To maximise reach and impact, stART Fund recipients are not eligible for other NAC funding schemes during the same grant period, and projects already supported by NAC grant schemes will not be eligible for stART Fund support.

Intellectual Property, Copyright and Royalties

Applicants are to ensure that their projects do not infringe the Intellectual Property (IP) rights of others.

For information on copyrights and royalties, please refer to the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (IPOS) and the Composers and Authors Society of Singapore (COMPASS).

Submission

How do I apply for the stART Fund?

You will need to complete and submit your application to the stART Fund Secretariat via the OurSG Grants Portal (OSG) including the following documents:

1. Proposal
2. Budget template
3. CV of key parties involved (e.g. artistic director, cast members, designers, stage manager etc)
4. Samples of work (mandatory for first time applicants or if requested by NAC)
5. For Theatre and Literary Arts projects, including Festivals, the submission of complete scripts/manuscripts is required upon application.
6. Latest financial statement

For more information on the portal and submission, please refer to the OSG Grant user guide.

Notification

The grant is open for application <u>once a year</u>. The table below lists the key dates and windows that you will need to adhere to for your application:

Open on	Apply by	Notified by	For projects taking place on or after
5 Jan 2026 (Mon)	27 Feb 2026 (Fri)	July 2026	1 August 2026

Please note that you may submit an application for your project at any point before the 'apply by' date indicated in the table above.

All applications must be submitted by 1700hrs on the closing date. Late applications will not be accepted.

If you have any questions, or wish to discuss your application in detail, please contact the stART Secretariat at stART@nac.gov.sg

All applications will be rigorously assessed by NAC, and applicants may be contacted via email if additional information is required. Applications will be evaluated by either an internal assessment team or a panel comprising both internal and donor assessors. All proposals submitted to the Council will be treated in the strictest confidence.

For more details, please refer to www.nac.gov.sg/start.