Our SG Arts Plan
(2018-2022)
Excellence that Inspires our People and Connects our Communities

National Arts Council
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Executive Summary

“We recognise the role of the arts in broadening our perspectives and enriching our lives. At the community level, the arts bring people of diverse backgrounds together, thus building strong social bonds. At the national level, it strengthens our national identity, and contributes to a more confident and resilient Singapore. This is why we are working hard to raise arts excellence, grow audiences, and ensure that our arts offerings are accessible to all.”

Ms Grace Fu
Minister for Culture, Community and Youth

Singapore as a nation has come a long way over the past 53 years. Our cultural policies have been shaped by the aspirations of our people, and we are proud of what our arts have achieved. But our work is far from complete – we will continue on this journey ahead together with our arts community and all Singaporeans. Our 5G Arts Plan (2018-2022) maps our priorities over the next five years, to bring Singapore’s arts development to greater heights.

Since the 1960s, the arts have played an important role in defining our young nation’s cultural identity and bringing diverse communities together. The arts scene thrived as artists charted professional careers and arts groups grew in strength and numbers. The foundations were laid by the 1989 Report of the Advisory Council on Culture and the Arts (ACCA) which paved the way forward as the Renaissance City Plans (2000-2011), culminating in the Arts and Culture Strategic Review (ACSR) in 2012. The ACSR led to a substantial injection of $270 million over the last 5 years into the culture sector.

The formation of the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) in Nov 2012 has added impetus to the ACSR vision of “a nation of cultured and gracious people, at home with our heritage, proud of our Singaporean identity”. Under MCCY, there has been an added emphasis on the arts as an important catalyst for building a civic culture of care, cohesion and confidence. We want to celebrate cultural diversity as a strength, and support a values-based narrative that will resonate with Singaporeans. The arts can play vital role in deepening our national identity, and in promoting bonds of trust and respect between communities.

In the coming years, the National Arts Council (NAC) will continue to champion the creation and appreciation of the arts as an integral part of people’s lives. This mission is aligned with MCCY’s desired outcomes and realised through NAC’s vision for Singapore:

**Vision**
Home to diverse and distinctive arts that inspire our people, connect our communities and position Singapore globally

Singapore’s arts scene has matured since NAC was established in 1991. While there has been growth within Singapore and increasing profile in the region and beyond, more can be done for the sustainability of the arts and culture sector in the long term.

The following outlines the current state of the arts in Singapore, and what we need to do together to achieve NAC’s vision for the future of the arts:

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1 Extracted from speech delivered at The School of the Arts Awards Day, 15 May 2017
2 Renaissance City Plan I, II, III (introduced in years 2000, 2005, 2008 respectively)
a) **Achieving Arts Excellence:** All Singaporeans can be proud of our artists and arts groups that fly our Singapore flag high in winning various international awards, and being presented at leading arts venues and festivals around the world. They have helped to articulate our Singapore story, and express who we are as a nation. We will continue to support our artists in achieving artistic excellence. Through their work, they can then inspire others in expressing themselves through the arts.

b) **Strong State Support and Public Institutions:** Singapore’s arts landscape has become more vibrant, due in large part to the increased support for the arts from the government and private sector. The establishment of strong cultural institutions and partners (including agencies beyond the arts, culture and social sectors) have also been instrumental in developing Singapore’s arts landscape. NAC aims to broaden and deepen understanding of the value of the arts, and create more opportunities for Singaporeans to experience and appreciate the arts.

c) **Diversifying Support for the Arts:** While the government remains committed to investing in the arts, diversifying revenue sources will provide more options for artists and arts groups. It also points to the importance of deeper partnerships, and of cultural institutions and arts companies working together.

d) **Enlarging Social Commons in Diversity:** With a society that is increasingly diverse in profile, the arts have the power to deepen understanding and bridge differences in perspective, and celebrate the many shared aspects of life in Singapore that citizens and residents hold close to their hearts.

e) **Strengthening National Identity and Shared Heritage:** There is room for the arts community to more fully realise the potential for intra and inter-community connections in the context of Singapore’s rich multi-cultural heritage to create unique arts experiences for audiences both at home and overseas.

f) **Harnessing Technology:** The effective use of technology requires the arts community to be equipped with skills and resources to access new tools and interpret important data, such as audience segmentation and consumption patterns. This will enable them to cater to changes in audiences’ needs and preferences.

g) **Growing Capabilities:** Greater capability development is needed in areas such as arts management, technical theatre, research and data analytics, community arts, audience development, facilitation of dialogues, and arts education. There is also a need to equip our freelance arts workers with sufficient support to protect their interests, compared with those in full-time employment when it comes to contracts, long-term financial planning, etc.

h) **Providing Access and Opportunity:** The arts can play a more significant role in culture-building, community life, and city planning. We can do more to provide greater access to a wide range of arts experiences so that the arts will truly become a part of every Singaporean’s life. We will also continue to encourage Singaporeans to co-invest in the arts – through volunteering for arts-related causes, and donating to arts charities.

i) **Growing Audiences:** The arts faces increasing competition for audience attention. It is therefore important for NAC to look not only at growing the supply of arts offerings, but also how we can increase audience demand.
j) **Unlocking Arts Spaces:** The Gross Floor Area (GFA) dedicated to NAC’s artists and arts companies has grown more than five-fold over the last 30 years, and demand for such spaces remains strong. More needs to be done to unlock spaces, both physical and digital, to extend the reach of the arts and support our next generation of artistic talents.

So what does the future hold for the arts in Singapore?

The arts must continue to inspire Singaporeans, serve as an important platform for social cohesion, and reflect what Singapore represents to a global community. NAC has identified three strategic thrusts:

a) **Inspire our people**  
Outcome: Singaporeans are empowered to create, present and appreciate excellent art

b) **Connect our communities**  
Outcome: Diverse communities come together to enjoy and support the arts

c) **Position Singapore globally**  
Outcome: Arts and culture icons and works are appreciated by audiences and critics at home and abroad

Guided by these three strategic thrusts, NAC has defined eight priorities that will guide future arts and culture initiatives.

1. **Strengthening NAC’s role as sector leader and champion for the arts in Singapore, working with key cultural institutions, public sector agencies and the private and people sectors**  
   We want to work with our cultural institutions and national companies in partnership to shape the visual, performing and literary arts ecosystems across forms, languages and traditions, while still championing the diversity of arts practices and perspectives in each ecosystem. In addition, supporters for the arts from the people and private sectors must be engaged to increase contributions towards the arts, whether in terms of time, funds, or access to spaces.

2. **Increasing our focus on growing audiences through specific audience development strategies**  
   Strategies for sustained audience development must be developed to cater to the needs, preferences and lifestyles of varying demographics, including students and youths, families with young children, elderly and persons with disabilities. These strategies will need to be developed based on robust research and data analytics, especially in terms of cultivating deliberate, ticket-paying audiences.

3. **Building diverse capabilities in the arts sector**  
   Even as we continue our support for capability development in art-making, we must also strengthen the ecosystem as a whole by raising competencies in arts management, technical theatre, research and data analytics, community arts, audience development, facilitation of dialogues, arts education, working with technology, and place-making. NAC will also continue its efforts to help arts organisations cultivate strong management and governance capabilities, be financially sound, and adopt good hiring practices.
4. **Increasing sector-wide support for freelance arts professionals**  
Sector-wide support for individual practitioners and freelancers must be strengthened to ensure that they have access to resources that will enable them to do their best work. NAC will establish a resource centre for freelance arts professionals, to enhance access to shared services and information, as well as provide learning and development opportunities, and facilitate collaborations and networks to increase work opportunities. NAC will also tap on Whole-of-Government schemes to strengthen support for freelancers.

5. **Leveraging digital technology to improve art-making and outreach efforts**  
NAC will support the arts community to be digitally confident and creative, so that they may leverage technology as a tool to create, distribute and market the arts effectively to diverse audiences. This can be in the form of targeted funding, training opportunities, and networking sessions involving both the arts and technology sectors.

6. **Strengthening Research in the Arts Sector**  
There is a need to equip both NAC and the arts community with the capacity to gather and analyse data about audiences’ needs and preferences, as well as consumption habits and pattern. The data will also enable us to be more effective in arts advocacy as we will have the evidence to better demonstrate the multi-dimensional value of the arts to society. It is also important for us to continue to advance documentation of and research into the art form practice of our own Singapore practitioners as this can inform and deepen the creative process, enabling artistic innovation.

7. **Innovative programme design and prioritised funding in key areas to achieve strategic outcomes, and maximise the impact of the arts on society**  
NAC will strengthen our programme design as well as prioritise resources so as to help us achieve our desired outcomes of both artistic excellence and audience development. We hope to maximise the impact of the arts on society, especially in terms of harnessing the potential of the arts for social mixing across cultures, generations and socio-economic backgrounds, and to reach under-served segments of society.

8. **Taking Singapore’s arts beyond our shores**  
Singapore can play a greater role as a cultural focal point in Southeast Asia, through strong partnerships with international festivals, presenters, councils, institutions and markets. NAC will tap on the unique appeal of Singapore’s rich and diverse art forms to reach different regional and international markets. Artists and arts companies will continue to receive support for works presented at significant international market and presentation platforms. NAC will seek out opportunities for our arts community to contribute on the global stage, and in international networks. International residencies and attachments both in and out of Singapore provide another platform for our artists to share with, as well as learn from, others.

This plan to drive our performing, literary and visual arts sectors serves as a document to guide the work of NAC over the next five years. It will be reviewed thereafter to respond to the inevitable changes in our operating environment, as well as domestic and international contexts. Working together with the arts community and stakeholders in the public, corporate and people sectors, we are confident that Singapore’s arts scene will flourish, and continue to be a source of pride for all Singaporeans.
Our SG Arts Plan (2018-2022)

Section 1: The changing role of arts and culture

The role of arts and culture in Singapore has changed over the years, guided by policies that have evolved with the needs of society.

1. Singapore’s cultural policies have been shaped by the aspirations of our people, the arts community, audiences and the government. Through the 1950s and 60s, the arts played an important role in defining our young nation’s cultural identity, and bringing diverse communities together. The following decades saw the continued growth of a thriving arts scene as artists charted professional careers, and arts groups emerged. In 1989, Singapore’s arts and heritage blueprints were laid out in the Report of the Advisory Council on Culture and the Arts (ACCA). These provided the foundations for Singapore’s cultural development, with the ACCA report recommending improvements to infrastructure and facilities, organisational structures, the arts education landscape, and greater promotional efforts for the arts and culture. In 1991 and 1993 respectively, two institutions – the National Arts Council (NAC) and National Heritage Board (NHB) – were established, underscoring the government’s commitment towards supporting a maturing cultural landscape.

2. Cultural policies in the subsequent decades were centred on growing the demand for Singapore’s arts and cultural activities. The Renaissance City Plans, initiated in 2000, laid out a strategy to expand local and international interest for Singapore arts, and in doing so, helped to demonstrate the economic value of the arts to society, as well as how the arts could contribute to a more vibrant Singapore. These plans emphasised the need for more original content, industry development, and community outreach. As the government channelled more resources towards the arts, NAC was able to help build a more sustainable arts ecosystem. This included investment in cultural infrastructure such as a national performing arts centre, visual arts institutions, museums, and a music conservatory, as well as initiatives to profile Singapore artists overseas.

3. The plans stemming from the Arts and Culture Strategic Review (ACSR) in 2012 continued to pave the way forward for Singapore’s arts development in alignment with the vision of “a nation of cultured and gracious people, at home with our heritage, proud of our Singaporean identity”. The ACSR brought about the injection of $270 million into the culture sector over the period of 2012 to 2016. When the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) was established in 2012, there was an added emphasis on the arts as an important catalyst for building a civic culture of care, cohesion and confidence. By celebrating cultural diversity as a strength, and supporting a values-based narrative that will resonate with Singaporeans, the arts can play vital role in deepening our national identity, and promoting bonds of trust and respect between communities. This continues to guide the NAC today.

4. The introduction of the Cultural Matching Fund (CMF) in 2013 provided yet another boost for Singapore’s arts scene. Since inception, the CMF has matched $171 million in private cash donations from companies and individuals to 95 arts and heritage groups. Donations to arts and heritage causes have more than doubled since inception – from $29.7 million in 2013 to $61.3 million in 2016. About 80% of CMF recipients agree that the scheme has enabled them to take their work to the next level.

5. Today, Singapore’s cultural institutions have become landmarks in Singapore’s skyline, and are embraced by both Singaporeans and international visitors for their world-class exhibitions and stage productions as well as broad-based and accessible arts programming. These include the National Gallery Singapore, Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay, Victoria Theatre and Concert Hall, the Singapore Art Museum and The Arts House, all of which are located in or near the rich historical Civic District.
Across the island, there are also other arts spaces such as the Goodman and Aliwal arts centres, for companies to rehearse and produce theatre, music and dance performances, and for visual artists to create and present inspiring artworks. These spaces also present exciting place-making possibilities to engage diverse communities.

6. Investment in cultural infrastructure as well as programming and curatorial expertise have provided the arts sector opportunities to build new audiences, and to focus on different audience segments such as seniors, youth, families and children. NAC and the arts community’s efforts have enabled the arts to find a place in the hearts of more Singaporeans. In 2015, 78 per cent of people living in Singapore said that they had attended at least one arts event in the past year, and 73 per cent3 of Singaporeans agreed that the arts improved the quality of life for everyone – a 6 percentage point increase from the same survey in 2013. Results of the 2015 Population Survey also showed that 74 per cent of Singaporeans agreed that the arts and culture are something that Singaporeans can be proud of.

7. Looking ahead, MCCY’s vision for the arts is for Singaporeans to engage more deeply with arts experiences, and for the arts to foster a stronger sense of what it means to be Singaporean. Championing the creation and appreciation of the arts as an integral part of people’s lives is NAC’s mission today. This is aligned with MCCY’s desired outcomes and NAC’s vision for Singapore:

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Section 2: The arts scene now

*Singapore’s thriving arts scene has matured since NAC was established in 1991. While the arts scene has seen numerous successes that are worth celebrating, more can be done for the sustainability of the arts and culture sector in the long term.*

8. The following section outlines the current state of the arts in Singapore. Against the backdrop of an interconnected globalised world and complex geopolitics, the arts and culture are intertwined with our nation’s long-term destiny. The observations here offer a snapshot analysis of what we need to do together to achieve the NAC’s vision for the future of the arts.

Achieving Arts Excellence

9. Our arts community has achieved great success, creating and presenting distinctive work that resonate with audiences both locally and overseas. Our artists have touched many hearts through their performances, entertained audiences with their music, and inspired readers by the power of the written word. All Singaporeans can be proud that our cultural heroes are flying our Singapore flag high, winning various international awards, and being lauded at leading arts venue and festivals around the world. They have also helped to articulate our Singapore story, and express who we are as a nation.

10. Our arts sector has also seen a steady growth in the number of arts organisations, societies, as well as arts and cultural workers over the years, contributing to the diverse range of quality arts experiences that our people can enjoy. In 2016, there were 6,000 registered arts organisations and

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3 Source: Population Survey on the Arts 2015. 73% of Singaporeans surveyed agreed that the arts and culture improve the quality of life for everyone.
societies across the performing, visual and literary arts sectors, and the number of arts activities available to the public rose to over 100 arts activities a day.

**Strong State Support and Public Institutions**

11. Singapore’s arts landscape has become more vibrant, due in large part to the increased support for the arts from the government and private sector. With increased affluence and education, the public has also become more receptive to the arts, and appreciates how the arts improve the quality of life. The ACSR and CMF, in particular, have been a boon for the arts sector. The 2013 Population Survey results showed that 64 per cent of Singaporeans surveyed agreed that the local arts scene had become more vibrant over the last five years. By 2015, this figure had increased to 79 per cent.

12. The establishment of strong cultural institutions, such as the Esplanade, National Gallery Singapore, School of the Arts and Arts House Limited, has also been instrumental in developing Singapore’s arts landscape. In addition, NAC works with a strong network of partners, including government agencies such as the Ministry of Education, People’s Association and the National Library Board. NAC also involves agencies beyond the arts, culture and social sectors, such as the Urban Redevelopment Authority, Singapore Land Authority and Housing Development Board. There has also been strong and consistent funding support from partners like the Tote Board. Through these collaborations, NAC has strived to broaden and deepen understanding of the value of the arts, and create more opportunities for Singaporeans to experience and appreciate the arts.

**Diversifying Support for the Arts**

13. With more Singaporeans interested in the arts, more young people making a career in the arts, and more new companies being formed, there are expectations on the government to provide sustained support and funding for everyone. While the government remains committed to investing in the arts, diversifying income sources will provide more options for artists and arts groups. It has been noted that arts charities are generally more dependent on government grants than charities in the social and welfare, education, health and religious sectors. Government grants accounted for 62.4 per cent of arts and heritage charities’ annual receipts in 2016⁴, which does not bode well for the cultural sector’s sustainability in the long term, underscoring the need to grow philanthropy and broad-based support among Singaporeans. It also points to the importance of deeper partnerships, and of cultural institutions and arts companies working together.

**Enlarging Social Commons in Diversity**

14. As society becomes more diverse, key stakeholders – including artists, audiences, funders, patrons and regulators – will have different expectations and concerns. Care has to be taken that diverse views do not become entrenched fault lines over time. Depending on how the work is presented, and how the audiences and participants are involved, the arts can be the basis for constructive conversations on a multitude of topics, helping us to build a stronger and more engaged Singapore citizenry. Even where there are fundamentally divergent positions, the arts can still bring people together, and highlight the many shared aspects of life in Singapore that citizens and residents hold close to their hearts.

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⁴ Commissioner of Charities Annual Report 2016
Strengthening National Identity and Shared Heritage

15. Beyond our shores, many of our artists and arts groups have made significant inroads abroad. But more can be done to profile Singapore on the global stage. NAC’s 2016 International Perception Study for Singapore Arts and Culture\(^5\) notes that efforts to profile Singapore artists and their work internationally could be stronger, more specifically, in terms of establishing a distinctive Singaporean voice. The study also indicated that there is room for the arts community to more fully realise the potential for inter-cultural connections in the context of Singapore’s rich multi-cultural heritage to create unique arts experiences for audiences both at home and overseas.

Harnessing Technology

16. Technology is a tool that can be used to effectively create, distribute and market the arts – both locally and internationally. In Singapore, however, technology is relatively underutilised in the arts and culture sector, lagging behind global leaders such as Australia and the United Kingdom. The effective use of technology requires the arts community to be equipped with skills and resources to access new tools and interpret important data, such as audience segmentation and consumption patterns. This will enable them to cater to changes in audiences’ needs and preferences.

Growing Capabilities

17. For our artists to be able to create their best work, a strong ecosystem is needed to help them reach audiences. More capability development in areas such as arts management, technical theatre, research and data analytics, community arts, audience development, facilitation of dialogues, and arts education, is needed. Management capabilities such as strategic planning, marketing, fundraising, corporate administration, intellectual property rights, and project management needs to be strengthened, particularly for smaller arts organisations, and traditional arts or vernacular organisations.

18. In 2016, NAC conducted an Arts and Culture Employment Survey to better understand employment conditions in the arts. The survey showed that about half of those who work primarily in the arts do so on a freelance basis. Freelance arts workers contribute significantly to the arts sector in myriad ways, and in the age of the gig economy, their numbers will grow. However, there is concern that freelance arts workers may not have sufficient support to protect their interests compared with those in full-time employment when it comes to contracts, long-term financial planning, etc.

Providing Access and Opportunity

19. The arts can play a more significant role in culture-building, community life, and city planning. Over the years, more Singaporeans are attending and participating in arts-related events with more programmes held in the HDB heartlands, a town plaza, a public library or a neighbourhood park. Free or priced these events add to the community life of Singaporean residents, complementing the programmes at our professional arts venues.

20. More can still be done, however, to provide greater access to a wide range of arts experiences so that the arts truly become a part of every Singaporean’s life. While vernacular literature, music and theatre are declining in popularity, literary translation and subtitling performances into and between the official languages can keep works of historical, social and cultural significance accessible to a wide range of audiences. This can help foster greater understanding between communities, and a deeper

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\(^5\) This was the first time such a survey was conducted to gauge the international perception of Singapore’s arts and culture. The survey was commissioned in September 2016 and completed in July 2017.
appreciation for Singapore’s shared heritage. NAC will also continue its efforts to work with partners in the health, education and social sectors to bring the arts to under-served communities in hospitals, nursing homes, etc.

21. Opportunities for Singaporeans to co-invest in the arts should be encouraged to grow the number of Singaporeans volunteering for arts-related causes, and donating to arts charities. Audiences can also show their appreciation and support for the arts by choosing to attend, as well as actively participate in arts events. When the arts become an integral part of our lives, purchasing tickets to home-grown productions, reading literature authored by Singaporeans, and collecting and displaying artwork by Singaporean artists will be everyday activities. This will play a part in the long-term sustainability of the arts.

Growing Audiences

22. The arts face increasing competition for audience attention, especially from entertainment options such as shopping, online games, streaming media services and other lifestyle activities. A burgeoning of arts activities points to a more vibrant arts landscape, but there is a risk of cannibalising the same audiences, if the level of interest in the arts does not grow.

23. In the 2015 Population Survey on the Arts, while 73 per cent of Singapore residents agreed that the arts and culture improved the quality of life for everyone, it continued to rank among the lowest priorities among Singaporeans, relative to issues such as job security and education. While this acknowledges the pragmatism of Singaporeans, there is concern that this group will be less likely to pay for arts and cultural activities, especially in uncertain economic conditions. Similarly, corporate donors lack interest or are unaware of arts organisations in need of funding. The result is that arts and culture are often not a pillar in their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy. Corporates may also not prioritise arts organisations, believing that state support for the sector is adequate.

24. It is therefore important for NAC to look not only at growing the supply of arts offerings, but also how we can increase audience demand.

Unlocking Arts Spaces

25. Singapore’s limited land space could also curtail the growth of local arts infrastructure. While the Gross Floor Area (GFA) dedicated to NAC’s artists and arts companies has grown more than five-fold over the last 30 years, demand for such spaces remains strong. Over the longer term, resources will remain finite. Thus, more needs to be done to unlock spaces, both physical and digital, to extend the reach of the arts and support the next generation of artistic talents.

Section 3: What the future holds

The future of Singapore’s arts scene is promising. The arts must continue to inspire Singaporeans, serve as an important platform for social cohesion, and reflect what Singapore represents to a global community.

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26. From NAC’s vision for the arts, three strategic thrusts have been identified:

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6 Results taken from Our Singapore Conversation, 2013
a) **Inspire Our People**
We want to empower arts practitioners across the spectrum to create and present excellent art that will inspire the Singapore spirit, and express our national identity. Our artists’ creative works will reflect, articulate and celebrate who we are, and the society we live in, including our shared history, aspirations and concerns. We want all Singaporeans to be proud of and inspired by the arts created and presented in Singapore. We recognise there are different types of audiences and arts presentations, and we want to help build deeper appreciation of the arts for all of them.

b) **Connect Our Communities**
The arts will offer individuals of all ages and backgrounds access to a wide range of arts experiences across forms, languages and traditions, as part of their everyday life. Such experiences are essential for building communal experiences which draw people together, enabling them to forge connections in a cohesive society. Singaporeans will also support our arts practitioners by taking greater ownership of the arts, and showing their appreciation and support by attending, experiencing and participating in the arts. This can be done through volunteering for and contributing to arts-related causes, and making the arts part of every Singaporean’s everyday life.

c) **Position Singapore Globally**
Our arts practitioners will be admired and appreciated by local and international critics and audiences. With access to innovative techniques and technology, our arts practitioners will be able to conceptualise, adapt and refresh their works, creating quality content and experiences which enrich the body of Singapore-made work. A wide range of physical and digital spaces will also enable the arts to extend its reach. As cultural institutions and partners collaborate to champion the value of the arts in city living and nation-building, Singapore will establish itself as a leading liveable city celebrated for its vibrant culture.

Section 4: How we will get there

*Guided by these three strategic thrusts, NAC has defined eight priorities that will guide future arts and culture initiatives.*

To achieve this national vision for the arts, the NAC will work with our cultural institutions, and the larger arts sector on these eight priorities:

a) **Strengthening NAC’s role as sector leader and champion for the arts in Singapore, working with key cultural institutions, public sector agencies and the private and people sectors**

With the articulation of our strategic plan for the arts over the next five years, NAC will work with our cultural institutions and national companies in partnership to shape the visual, performing and literary arts ecosystems across forms, languages and traditions, while still championing the diversity of arts practices and perspectives in each ecosystem. NAC will also work with the institutions to establish robust benchmarks on artistic quality, and utilise the arts sector’s collective resources more effectively by collaborating to provide support for the creation and presentation of new works at the various stages of their development. We will also commission more research and documentation to profile Singaporean content and its creators to a wider audience base, encouraging greater appreciation as well as critical discourse.
In addition, supporters for the arts from the people and private sectors must be engaged to increase contributions towards the arts, whether in terms of time, funds, or access to spaces. NAC will continue advocating the value of the arts to non-arts public agencies, as well as to both corporate and individual donors. We will map donor engagement strategies to deepen engagement with existing donors, while cultivating new partners and patrons to support the arts sector. More public spaces will also be freed up for the arts through partnerships with non-arts agencies, corporates and intermediaries. This will help bring meaningful arts experiences to a wider range of audiences across different demographics. Through these partnerships, NAC can provide opportunities for the arts sector to showcase their artworks where Singaporeans live, work, and play.

b) Increasing our focus on growing audiences through specific audience development strategies

Strategies for sustained audience development must be developed to cater to the needs, preferences and lifestyles of varying demographics, including students and youths, families with young children, elderly and persons with disabilities. These strategies will need to be developed based on robust research and data analytics, especially in terms of cultivating deliberate, ticket-paying audiences. Our efforts will have to consider not only accessibility, but also whether our programme content is relevant and resonant for the intended audience so that they will want to come back again for more.

Arts for young audiences and arts education efforts will continue to be a priority as nurturing audiences of the future starts when they are young. We will continue to work with Ministry of Education and key partners such as preschool anchor operators, the Early Childhood Development Agency, and the arts community to extend the reach of the arts to as many schools, teachers, parents and children as we can.

c) Building diverse capabilities in the arts sector

Even as we continue our support for capability development in art-making, we must also strengthen the ecosystem as a whole by raising competencies in arts management, technical theatre, research and data analytics, community arts, audience development, facilitation of dialogues, arts education, working with technology, and place-making.

To support the industry’s capability development needs, NAC will facilitate closer coordination and collaboration across Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs) and other training providers to ensure industry’s needs for talent and skillsets are met, and resources are optimised. This includes building necessary skillsets that enable arts professionals to sustain their careers (e.g. financial and career planning, fundraising) and to tap on new opportunities (e.g. digital technology, engagement and facilitation skills), as well as articulate career pathways and skills frameworks for priority areas such as arts education and arts programming. NAC will also continue its efforts to help arts organisations cultivate strong management and governance capabilities, be financially sound, and adopt good hiring practices.
d) Increasing sector-wide support for freelance arts professionals

Sector-wide support for individual practitioners and freelancers must be strengthened to ensure that they have access to resources that will enable them to do their best work. To achieve this, NAC will tap on Whole-of-Government schemes to strengthen support for freelancers, for example, encouraging employers in the arts sector to adopt the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) tripartite standard for engaging freelance workers.

In addition, NAC will establish a resource centre for freelance arts professionals. Through this initiative, we hope to enhance access to shared services and information about legal issues, financial planning, medical and insurance provisions, contract terms, career development, etc., as well as provide learning and development opportunities, and facilitate collaborations and networks to increase work opportunities.

e) Leveraging digital technology to improve art-making and outreach efforts

NAC will support the arts community to be digitally confident and creative, so that they may leverage technology as a tool to create, distribute and market the arts effectively to diverse audiences. This can be in the form of targeted funding, training opportunities, and networking sessions involving both the arts and technology sectors.

NAC will also work closely with the cultural institutions. The digitisation of content, such as the National Art Collection by National Gallery Singapore and Singapore Art Museum, for example, will create new entry points for audiences. The museums and the Esplanade will also explore how technology can enhance the audience and visitor experience.

f) Strengthening Research in the Arts Sector

There is a need to equip both NAC and the arts community with the capacity to gather and analyse data about audiences’ needs and preferences, as well as consumption habits and pattern. This will enable artists and arts companies to target and engage with their audiences more effectively.

The data that we gather through research will also enable us to be more effective in arts advocacy as we will have the evidence to better demonstrate the multidimensional value of the arts to society. In addition, NAC hopes that benchmarking our work with that of other government agencies, as well as our international arts council counterparts, will help us to better review our policies and programmes, and determine best practices.

It is also important for us to continue advancing documentation and research into the art form practice of our own Singapore practitioners to deepen the creative process and grow artistic innovation. Research can also help us to better articulate the cultural identity of Singapore arts as we strive to develop distinctive content that fosters national pride, speaks to our national identity, and establishes Singapore arts globally.
In trying to increase the quality and quantity of arts research, NAC will work more closely with universities and research institutes on projects relevant to the arts sector. Collaborations between the academic and arts communities will be facilitated by the NAC to bring together academic expertise and arts practice in action research.

g) Innovative programme design and prioritised funding in key areas to achieve strategic outcomes, and maximise the impact of the arts on society

NAC will strengthen our programme design as well as prioritise resources so as to help us achieve our desired outcomes of both artistic excellence and audience development. We hope to maximise the impact of the arts on society, especially in terms of harnessing the potential of the arts for social mixing across cultures, generations and socio-economic backgrounds, and to reach under-served segments of society. An example is the work of the Singapore Writers Festival which not only showcases the very best of Singapore writing to both local and international audiences, but actively programmes with a view towards exposing people to works of different languages, traditions, and cultures. The festival also considers how programming can be accessible to everyone from children, to seniors, to people with disabilities.

h) Taking Singapore’s arts beyond our shores

Singapore can play a greater role as a cultural focal point in Southeast Asia, through strong partnerships with international festivals, presenters, councils, institutions and markets. NAC will tap on the unique appeal of Singapore’s rich and diverse art forms to reach different regional and international markets. Artists and arts companies will continue to receive support for works presented at significant international market and presentation platforms – such as the Venice Biennale, Internationale Tanzmesse, Art Basel (Basel, Hong Kong), and the Frankfurt Book Fair – that enable our leading artists and arts companies to develop international networks. Key events, such as the Singapore International Festival of the Arts, Singapore Art Week, Singapore Biennale and the Singapore Writers Festival which have already established themselves in the region, can also be further promoted via partnerships with other government agencies as well as the private sector.

We also believe that Singapore’s cultural heroes have much to share with their international counterparts in terms of artistic knowledge and skills, and best practices. NAC will seek out opportunities for our arts community to contribute on the global stage, and in international networks. International residences and attachments both in and out of Singapore provide another platform for our artists to share with, as well as learn from, others.
Strategic Thrust 1: Inspire Our People
Singaporeans are empowered to create, present and appreciate excellent art

The arts have the power to inspire and move the spirit. As our artists’ creative works reflect, articulate and celebrate who we are and the society we live in, it can also shape a strong sense of national identity. Whether it is exploring our shared history, aspirations or societal concerns, the arts have the potential to connect us individual to individual, community to community. To unlock the true value of the arts, we must support the artists to do their best work while enabling the different audiences, from the first-timer to serious arts-lover, to develop an appreciation for artistic excellence. Our artists inspire others in their own artistic expressions.

Supporting our artists to do their best work

1. Artists must be supported so that they can continue to create and develop high quality works of art that reflect the diversity that is Singapore. To do this, we must focus on efforts beyond just art-making. Important areas include building audiences, research and documentation, freeing up spaces for the making and presentation of arts, and achieving long-term sustainable growth.

2. This is increasingly urgent as audiences are becoming more sophisticated consumers of arts experiences – thanks to broad-based education, exposure to global culture through travel and mass media, and access to a wider range of art forms in Singapore. The arts sector must rise to this challenge of higher expectations from consumers.

3. Thanks to strong support structures in Singapore, there is already much in our arts landscape that inspires the most discerning arts-lover. But the path towards excellence is a journey, not a static end-point. NAC seeks to support and raise standards of artistic excellence for the whole sector, in particular through the lens of growing and sustaining audiences and leaving a positive impact on society.

Bridging audiences, supporting practitioners

4. While nurturing artistic creation remains important, NAC believes there is a need for more Bridging and Intermediary companies under the Major Company scheme. This will encourage groups to be more focussed in their plans to reach new audiences, professionalise the sector and raise capabilities across diverse roles. Intermediaries will also play an expanded role in the development of artists and arts advocacy. When these efforts all come together, they help to foster robust and sustained growth of the entire arts ecosystem, and will help Singapore’s arts scene flourish.

Capability development for the sector

5. Additional investment and support will strengthen the capabilities of the arts sector as a whole. Investments that focus on understanding audience segmentation and audience development capabilities will help artists create works that will resonate with today’s discerning audiences and arts consumers. To enable long-term growth of the arts sector, arts companies should step up their fundraising capabilities as well as consider how their revenue base can be diversified, beyond government funding.

6. We will facilitate closer coordination and collaboration across the Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs), including LASALLE College of the Arts and Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA), training partners and intermediaries to further develop Pre-Employment Training and Continuing Education
and Training programmes, meeting the sector’s capability development needs. Arts organisations’ core skills in areas such as management, administration, and organisational leadership development will also be strengthened. Skilled artists and professional arts workers will ensure a viable pipeline of new talents, contributing to Singapore’s long term cultural and social capital, while demonstrating the viability of an arts career.

7. Across the sector, support must also be given to individual practitioners and freelancers so that they have access to resources to do their work well. There is a need for systematic support of the freelancers in the arts sector who face diverse employment conditions and may benefit from skills upgrading that will help them navigate the increasingly prevalent gig economy. More will be done to ensure that their rights will be protected, so that they can grow meaningful careers and continue to contribute to Singapore’s arts and culture development.

8. NAC has adopted MOM’s Tripartite Standard for Contracting Self-Employed Persons, which fosters fair and progressive employment conditions for freelancers. We will also be working with employers and other stakeholders in the arts sector to adopt these measures.

9. A new resource centre will also be developed, both in digital and physical forms, to support the needs of freelance arts professionals. Through this centre, we will enhance their access to shared services and information and provide learning and development opportunities.

Research and development

10. We will expand on existing ways of articulating the value of the arts through new measurements of artistic excellence and success. These could include art form-specific attributes of excellence, alternative indicators for funding, studies on the effectiveness of signature pedagogical methods, and indicators on the impact and value of arts exposure, such as early experiences in the arts, or arts-enhanced education.

11. We will support sectoral plans to develop a body of distinctive content that resonates with Singaporeans. We will identify Singapore content to be documented and archived, optimising digital platforms, which will require practice-based research to anchor our understanding and recognition of a Singapore voice and identity in the arts. For relevance to the wider sector, research should be informed by academic and practice-based perspectives. Such documentation and archival are critical to inform and deepen the creative process, enabling artistic innovation in the sector. Research will also inform how technology can be leveraged for art-making.

12. Physical infrastructure and quality arts manpower are key drivers of arts making and consumption of the arts. Currently, the Arts and Culture Employment Study and Manpower Sizing exercise helps us understand the labour supply side of the arts sector, but deeper understanding on capability gaps as well as the future needs and gaps of the arts ecosystem is needed. Research will continue to support our capability development efforts for the training of future and current arts workers, especially in developing the skills required for future challenges and ensuring the financial sustainability of the overall industry.

Unlocking Spaces

13. Since 1985, the Gross Floor Area (GFA) for the arts administered by NAC has grown substantially from 13,870sqm to 35,970sqm in 2015. With Singapore’s limited land space and NAC’s allotted GFA already at its cap, there is need to ensure spaces are optimised, with good opportunities
for place-making and community engagement. Spaces can become sites of collaborative art making, drawing from the local character and history of different Singaporean precincts.

14.  NAC will explore the clustering of art spaces for better synergies and facilitating arts tenants to think more proactively about long term sustainability, including the optimisation of allowable commercial GFA for the larger tenancies. In particular, given the consistent over-subscription for subsidised arts spaces over the years, there is a need to ensure young emerging talents have equal access to spaces for art-making, rehearsals, programming and creative place-making. We will work on this with the relevant government agencies such as HDB, JTC, SLA and URA.

15.  We will also work with agencies that actively undertake cultural programming such as National Heritage Board, their museums and National Gallery Singapore, on studies to understand the role and effectiveness of place making. These findings will in turn inform NAC’s infrastructure plans for arts spaces and inform our conversations on urban planning and the geographical spread of arts activities island-wide.

16.  Taking a closer look at the individual arts communities:

**Performing arts practitioners**

*We will raise the public visibility of the performing arts by working with the arts sector to create a national focal point in the existing cultural calendar*

17.  Building on the current state of the performing arts sector, which today is characterised by a bustling year-long calendar of shows, we will work with cultural institutions and arts companies to create a focal point for the performing arts in the cultural calendar. NAC will leverage existing festivals and events, such as the Singapore International Festival of Arts (SIFA) and programmes by the Singapore Symphony Orchestra (SSO) and Singapore Chinese Orchestra (SCO), to establish a stronger sense of anticipation among Singaporeans around this focal point every year. By working with the various arts companies including the Esplanade, we can support marketing efforts with a national campaign that celebrates the various forms of the performing arts to win over new audiences and develop deeper understanding.

*We will build capabilities in gap areas such as the use of technology, core organisational skills, bridging audiences and intermediary development, and support the development of critical writing in and about the arts*

18.  Working with relevant partners, we will help performing arts practitioners and organisations understand and increase their use of technology. We will encourage utilisation of technology in arts creation and audience engagement by refining the existing grants framework and also facilitate opportunities for artists to meet and work with the technology sector and leaders in the field.

19.  Beyond facilitating training programmes to strengthen the capabilities and know-how of practitioners in areas such as fundraising, marketing and arts management, we will also develop the practice of critical writing in performing arts. We will support programmes by intermediaries that build the craft of writing, rooted in intellectual rigour, and deepen critical discourse in the performing arts.
Visual artists
We will help our art institutions and intermediaries contribute significantly towards a sustainable ecosystem

20. Our art institutions and companies will create opportunities for our artists by developing training programmes to address gaps in the sector. These programmes can focus on capability development in the areas of curating, exhibition management and other roles. Growing critical art writing will attract more art writers and generate insightful discourse on the visual arts in Singapore and the region. Art institutions and companies will be encouraged to expand residency programmes to groom our next generation of visual artists.

We will ensure that Singapore’s National Collection will be held in good stead for current and future audiences

21. An overall acquisition strategy will be developed to guide our National Institutions in building and enhancing the collection. Both the acquisition and presentation of the collection in exhibitions are key to strengthening Singapore’s position as a thought leader in Southeast Asian art. National Gallery Singapore, Singapore Art Museum and STPI will work together to benefit from economies of scale. One area is in the acquisition and conservation of artworks, where research of new methods for storage and conservation of art can be conducted. These institutions can advise on possible new infrastructure and improved processes to ensure that standards of artwork care are continuously refined.

We will provide more support for the development of contemporary art

22. We will invest in and support our visual arts institutions in growing contemporary art appreciation to commission, acquire, and document the present for a future visual art narrative. With the Singapore Art Museum (SAM) closing for upgrading works, we will work with SAM to intensify its education and community outreach efforts during this time. With the expected completion of its new facility by 2021, it presents a timely opportunity in championing contemporary art, bringing together art, design and technology, anchored on the artistic heritage of Singapore and Southeast Asia.

We will discover more opportunities for Singapore artists to create and display their art

23. Bringing art to the public is an immediate and direct way of creating presentation opportunities for artists and enhancing the visual aesthetics of a city. Public art will remain a key feature in major events such as Singapore Art Week and Singapore Biennale. Along with public art, interim use of unused public properties will be explored to create more short-term production and presentation spaces. NAC will also actively promote offer of private spaces, such as in shophouses and vacant commercial units in shopping malls, to allow for growth of new alternative arts spaces. Highly accessible public areas and community spaces, including the Rail Corridor, can also play host to the arts as they add to place-making efforts to enhance the vibrancy and quality of life in our city state.

Writers and literary arts practitioners
We will nurture a pool of talent with emphasis on grooming talent writing in Chinese, Malay and Tamil (CMT) languages, genres and forms that appeal to diverse readers

24. We will nurture a pool of talents committed to creating quality literary content across languages, genres and forms, as well as experiences that appeal to diverse readers, with dedicated strategies to address the specific challenges faced by the CMT communities.
25. We will focus on CMT writing through talent-spotting platforms such as the Golden Point Award. We will also look into targeted development opportunities for writers at different stages of their professional development, with the broader aim of providing a comprehensive developmental pathway for writers. This will include residency partnerships, manuscript critique and development opportunities to develop the writers’ craft.

26. Beyond nurturing talent, particularly for the Malay and Tamil literary scene in Singapore, we will also focus efforts on growing readership, working with key partners, such as academic institutions, National Library Board, Singapore’s media companies and literary arts intermediaries such as publishers and retailers.

Teaching artists and arts instructors
We will improve the quality of instruction and facilitation for teaching artists and arts instructors

27. We will establish a professional development framework for industry artists (teaching artists and arts instructors) who offer programmes for both MOE schools and other educational contexts. This will require close collaboration with MOE and its various arms, such as the National Institute for Early Childhood Development (NIEC), as well as other relevant institutions. This framework includes the following:

- Developing a more structured plan for professionalising the arts education sector, including mapping the sector in terms of manpower sizing, establishing skills and development needs;
- Ensuring availability of training opportunities in arts pedagogy - including at pre-school and special education levels – through various efforts such as collaboration with international partners;
- Developing artists’ capabilities in audience engagement and ability to work in different contexts (both in and outside of schools) – from programme design to facilitation skills and document the successful engagement approaches;

28. In addition, we hope to provide relevant training opportunities that help arts educators (i.e. teachers) in MOE, Special Education (SPED) and preschool environments to deepen their own creative practices. This will also require close collaboration with MOE and its various arms such as the Singapore Teachers’ Academy for the Arts.

29. We envision a professional arts education sector with a sustainable base of artist-educators who have attained minimum qualifications in both their art form practice as well as pedagogy. There will also be a pool of master teaching artists who will provide leadership in the area of arts education through research and providing mentorship and training. Arts educators in school will also have the avenues to deepen their arts practice.

Community artists working with specific demographics, including people with disabilities
We will support community artists by ensuring that they have access to developmental opportunities

30. To build an inclusive arts landscape, we will nurture a pool of community artists to engage various communities – including people with disabilities – in different social settings, across demographics and abilities. They will be further supported by increasing the capabilities of arts volunteers and volunteer managers. These efforts, together with opportunities for them to teach in non-specialised arts institutions, will provide them a variety of ways to expand their practice and reach.
We will develop a capability development framework and development opportunities in various modalities for community artists, community partners and volunteers to better support community engagement. This includes working with relevant intermediaries and stakeholders to develop research-based resources such as toolkits for community engagement and impact evaluation.
Strategic Thrust 2: Connect Our Communities
People and communities come together to support the arts as their understanding of the value of the arts grows

The arts will offer everyone access to rich, multicultural arts experiences across forms, languages and traditions, especially taking into consideration demographics that have had limited access. The arts are integral in forming communal experiences that draw people together, bridge differences, and forge connections as a cohesive society. Singaporeans will also be encouraged to take greater ownership in the arts. This support of home grown-artists and their works will take the form of regularly experiencing, and participating in the arts, including volunteering and giving to the arts.

1. Engaged audiences are the cornerstone of a vibrant arts scene and ecosystem. We want all Singaporeans to engage and participate in the arts through programmes that spark curiosity, foster empathy and cultivate understanding of and pride in Singapore’s cultural identity.

2. We believe the arts can bring people together, bridging diverse communities and strengthening social networks. We also recognise the power of the arts to bring vibrancy to spaces, and foster a stronger sense of belonging among Singaporeans.

Supporting audience development and engagement

3. As the arts scene becomes more vibrant with more arts offerings, growing new audiences and engaging them remain a priority.

*We will strengthen research efforts to inform our audience development strategies*

4. Knowing our existing and future audiences is key. Our understanding of the different segments of audiences must be backed by data so that we can develop specific strategies that encourage more arts attendance and participation, and new entry points for audiences.

5. We will work closer with industry partners, including cultural institutions, arts organisations and practitioners, as well as universities on research that will be segmented by art forms and audience demographics. Practical research insights will be shared with the arts community so that they can better understand consumption habits and patterns. This will guide the arts sector on how to be more proactive in encouraging those who consume free arts events to become ticketed audiences.

6. Research on the impact of the arts in terms of city living, health, education and community-building is also important as the data gathered will enable us to be more effective in arts advocacy, helping policy-makers, funders and the public to better appreciate the multi-dimensional value of the arts to society. Possible areas of research include the impact of arts activities on identity, social trust, integration of disadvantaged demographics, and individual well-being personal fulfilment, and creativity.

*We will help arts groups harness technology to grow new audiences*

7. We will grow new audiences through digital technology and spaces. By collaborating with academic institutions and technology companies, we will help arts groups find new ways through technology to design arts experiences, enhance audience engagement, and increase accessibility to
the arts. We will venture more aggressively into digital spaces, and partner public agencies such as the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) to help our artists and arts organisations explore new possibilities. We will build on the A-List and develop a one-stop arts and culture event platform that aggregates content across the sector and provides useful consumer insights.

We will free up more spaces to showcase the arts, and to bring the arts closer to specific communities

8. We will collaborate with public agencies, as well as corporate and community organisations and intermediaries, to open up more spaces for artists. We will continue to work with partners like the National Library Board and People’s Association to strengthen distinctive identities for the various Arts and Culture Nodes around Singapore, and grow the number of nodes in our network. Other government-managed spaces will also be unlocked to make local artworks more available in the heartlands, for example, through our Public Art initiative. In addition, NAC will support more relevant and inspiring public programming in the precincts it co-manages, such as the Civic District and Gillman Barracks.

9. Arts in Your Neighbourhood, NAC’s bi-annual programming platform to bring different arts experiences to Singaporeans at their doorsteps, will continue with family-friendly programmes, inspired by and relating to neighbourhoods. Such commissioned works represent new opportunities for our artists, and encourage Singaporeans to connect with and learn about the places that they live in. To reach out to youths, we will partner with intermediaries and space owners to design experiences in unconventional pop-up spaces that cater to changing youth tastes. Similarly, programmes will be specifically curated to reach out to seniors, for example, through our Silver Arts initiative. NAC will also facilitate programmes that encourage inter-generational bonding.

We will promote inclusivity and accessibility by reaching out to diverse demographics, including under-served communities

10. NAC will continue to build partnerships with stakeholders within the social service and health sector to demonstrate how the arts can achieve rehabilitation, wellness and intervention outcomes. Some of these partners have since integrated artist-led programmes into their core services, and become advocates for the arts in their respective sectors. Key advocacy platforms, such as the annual Arts in Eldercare Seminar and Arts & Disability Forum, have brought stakeholders and the arts sector together to advance conversations in how the arts can play an integral role in reaching out to specific under-served communities.

11. We will also continue to support programming that incorporates access and disabled-friendly elements. For example, funding will be given to companies which provide surtitling, close-captioning, and sign language services to enable all audiences to engage with the work. We will also work on self-help resources for our partners to conduct evaluation of their venues and programmes in terms of accessibility and inclusivity.

12. In addition, we will equip our community partners with the capability and capacity to expand their reach to diverse communities. This will include nurturing champion organisations in the various social service sectors, and creating resources for partners to multiply the reach of content across sectors and demographics. Plug-and-play content will also be developed to help the sector deliver arts programmes independently, fostering sustainability of engagement with both broad-based as well as under-reached communities.
Deeper engagement in specific art forms

13. Deepening Singaporeans’ engagement in the arts can happen at several levels. Apart from being audience members and participants, Singaporeans can also be volunteers and patrons. Some with deeper interest can take their hobbies further; they can take to the stage, create arts for exhibitions or pen a manuscript.

14. Taking a closer look at the three arts forms, and what we can do to deepen engagement between artists, art professionals and the wider public:

Performing arts

15. On the performing arts front, the most anticipated festival on the cultural calendar remains the Singapore International Festival of Arts which promises to enthral audiences with exciting, new commissions and thought-provoking works. As festival commissioner, NAC will continue to work closely with our subsidiary Arts House Limited on the festival programming, and how it can inspire a broad range of audiences. We will also work with the various cultural agencies on their programmes. Esplanade, for example, runs cultural festivals across art forms and ethnic traditions throughout the year.

We will strengthen our understanding of audience segments and behaviours through research

16. To grow greater demand for the arts and develop new audiences, we need to understand our existing and potential audience segments. In consultation and partnership with performing arts organisations and practitioners, NAC will commission a range of audience research studies, from quantitative research at the art form level about audience segments and consumption patterns to qualitative research that will help us gain insights about audience behaviours.

17. Initiatives such as Got to Move and Hear65, which aim to increase public awareness of, participation in, and support for dance and music respectively, will also tap into data analytics to ascertain trends in public opinion, as well as to refine their tactics. The Artground, the dedicated children’s arts space funded by the NAC at the Goodman Arts Centre, will complete a study to identify and understand the space-based experiences of audiences and the needs within the Theatre for Young Audiences field.

We will develop capabilities in areas such as audience engagement, facilitation, and content creation for specific audience segments

18. In tandem with the focus on audience research, we will also introduce initiatives to build capabilities in audience engagement, such as a pilot programme involving teaching artists, musicians, and marketing consultants with a focus on programme design and facilitation to reach new audiences (i.e. people who do not regularly attend ticketed shows). In catering to diverse audiences, support will continue to be given to inclusivity practices, such as surtitling, close-captioning, and sign language services.

19. Through programming at the Stamford Arts Centre, including residencies and public outreach programmes, we will develop upstream capabilities, and foster collaborations between contemporary and traditional arts practitioners to augment the efforts of cultural institutions in commissioning, co-producing, and presenting culturally specific as well as cross-cultural works.
20. In the Theatre for Young Audiences sector, organisations such as The Artground, the Esplanade, and arts companies with a focus on children will champion experimentation and new design approaches for age-appropriate content. We will facilitate capability development opportunities for practitioners in this field to deepen their practice and collaborate with international artists. We will also continue to support the professional development of artists working in schools.

Literary arts

We will cultivate shared interest in and appreciation of Singapore’s literary works

21. Literature can be a vehicle to improve people’s mutual understanding of Singapore’s diverse heritage and cultures. In particular, we recognise the continued importance and relevance of the vernacular languages in the arts, especially in their ability to connect across communities. We will continue to encourage the translation of key Singapore literary works from all four official languages to help them reach a wider audience. In addition, we will develop differentiated initiatives that appeal to different reader segments, as well as promote seminal works that may have been forgotten or are no longer in print. This will grow people’s shared appreciation of Singapore’s literature across languages and cultures, and anchor communities through shared stories.

We will nurture a love for literature and deepen public engagement of Singapore literature through platforms such as the Singapore Writers Festival and the development of a key literary centre

22. The Singapore Writers Festival (SWF) is the pinnacle engagement platform in Singapore’s literary arts scene with programmes that cater to a wide range of readers’ interests. Moving forward, SWF will play a larger role in developing readers of Singapore literature, and prioritise deeper engagement with audiences through high-quality public programming featuring Singapore writers, socially-inclusive programmes, and cross-disciplinary collaborations.

23. We will also develop literary intermediaries, including strengthening The Arts House to be a key literary centre, complementing National Library Board’s broad-based literary events. The Arts House will become the cornerstone of Singapore’s literary scene, and strengthen communities through the celebration of our Singapore stories.

Visual arts

We will reach broad-based audiences as well as under-served communities through public art and accessible programming

24. Art will be brought to the people through presentations and programmes near their homes. New public art trails will be created, and we will collaborate with public agencies to unlock spaces for more community art displays. While we will support the National Gallery Singapore, Singapore Art Museum and STPI in taking programming out of the confines of their buildings, we will also work with partners like the People’s Association to involve the larger community, and embark on co-created projects. To reach a wider group of audiences, artists and art groups will be encouraged to leverage on commissioned work and presentation opportunities at lifestyle events. Event organisers will be encouraged to feature artworks as well.
We will encourage digitisation of research, knowledge and content to create new entry points

25. We will work with our institutions and arts companies as they ramp up their digital engagement efforts. For example, National Gallery Singapore, Singapore Art Museum and STPI will be encouraged to digitise their content, such as the National Art Collection and key exhibitions, to create new audience entry points. Technology and new media can also be integrated into the art-making process through collaborations between the art and science sectors.

We will develop capabilities of art galleries and privately funded art intermediaries to cultivate patronage and grow new collectors

26. Cultural institutions such as STPI can work closely with the Art Gallery Association to support art businesses, grow new members, and represent the interests of galleries in working with public agencies, media and stakeholders. Through regular engagement, art galleries can adopt best practices to ensure that commercial dealings with artists and buyers are fair, and share ideas on how to meet the need for a larger pool of professional gallery managers. The growth of privately funded intermediaries such as private museums and collector-led art spaces will also be encouraged. These intermediaries can help our artists develop patronage through programmes and initiatives such as collectors' talks, workshops and presentations of private art collections.

Arts education in our schools

27. We recognise that arts exposure at an early age impacts lifelong engagement in the arts, nurtures creative thinking and the imagination, helping to develop empathetic, articulate and confident children. Arts education can also help children appreciate Singapore's cultural heritage and develop national pride while shaping the artists, audiences and arts-lovers of tomorrow.

28. We will work closely with government agencies, such as the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA), to augment the opportunities available for students to engage with the arts as part of their studies, co-curricular activities and enrichment programmes, especially to develop interest in the traditional arts from a young age.

We will strengthen strategic collaborations with MOE

29. To expose our students to more local works and artists, and develop an appreciation of our local cultures and national cultural icons, we will help to develop literary texts and teaching resources to introduce more Singaporean authors to our students, and curate learning content to heighten awareness and understanding of seminal works by Singapore artists and musicians in our curricula across levels. Schools will also participate in specially designed programmes at museums and performing arts centres that offer students authentic experiences linked to their school curriculum.

30. To tap on MOE’s online platforms such as the Student Learning Space, NAC will support the development of digital content and approaches for the teaching and learning of Singapore content to build greater awareness of Singapore artists. In addition, we will work with MOE, via key platforms, such as the Singapore Youth Festival, to increase the reach of Singapore artists and content.

31. We will also continue our work with MOE to incorporate the arts into learning areas that extend the main arts curricula, looking especially at Character and Citizenship Education and deeper learning about our multi-cultural heritage. We will also explore how the arts can be further used to better enhance the school experience for students with disabilities.
**We will deepen school engagement and nurture distinctive schools in the arts**

32. We will focus on deepening school engagement by brokering strong artist-school partnerships, and supporting schools with a niche area in the arts. This will nurture distinctive schools in the mainstream, special education and early childhood sectors that can serve as beacons and role-models for others.

**We will work with key partners in the early childhood sector to expand the reach of best practices in the arts**

33. We will work with key partners, such as the Early Childhood Development Agency, National Institute of Early Childhood Development, and other anchor operators and the arts community, to expand the reach of the arts into this sector. For example, in collaboration with partners in the early childhood sector, NAC hopes to develop teaching resources to complement the Nurturing Early Learners (NEL) Framework, share best practices of integrating the arts into early childhood learning with preschools through online resources, Communities of Practices, and learning journeys; look into facilitating exchanges between preschool teachers and artists; as well as the training and development of artists who wish to conduct programmes in the early childhood sector.

**Giving to the arts**

34. While the government plays a critical role in supporting the arts, arts philanthropy and volunteerism remain vital. Together with strong patronage and support from the corporate sector and individual supporters, we want to forge a shared ownership of our arts to ensure a more self-sustaining sector.

**We will advocate and accelerate giving to the arts**

35. To build on the momentum of corporate and individual giving since the introduction of the Cultural Matching Fund, we will work with cultural institutions and arts charities to encourage more donations. Our advocacy efforts will be strengthened by research investigating the role of the arts, and the impact of the arts on communities.

**We will cultivate and connect patrons**

36. We will step up efforts to cultivate new patrons, in particular through privately-funded initiatives as well as visual art intermediaries. This requires a deeper understanding of causes which appeal to potential and existing patrons, effective advocacy and outreach as well as sustained efforts to engage donors.

**We will grow a culture of arts volunteerism**

37. Everyone can play a part in Singapore’s cultural development by contributing their time, passion and skills to the arts sector. We will facilitate arts volunteerism opportunities, enabling more people of different backgrounds to give back to the arts. In the long run, we aim to nurture a sustainable pool of arts volunteers, and establish arts volunteerism as a meaningful form of arts support and participation. In addition, arts volunteering can be a powerful tool for engaging under-reached communities, as arts activities can be the platform for deeper conversations and interactions.
that enrich a befriending experience. Through research, we will better understand the motivation of arts volunteerism which will inform volunteer engagement and training.

*We will build fundraising and volunteer management capabilities within the arts sector*

38. We will continue to build fundraising and volunteer management capabilities within the arts sector. This includes developing professional development courses and resources with our partners to equip our arts community as they raise funds and work with volunteers to achieve their artistic vision.
Strategic Thrust 3: Position Singapore Globally
Arts and culture icons and works are appreciated by audiences and critics at home and abroad

We seek to establish Singapore as an influential cultural presence in the region, fostering a sense of national pride among Singaporeans, and strengthening Singapore’s cultural role and positioning globally. Singapore’s arts practitioners will be admired and appreciated by local and international critics and audiences. With access to innovative techniques, technology and opportunities, Singapore’s arts practitioners will be able to conceptualise, adapt and refresh their works, creating quality content and experiences which enrich the canon of Singapore-made work.

Putting Singapore art on the map

1. As a small country with an open economy, connectivity is central to Singapore’s survival and prosperity. It is only through staying open to trade, people and ideas that Singapore can leverage global growth, and build the deep capabilities needed for its people and companies to access new markets, adopt innovative technologies, and create good jobs.

2. Internationalisation has long been key to growth in the corporate world. There are similar opportunities for the arts. Going global means new markets and audiences and transcending the limited market potential in Singapore. Benchmarking and understanding best practices become possible when artists engage in rich conversations with their international counterparts, as part of their capacity building. Artistic innovation and research also take on different dimensions with more international collaborations.

3. As global economic weight shifts towards Asia, Singapore, in the heart of Southeast Asia, will also see new opportunities aplenty. As a relatively young nation, we have to play on our strengths to reach out to international markets and audiences, to sustain an effective presence overseas.

4. An early study conducted by NAC\(^7\) found that perceptions of the Singapore arts scene, in particular, mirrored positive global perceptions of Singapore: a highly professional workforce with strong technical skills and organisational abilities; well-resourced and with good infrastructure. NAC seeks to leverage these strengths, establishing Singapore as an influential presence in the region that champions the value of the arts as part of city living and nation building.

5. Singapore’s cultural diversity has also been a boon for the arts. While uniquely Singaporean, the best of Singapore’s cultural offerings are contemporary yet Asian, and speaks to our common humanity. Of international quality, these works will appeal to discerning partners. The innovative use of traditional elements may further add to the distinctiveness of Singapore-made work.

Planning our approach

6. To successfully create and present art that articulates our cultural identity, we need to devise strategies to help artists target and engage with international audiences more effectively. Research on Singapore’s international reputation, as well as metrics for the international benchmarking of artistic excellence, will inform our strategies for internationalisation.

7. We will also use digital media to effectively market Singapore arts in an increasingly fast-paced and crowded marketplace. This will allow us to target specific audiences and decision-makers. We will

\(^7\) International Perception Study 2016
experiment with innovative technologies to create new types of content, and to better understand the role of the arts in city living. This will inform the value proposition of the arts on liveability, an indicator which measures a city’s standing and vibrancy.

8. It is also important that we better understand Singapore’s cultural role in Southeast Asia in order to work more closely with our neighbours. We will need to carry out research that allows us to build on existing cultural policy knowledge and innovation in arts practice, as well as the positioning of Singapore and Singapore arts in the region.

9. While impact studies such as the Population Survey on the Arts, Digital Engagement in the Arts as well as NAC event surveys have yielded useful information, other studies on more recent programmes and trends are needed for greater insight. We will need to work closely with other cultural institutions in niche areas such as the state of and development of intercultural practices; the effectiveness of signature pedagogical methods; the long-term impact of arts exposure in early childhood; and the impact of arts engagement on key population segments.

10. Broadly, we plan to position Singapore globally in these three ways:
   i) Cementing Singapore’s role as a valuable collaborative partner for arts and culture in the region;
   ii) Developing international residencies and capability building programmes; and
   iii) Extending an effective Singapore presence overseas.

i) Cementing Singapore’s role as a valuable collaborative partner for arts and culture in the region

11. There is a need for Singapore to strengthen exchanges and networks with its Southeast Asian counterparts. It is important that we build on existing platforms at the government level and explore deeper and more direct relationships with our overseas counterparts, through regional residencies or partnership programmes. This will strengthen Singapore’s position as a valuable collaborative partner in the region.

12. On the global front, it is also essential for Singapore to strengthen its international reputation as a valuable contributor in cultural policy and innovation. This includes art and technology, funding, research, and community engagement. We will support our arts community in active participation, such as presenting papers, fielding speakers or even hosting noteworthy conferences or summits – such as the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) World Summit or cultural research platforms – as well as ensuring Singapore representation on international boards.

13. It is important that we invest in developing Singapore-led best practices platforms. Some possible areas include Asian dramaturgy, Southeast Asian art discourse and research, teaching artistry, arts and the social sector, and cultural research. We will support our institutions, artists and arts groups in growing their influence internationally and regionally.

14. Such platforms position Singapore as an access point for greater cultural understanding of Southeast Asia, and as an active cultural contributor on the international arts scene. The Singapore Writer’s Festival is an example of such a platform, which will be enhanced to feature more Southeast Asian literature and talent. More exchanges between literary communities in Southeast Asia will also be encouraged to promote greater understanding of our neighbours.

15. It is also important that Singapore builds fruitful long-term relationships and international networks that are valuable and relevant to the arts sector. Singapore is part of formal networks
including the IFACCA and the International Network of Contemporary Performing Arts. Singapore is also part of art practice-driven networks, such as the Asia Discovers Asia Meeting and the Open Network of Performing Arts Management. Where necessary, NAC will lead Asian chapter meetings, contribute to or lead research projects, profile speakers for events, or propose that meetings or summits are held in Singapore.

16. NAC will also continue to build a closer working relationship with public sector agencies which promote Singapore overseas, such as the Singapore Tourism Board (STB), Economic Development Board (EDB) and Overseas Singaporean Unit (OSU). This will ensure consistent international marketing and branding of Singapore’s arts and culture sector, and greater coordination in areas such as international digital and social media marketing programmes, media outreach and familiarisation programmes.

17. There are also plans for more coordinated digital marketing campaigns in larger markets, such as Australia and China. NAC will work with STB to better support the Passion Made Possible campaign, by providing current and relevant content about Singapore’s cultural scene to pique the interest of younger travellers and audiences. In addition, together with STB, we will also identify key strengths and innovations in our cultural offerings to market internationally, tapping on STB’s extensive network. We will continue to celebrate our artists, whose passions have been realised in Singapore.

18. NAC will continue working closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on cultural diplomacy projects by recommending suitable artists for overseas audiences, working together to develop cultural projects, assessing proposed budgets and timelines, and facilitating funding requests.

19. In partnership with the Overseas Singaporean Unit, NAC will also strive to better engage overseas Singapore arts students and overseas Singaporeans who work actively in the arts. Close relationships with these individuals will benefit the Singapore arts scene, as they help to broaden Singapore’s international networks, and provide valuable feedback on Singapore works from an international perspective. NAC will explore strategic opportunities to engage these individuals through platforms such as practice-related committees and advisory panels, events and Singapore showcases at international platforms.

ii) Developing international residencies and capability building programmes

20. International residencies and capability building programmes play a significant role in encouraging cultural exchange between countries. They provide opportunities for government agencies or culture institutions to work together, and for artistic communities to network and build meaningful relationships. Capability building and residency programmes also allow for gaps in skills and knowledge to be plugged in the absence of suitable local programmes. Some programmes could be in practice-based areas, such as critical writing, creative producing and market development capabilities for the music sector, while others could be more broad-based such as arts and technology, and leadership development within the culture sector.

21. More partnerships will also be forged with acclaimed international and regional residency platforms. These platforms provide opportunities for Singapore artists to gain international exposure, and to build global networks. Singapore’s art companies will also receive support as participants of international symposia and conferences which establish Singapore as a centre for arts discourse. Support for intermediaries – such as art societies – will be sustained, to enable older generations of artists to continue creating and presenting new artwork to the world.
Over the years, NAC and Singapore artists have participated in a number of overseas residencies and capacity building programmes such as the Kunstlerhaus Bethanian Residency, the Dena Foundation Residency and the International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People (ASSITEJ) Korea International Summer Festival, Toji Cultural Centre Residency Programme, among others. We will continue to support Singapore artists’ participation in these platforms, and seek out more of such opportunities through partnerships with overseas arts councils or institutions. Such opportunities are particularly valuable for emerging leaders, who are in a position to inspire their peers, further their careers in the arts and grow in international stature.

### iii) Extending an effective Singapore presence overseas

International platforms and programmes continually profile the best from every country and have always been where notable culture experts and key opinion leaders from around the world converge. Such events are important platforms that help profile Singapore arts practitioners and their works at the international level, and Singapore’s past showcases at these platforms have helped boost the careers of artists by providing them with international opportunities. They also ensure that our artists remain internationally relevant, and plugged into global conversations.

We need to continue to sustain a Singaporean presence at well-known, international art events, such as the Venice Biennale. In addition, our institutions will take Singapore exhibitions to overseas international museums and galleries, and present Singapore artists at reputable art fair platforms. Our Cultural Medallion artists and their work will be foregrounded to highlight Singapore’s unique art history and narrative.

Trade platforms are also important for the Singapore arts scene, as they provide opportunities to promote Singaporean talent, build connections, and facilitate the buying and selling of Singapore works. In recent years, NAC has supported Singapore showcases and artist delegations to a range of trade platforms, such as the International Society for Performing Arts (ISPA), Performing Arts Market in Yokohama (TPAM), Australia Performing Arts Market (APAM), BIGSOUND Australia, Internationale Tanzmesse (contemporary dance), Art Basel (Basel, Hong Kong), and Frankfurt Book Fair.

These showcases and artist delegations benefit Singapore artists, with more of them developing direct connections that eventually lead to the sale of work, or future projects and collaborations. NAC will evaluate the relevance of these platforms, and look out for similar opportunities or platforms for other art forms.

To better support NAC’s international efforts, NAC will provide seed funding to Singapore artists who are exploring new projects with overseas counterparts. NAC will also work closely and strategically with the cultural institutions and national orchestras to maximise the impact of our resources on arts practitioners and arts groups that are ready for the international stage, and to facilitate international exchanges and collaborations.
Conclusion

1. Over the years, Singapore has seen a gradual maturing of its arts scene. From its early years of helping a young nation define its cultural identity, the arts have grown from strength to strength, becoming more integral to everyday life. There is much to celebrate: world-class cultural infrastructure based on strong institutions, excellent artworks that inspire audiences at home and abroad, well-designed programming that connects different communities, and an increasingly professional sector.

2. Still, much work remains to be done. Our SG Arts Plan (2018-2022) will guide NAC in championing the arts sector in alignment with our vision of making Singapore a home to diverse and distinctive arts which can inspire Singaporeans, connect communities, and position Singapore globally. This plan will be reviewed over time to respond to the inevitable changes in our operating environment, as well as domestic and international contexts, but serves as an important document to articulate our current thinking and priorities for the future.

3. As outlined in our preceding chapters, three strategic thrusts elaborate how we plan on achieving this vision:
   - **Inspire Our People** – We aim to give our artists the support they need to do their best work, creating and presenting art that will inspire audiences and express our Singapore stories. We aim to see more excellent art that reflects, articulates and celebrates Singaporeans’ shared history, aspirations and concerns;
   - **Connect Our Communities** – We aim to give Singaporeans more access to a wide range of arts experiences across forms, languages and traditions. We want to support more quality performances, exhibitions and literary works, which can serve as meaningful community-building experiences; and
   - **Position Singapore Globally** – We aim to support our arts practitioners in their efforts to go global, through access to cutting-edge techniques and technology, as well as significant international platforms, events and festivals. We will expand NAC’s existing networks by working closely with partners, including other public sector agencies.

4. As we work towards our goals, we are thankful that we do not have to embark on this journey alone.

5. We are grateful for the opportunities we have had, over the years, to work with our valued stakeholders, which include the arts community, public sector agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), private sector organisations, educators, volunteers, and members of the public. Each of you has been instrumental growing the arts sector in Singapore, and we are excited about our continued collaborations to propel Singapore arts to even greater heights.

6. We deeply appreciate the hundreds of stakeholders who have come forward with their input, feedback and encouragement, as we designed our strategic plans over the course of the last year.

7. Guided by our vision, NAC remains committed to supporting art practitioners by giving them access to the resources they need to create inspiring art that will inspire audiences both in Singapore and beyond our shores. We will also strive to provide greater access for the wider general public to experience the wonder of the arts across forms, languages and traditions, and through this, grow as individuals, bond as communities, and celebrate as a nation. With the support of our arts practitioners,
various government, corporate, and social sector stakeholders, as well as the public, we are confident that Singapore’s arts scene will flourish, and continue to be a source of pride for all Singaporeans.
Our SG Arts Plan
(2018-2022)

Annexes
Literary Arts

1. Literature is more than just words on a page; it captures our stories, experiences, aspirations, and cultures – in short, literature is an important expression of who we are and our Singaporean identity. To support the growth of the literary arts in Singapore, the government announced the first Literary Arts Plan in 2010 with an injection of $24M.

2. Since then, as part of the Arts and Culture Strategic Review (ACSR), funding has been geared towards catalysing growth in Singapore’s literary arts scene. For example, NAC’s Creation Grant scheme has supported Singaporean writers to develop new works that have added to the diversity of Singapore literature, especially in long-form writing such as novels. Creative writing residency partnerships between NAC and local organisations such as Nanyang Technological University and National Parks Board, as well as foreign residency partners like the University of Iowa’s International Writing Programme, have provided increased opportunities for writers to develop their creative practice. The Singapore Writers Festival (SWF) became an annual event in 2011 and is now a highlight of the Singapore arts calendar; its 2017 edition attracted over 25,000 attendees.

Analysis of Current State

Strengths

3. Literary reading is growing amongst Singaporeans, with 44% of the population having read at least one literary book in 2015 as compared to 30% in 2005. Also, the inaugural National Literary Reading and Writing Survey in 2015 indicated that Singaporeans had positive attitudes to reading. The literary scene has grown in vibrancy with more writers overall; greater volume and diversity in literary content; healthy growth in the number of intermediaries from English and Chinese literary publishers; and new non-profit organisations to address gaps such as writer development and public engagement.

Weaknesses

4. Although the literary scene is now more vibrant than before, overall awareness and appreciation of Singapore literature is low; only one in 10 Singaporeans read Singapore literature. We need more high quality literary arts experiences to interest Singaporeans who are not familiar with Singapore literature. The decline in language proficiency in Chinese, Malay, and Tamil has affected the cultivation of the next generation of writers and readers who are able to read and write in those languages. More importantly, opportunities for cross-cultural understanding will be diminished without good quality Singapore literature written in Chinese, Malay, and Tamil.

Opportunities

5. Literature, with its ability to improve readers’ capacity for empathy, can be a vehicle for promoting understanding of our heritage and culture. There are several literary arts events in Singapore today but few encourage cross-cultural interaction and social mixing. There is an opportunity for literary translation into English to make Chinese, Malay, and Tamil works of historical and social significance more accessible to a wider base of readers; this will nurture a deeper appreciation of our heritage and potentially foster greater understanding between language communities. New trends and developments in communication technology such as augmented reality, virtual reality, and audiobooks also provide opportunities to attract new readers and deepen engagement for existing readers.

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1 2015, National Literary Reading and Writing Survey.
3 Ibid.
Threats
6. As society becomes more diverse, cultural sensibilities are needed to manage the complexities that arise to build a more inclusive society. There must be more effort in articulating a strong Singaporean identity and in enlarging common spaces for diverse communities. With the advent of new technologies, traditional publishing companies can do more to grasp the full impact of the industry disruption being caused by the sharing/streaming economy and other shifts in consumption patterns caused by technological trends.

Envisioned State and Outcomes
7. By 2022, NAC envisions a vibrant literary arts scene where Singapore literature provides communal experiences for individuals of diverse backgrounds. Literary arts practitioners are supported to create and offer quality literary content and experiences that Singaporeans can relate to and are proud of. The literary arts draw people together, enable them to bridge differences and forge connections as a cohesive community. Domestic and international readers and critics admire and appreciate Singapore literature for its distinctly Singaporean content that can appeal to readers.

8. From 2018 to 2022, NAC will build on the existing foundation and vibrancy in the scene, to prioritise greater appreciation of Singapore literature and improved quality of Singapore literature in the next five years. In order to do so, NAC will focus on:

   a. A more targeted approach in literary engagement, with a priority on increasing appreciation for Singapore literature and fostering cross-cultural understanding by promoting interaction across language communities;

   b. Targeted developmental programmes for literary arts practitioners at different stages of development to hone their craft, and for intermediaries to professionalise with an emphasis on Chinese, Malay and Tamil literary writers and stakeholders; and

   c. Development of a more diverse literary arts scene, with a focus on promoting literary exchanges within Southeast Asia and a healthy range of research and writing on Singapore literature.

Strategic Thrust 1: Inspire Our People

Nurture a pool of talent with emphasis on grooming talent writing in Chinese, Malay, and Tamil, as well as across genres and forms that would appeal to diverse readers

9. NAC will nurture talent who are committed to creating quality literary content, and will develop dedicated strategies to address the challenges faced by the Chinese, Malay, and Tamil writing communities. NAC will also look into opportunities for writers at different stages of development to ensure their access to skills and resources for continuous advancement of their creative practice. This will include residency partnerships and manuscript critiques to develop writers’ craft, and professional skills such as pitching and networking.

10. Beyond nurturing talent, NAC will study issues across the whole value chain, e.g. publishing, retail and readership, and work with key partners such as academic institutions, National Library Board, media and literary arts intermediaries to address them.
Strategic Thrust 2: Connect Our Communities

Cultivate shared interest in and appreciation of Singapore literature through engaging forms (e.g. multidisciplinary adaptations, transmedia platforms, etc.)

11. NAC will give priority to underappreciated or inaccessible (i.e. no longer in print) seminal works. Greater emphasis will also be placed on translation to promote shared appreciation of Singapore literature across our language communities, and to provide readers with an avenue to engage in meaningful conversations on cross-cultural issues and different perspectives. To achieve this, NAC will partner key organisations such as National Library Board, National Heritage Board, People’s Association, and the language councils. To effectively reach out to the public, NAC plans to conduct related research in reading, engagement, buying patterns and trends.

Nurture a love for literature and deepen public engagement of Singapore literature through pinnacle engagement platforms such as the Singapore Writers Festival and the development of a key literary centre

12. The Singapore Writers Festival is the pinnacle engagement platform in Singapore’s literary arts scene with programmes that cater to a wide range of readers’ interests. Moving forward, SWF will cater to more discerning arts-going attendees by playing a larger role in developing readers of Singapore literature, and prioritising deeper engagement with interested attendees. For example, SWF will feature distinctive programmes and socially-inclusive programming. NAC will also develop literary intermediaries, including positioning The Arts House as a key literary centre, where literary activities can take place all year-round to build on the momentum from SWF. A literary centre will complement National Library Board’s literary events to cultivate a greater appreciation for Singapore literature. This centre should evolve into a cornerstone of Singapore’s literary scene: one that supports the vitality of literary activities, builds communities around the sharing and appreciation of stories, and focuses public interest in Singapore literature.

Encourage early exposure to and sustained interest in Singapore literature, within the literature curriculum and beyond, amongst children and youth

13. Literary arts in education continues to be a priority to develop the next generation of writers and readers. Opportunities for children and young adults to encounter and engage with Singapore literature should start from home and in schools, and extend beyond the literature curriculum. NAC will encourage early and sustained exposure to Singapore literature from young and in schools, working with the Ministry of Education to incorporate more Singapore literature into curriculum with supplementary teaching and student resources. This includes developing literary texts and relevant teaching resources in the four official languages, with new emphasis on online resources. NAC will also broaden schools’ access to quality literary programming directly via the Arts Education Programme, Words Go Round, etc., as well as indirectly via support for literary organisations that offer school programmes.

Leverage technology to create, digitise or adapt Singapore literature for targeted demographics

14. As part of NAC’s efforts to improve accessibility and awareness of Singapore literature, NAC will support the capability development of literary arts practitioners and intermediaries to equip them with skills needed to integrate technological developments with the literary arts. NAC will also encourage or seed digital projects that use technology in the creation, digitisation or adaptation of literary works, focusing on art-making with technology (e.g. co-creations using technology) and the
distribution of Singapore literature with technology (e.g. digitisation of Singapore literature texts, transmedia adaptations, etc.)

**Strategic Thrust 3: Position Singapore Globally**

*Establish Singapore as a key enabler of exchanges between the Southeast Asian literary communities*

15. Southeast Asian literature provides Singapore a valuable access point to cultivate greater cultural appreciation of the region’s complexities. Singapore has deep historical, social and economic ties with many communities in the region. Thus, through insights of the region via literature, Singaporeans can better understand ourselves. Singapore can do more to showcase the region’s culture and provide a new platform for the exchange of ideas in the following two ways:

(a) Position SWF as a presentation platform to present Southeast Asian literature and discover literary talents from the region
SWF will enhance its focus on Southeast Asian literature and talent, including those from Singapore. SWF also plans to include programmes that take on a developmental role to engage and educate the Singapore public on Singapore literature alongside Southeast Asian literature.

(b) Promote exchanges between Southeast Asian literary communities so as to raise Singaporeans’ understanding of our neighbours
Discourse about Southeast Asian literature plays a crucial role in improving Singaporeans’ understanding of our neighbours. Possible collaborations with local and regional cultural institutions and think-tanks include the translation and publication of seminal Southeast Asian literature.

**Encourage literary discourse on Singapore literature**

16. A healthy literary arts sector thrives on literary discourse that fosters critical discussion about a country’s literature, its history and development, thereby deepening people’s understanding of Singapore literature. This can lead to more meaningful engagement between the literary community and the general reading public, and ultimately to the overall development of a more confident cultural identity. Just as importantly, we need to encourage a wide spectrum of writing on Singapore literature, such as book reviews and academic essays, in order to seed conversations on Singapore literature across the diverse reading groups. NAC will work with partners to foster a range of writing on Singapore literature, as well as to develop critical writing skills.

**Summary**

17. The sectoral plan will lead the evolution of Singapore into a city of readers who are proud of Singapore’s strong literary culture, and of writers whose stories continue to inspire Singaporeans. Singaporeans will have a better understanding across communities through literature.

18. In summary, efforts in literary arts development will go towards: (a) making engagement programmes more targeted, with a priority to increase appreciation of Singapore literature and social cohesion by promoting interaction across language communities; (b) more targeted support of developmental programmes for practitioners to hone their craft and a greater focus on professionalising leading intermediaries; and (c) a more diverse literary arts scene with a focus on Southeast Asia and a healthy range of literary discourse and criticism.
Performing Arts

1. The Performing Arts (PA) sector has seen immense growth in the past two decades. The development of a range of arts venues catalysed a burgeoning supply of arts programmes, which responded to growing demand for the arts. In tandem with these developments, the number of performing arts activities, as well as registered performing arts companies and societies, increased steadily. In 2015, an average of 23 performing arts activities took place every day in Singapore.\(^\text{11}\) Likewise, the number of performing arts companies and societies continued its growth trajectory, increasing from 2,689 in 2013 to 3,079 in 2015.\(^\text{12}\)

2. Despite the growth in the number of groups and activities, ticketed attendance for performing arts events declined in the past five years, from 1.85 million tickets sold in 2011 to 1.56 million in 2015,\(^\text{13}\) although overall arts attendance levels (including free events) continued on a rising trend.\(^\text{14}\) The profile of these consumers tended to be female, students or PMEBs, aged 15-24, and with monthly household incomes above $8,000.\(^\text{15}\) Theatre (especially musicals)\(^\text{16}\) and music (especially pop, rock, and indie)\(^\text{17}\) were popular art forms among this profile.

3. In terms of artistic success, original works by Singaporean creators, particularly in theatre and dance, continued to be picked up and performed at overseas festivals and venues. Singaporean musicians also set a high bar for themselves in recent years, winning international accolades and prizes, as well as performing at some of the biggest festivals in the world. However, a review of writing and assessments by critics and peer practitioners suggested that there was still much room for improvement in the sector’s general artistic standards.

Analysis of Current State

Strengths

4. Overall attendance and participation in the performing arts has improved since the previous sectoral plan. Beyond the theatre and concert hall, the performing arts are also effective at achieving national outcomes, such as national pride,\(^\text{18}\) arts participation,\(^\text{19}\) and cross-cultural understanding.\(^\text{20}\) Outside Singapore, our contemporary musicians and national orchestras have made their presence felt in recent years, with successful overseas tours and placements on global streaming charts, awards, and invitations to perform at major festivals and venues. National venues and platforms like The Esplanade Company Limited (TECL) and the Singapore International Festival of Arts (SIFA) have also built up networks of international connections to benefit other Singaporean artists.

\(^{11}\) Data from Singapore Cultural Statistics 2016.
\(^{12}\) Data from Singapore Cultural Statistics 2016. Prior to 2013, only companies with SSIC codes under NAC’s purview were included in the Cultural Statistics report. However, the definition was expanded in 2013 to include other companies that were part of the cultural sector, including companies from the media and supporting industries. The change in definition contributed to the large increase in the number of companies, from 490 in 2012 to 2,401 in 2013.
\(^{13}\) Data from Singapore Cultural Statistics 2016.
\(^{14}\) Data from Population Survey on the Arts 2015.
\(^{15}\) Ibid.
\(^{16}\) Data from Population Survey on the Arts 2015. 37% of the population attended theatre performances, including 13% who attended musicals.
\(^{17}\) Data from Population Survey on the Arts 2015. 35% of the population attended music performances, including 19% for pop, rock, and indie, and 9% for western classical.
\(^{18}\) Based on the National Music Consumption Survey 2017, two in three Singaporeans said they were proud of Singapore’s music and musicians.
\(^{19}\) Based on the Singapore Cultural Statistics 2016, the number of members in dance interest groups tripled in a short span of four years (2011 to 2015).
\(^{20}\) Based on the Population Survey on the Arts 2015.
Weaknesses
5. Critical writing about the arts is weak in Singapore and there is little research and documentation of the performing arts. Likewise, there is room for practitioners to improve how they reach out to and engage new audiences of their work. The predominance of the English language over the Mother Tongue languages, along with uneven audience engagement efforts, have made it challenging for more people to connect with some art forms, especially those that require some language proficiency. The level of professionalism in arts management and instruction, succession planning as well as support for freelance performing arts practitioners also needs to be strengthened. Lastly, the adoption of technology in the performing arts could be stronger.

Opportunities
6. To grow new audiences for the arts, non-arts considerations and interests could offer entry points for uninitiated audiences to encounter the arts. In particular, programming for families with children and tapping into Singaporeans’ interest in health and fitness\(^\text{21}\) are potential growth areas for audience development. With the growing propensity towards self-expression among youth in the social media age, there is an opportunity to tap on this energy and develop interest and ability in critical writing. Global shifts in technology and music consumption patterns have also made it possible for emerging musicians to have breakthroughs internationally regardless of location. The development of technologies for artmaking, digital engagement, and marketing has made it possible for small but technologically enabled countries like Singapore to be part of the vanguard for innovations.

Threats
7. While we celebrate the vibrancy and diversity of performing arts offerings, the increasingly crowded cultural calendar in Singapore has resulted in intense competition for audiences. Given the broader trend of population decline, which results in shrinking school populations, opportunities to engage with the arts through co-curricular activities might decrease. This has implications on the longer-term careers of performing arts practitioners. The emotive power of the performing arts, while having greater potential to unite communities and build a cohesive society, can also be used to divide people if the arts are politicised for particular causes. This could alienate supporters and funders, and potentially erode public support for the arts.

Envisioned State and Outcomes
8. By 2022, NAC envisions a vibrant performing arts scene that is driven by an integrated ecosystem and embraced by audiences, with a growing pool of distinctive works. Our national orchestras inspire national pride among Singaporeans and are regarded as among the best in the world. At the same time, our performing arts practitioners receive international accolades and are embraced as role models by Singaporeans from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds.

9. Different segments of the population have myriad opportunities to engage with the performing arts through tailored programmes that spark curiosity, enable empathy, and cultivate a sense of national identity and pride. Internationally, content coming out of Singapore is recognised for its contemporary sensibilities and strong roots in the multiculturalism and diversity of this region. Our performing arts institutions and practitioners are recognised as up-and-coming leaders in using technology to make art and engage audiences.

\(^{21}\) Data from Population Survey on the Arts 2015. “Sports and exercise” came out as the second most popular leisure activity that Singaporeans spent time on.
Strategic Thrust 1: Inspire Our People

*Raise the public visibility of the performing arts by working with the sector to create a national focal point in the cultural calendar*

10. Building on the vibrancy of the performing arts sector, NAC will work with cultural institutions and arts companies to create a focal point for the performing arts in the cultural calendar. For example, NAC could build upon existing festivals and events, such as SIFA, Flipside, the M1 CONTACT Contemporary Dance Festival, and the national orchestras, to establish the branding for a national Performing Arts Festival in May/June every year. A national publicity campaign that celebrates the diverse forms and expressions of the performing arts could complement existing marketing efforts, appealing to new audiences in the process.

*Build capabilities in gap areas such as the use of technology, arts education, fundraising, marketing, and arts management*

11. To enable increased and more effective use of technology to enhance the audience experience, NAC will work with partners such as TECL and Culture Academy to organise capability development programmes. NAC will also encourage experimentation and the utilisation of technology through the existing grants framework, as well as facilitate opportunities for artists to meet and work with the technology sector. In collaboration with partners, NAC will continue to facilitate training opportunities to strengthen the sector’s capabilities in fundraising, marketing, and arts management.

12. Improving the quality of arts education programmes in schools is critically important to inspire a new generation of arts lovers. In addition to more structured professional development opportunities for instructors and teaching artists in schools, NAC will also work with the Ministry of Education to augment the opportunities available for students to engage with the arts as extensions of the school curriculum, as well as to develop interest in the traditional arts from young.

Strategic Thrust 2: Connect Our Communities

*Strengthen the sector’s understanding of audience segments and behaviours through research, as well as support the development of critical writing in and about the performing arts*

13. In order to understand existing and potential audience segments, NAC will work with performing arts institutions to commission a range of audience research studies, from quantitative research at the art form level about audience segments and consumption patterns to qualitative research to gain insights about audience behaviours. Initiatives such as Got to Move and Hear65, which aim to increase public awareness of, participation in, and support for dance and music respectively, will also tap into data analytics to ascertain trends in public opinion, as well as to refine their tactics. In addition, The Artground will complete a study to identify and understand the space-based experiences of audiences and the needs within the Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) field.

14. NAC will seek partnerships with cultural institutions such as the Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre to develop research that document the development of the performing arts over time, including traditional practices and forms. Beyond that, NAC will develop the practice of critical writing in the performing arts by supporting intermediaries to develop the craft of writing among writers and deepen critical discourse in the performing arts. Initiatives like Hear65 will also document contemporary music practices through articles, podcasts, and videos.
Develop capabilities in areas such as audience engagement, facilitation, and content creation for specific audience segments

15. In tandem with the focus on audience research, NAC will also introduce initiatives with the aim of building capabilities in audience engagement, such as a pilot programme involving teaching artists, musicians, and marketing consultants with a focus on programme design and facilitation to reach new audiences (i.e. people who do not regularly attend ticketed shows). In catering to diverse audiences, support will continue to be given to inclusivity practices, such as surtitling, close-captioning, and sign language services to enable all audiences to appreciate and engage with the work.

16. Through programming at the Stamford Arts Centre, including residencies and public outreach programmes, NAC aims to develop upstream capabilities and foster collaborations between contemporary and traditional arts practitioners to augment the efforts of cultural institutions in commissioning, co-producing, and presenting works. In the TYA segment, organisations such as The Artground, TECL, and arts companies with a focus on children will champion and support experimentation and new design approaches for age-appropriate content. NAC will facilitate capability development opportunities for TYA practitioners to deepen their practice and collaborate with international artists. NAC will also continue to support the professional development of artists working in school.

Strategic Thrust 3: Position Singapore Globally

Strengthen the arts ecosystem through closer alignment with the performing arts institutions and strategic funding of initiatives and intermediaries

17. NAC will work closely and strategically with cultural institutions such as TECL, AHL, and the national orchestras to achieve the performing arts vision. Through closer coordination and alignment, the major presenting venues and NAC will minimise the duplication of programmes with similar goals and maximise the impact of our resources on artists and arts groups that are ready for the international stage.

18. The national orchestras will also continue to support the presentation of Singaporean work, as well as connect visiting artists with Singapore’s music practitioners through masterclasses and dialogues. At the same time, NAC will work with arts companies and intermediaries like Dance Nucleus to provide stepped pathways for the creation of new work: from space and grant support to incubate works and facilitate international exchanges and collaborations, to workshops incorporating critical presenter and producer perspectives, leading to connections with international co-commissioners and presenters.

19. To nurture a robust performing arts ecosystem that supports the needs of arts companies and practitioners, including independent artists, producers, and arts managers, NAC will continue to support the growth of intermediaries that address key gaps in each sector. While the strong support for ground-up initiatives will continue to be a key feature of NAC’s open grants framework, NAC will also channel resources towards strategic partnerships with intermediaries and arts companies to address sectoral needs, such as the establishment of a Freelancer Resource Centre.

Summary

20. The sectoral plan will strengthen Singapore’s performing arts sector, which will be led by strong and sustainable institutions and companies that support a diversity of practices and perspectives in a thriving ecosystem. This will lead to the creation of a pool of distinctive works that
are embraced by audiences and that spark curiosity, enable empathy, and cultivate a sense of national identity and pride among the public.

21. In summary, efforts in performing arts development will go towards: (a) strengthening the sector’s understanding of audience segments and behaviours, as well as supporting the development of critical writing in and about the performing arts; (b) developing capabilities in the areas of audience engagement, arts education, technology, fundraising, marketing, and arts management; and (c) raising the public visibility of the performing arts by working with the sector to create a national focal point for the performing arts in the cultural calendar.
Visual Arts

1. Singapore’s focus in the early years was to put in place infrastructure and established cultural institutions; namely the Singapore Art Museum, STPI Singapore and National Gallery Singapore which were formed in 1996, 2002 and 2015 respectively. These institutions have been instrumental in bringing blockbuster exhibitions and artworks to Singapore audiences and growing the National Collection into the world’s largest public collection of Southeast Asian art. Nanyang Technological University Centre for Contemporary Art (NTU CCA) was also launched in 2013, offering cutting edge exhibitions, residencies and a space for research and critical discourse.

2. Public funding was extended to diploma programmes offered by LASALLE College of the Arts and Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) in the early 2000s, making art education a more viable pathway for Singaporeans. In addition, NTU launched its Arts, Design and Media faculty in 2005 offering Bachelor of Fine Art programmes further expanding the options for aspiring arts practitioners.

3. In an effort to profile our artistic talents, Singapore began showcasing our artists at the prestigious Venice Biennale (VB) in 2003. In addition to showcasing made-in-Singapore content internationally, major events such as Singapore Biennale and Singapore Art Show were introduced in the mid-2000s which contributed to making Singapore a go-to destination for contemporary art and placed us in dialogue with the international art world.

4. To add character to public spaces and make art a part of our daily lives, public art schemes were initiated including Land Transport Authority’s Art in Transit Programme, Urban Redevelopment Authority Public (URA) Sculpture Masterplan, National Heritage Board’s Tax Incentive Scheme and the URA Art Incentive Scheme. To encourage artists to meaningfully engage Singaporeans through public art, PAssionArts by People’s Association and the Public Art Trust by NAC have commissioned numerous public art projects for our neighbourhoods.

5. As a means to catalyse the art market and create a credible marketplace in Singapore, Art Stage Singapore was established in 2011 and Gillman Barracks as a contemporary art cluster in 2012, both spearheaded by Economic Development Board (EDB). Gillman Barracks offers quality programming and is an anchor venue for major arts and cultural events in Singapore. Singapore Art Week (SAW) was launched in January 2013 by Singapore Tourism Board (STB), which has branded Singapore as a destination for visual arts attracting more regional and international visitors.

Analysis of Current State

Strengths

6. Singapore has the largest art institutions in the region, acquiring more than 8,000 artworks making the National Collection the largest Southeast Asian art collection in the world. The collection is conserved, maintained and stored at the Heritage Conservation Centre, a world-class facility employing exemplary standards in artwork conservation and storage. In addition, both arts colleges moved into new purpose-built facilities, and together with NTU ADM are training a healthy stream of artists annually. Audience growth for the visual arts has been on the uptrend since 2011.¹ This growth can be attributed to the many visual art programmes available throughout the year. To enable art practitioners to create and present new artworks, grant schemes offer flexibility for a diverse range of artistic practices and programmes. This has contributed significantly towards developing professional capabilities of our practitioners and engaged audiences. Arts housing support is also available to artists

¹ Data from the Population Survey on the Arts 2015
and arts organisations, allowing many to benefit from affordable spaces especially with premium prices on real estate in Singapore.

**Weaknesses**

7. Most art cities around the world have organically driven art scenes comprising non-profit spaces, artist-run collectives, residencies, art archives and research organisations. In Singapore, there are few grounds-up and privately funded initiatives due to the lack of suitable spaces and prohibitive costs. Despite a growing number of audiences, visual arts appeal less to ‘Married with Kids’ and ‘Seniors’ segments and those lesser educated.\(^2\) There is also a lack of research into understanding the behaviours of our current and non-art audiences. Artists, art galleries and art fairs also find it difficult to achieve better self-sustainability as there is a small market of buyers of Singapore art. The art market is still in a nascent state where trade represents only 1% of global art export and import. In addition to the lack of art buying, individual giving to the visual arts is not an established norm in Singapore with crowdsourcing only an emerging trend among Singapore companies and artists.

8. Space is an important resource for art practitioners to focus on art making and programming. As affordable spaces are scarce, it poses a constraint for the sector as government subsidised arts housing is limited and there is a growing lack of spaces available to accommodate the increasing number of artists. Presentation spaces are also limited, restricting the ambitions of arts groups such as art societies in presenting large-scale exhibitions. There are also few development platforms available to support art practitioners such as curators, art writers, gallery and exhibition professionals.

**Opportunities**

9. Better synergies with key visual art institutions can contribute to growing new audiences, capability development, and positioning Singapore as regional thought leader. Similarly, art gallery associations can enhance the capabilities of our art galleries by developing strategies for art businesses, cultivating collectors, organising events and networking opportunities to share best practices. To grow new audiences particularly in under-represented segments, art can be made more accessible through educational and family-oriented programmes.\(^3\) More research can also be done to understand the different segment of audiences and non-audiences better. To nurture interest in Singapore art among the young, exposure to more Singapore’s art and artists in engaging ways can be introduced across levels within the classrooms, and through facilitated school visits to the museums.\(^4\)

10. To optimise the potential of public art in growing audiences, more publicly owned spaces can be unlocked and land planning agencies can be encouraged to consider public art as part of their land redevelopment plans. To create more spaces for artwork creation and presentation, unused public properties can be explored for interim art use as creation, production and presentation spaces. Also, lifestyle events can be leveraged on as alternative presentation platforms for artists as many already include art in their offerings. With the global shift in focus towards digital transformation and engagement, Singapore has a mature environment that supports the growth of new media technologies and scientific infrastructure. It is therefore an opportunity for the sector to leverage on Singapore’s strength as a technological hub to optimise the potential of digital engagement in growing new audiences, and spark more collaborative new media art practices.

11. With the establishment of reputable foreign galleries and the creation of arts precincts such as Gillman Barracks, Singapore is in a good position to develop a reputation as a key art centre in

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\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) Main barriers of entry as reported in the Population Survey on the Arts 2015 include family commitments and lack of awareness of visual arts activities being the main barriers of entry in 2015

\(^4\) MOE’s art curriculum from Primary 1 to Secondary 2 aims to develop visual literacy and art appreciation through three core objectives in seeing, expressing and appreciating, with Singapore art being taught at all levels.
Southeast Asia and beyond. More curators and writers can be developed, to mediate and validate the qualities and values of artists and artworks, and contribute to developing the national narrative on Singapore art which will resonate with audiences. To strengthen Singapore’s position as a visual arts city, it is important to increase Singapore’s standing in art and enhance our global reputation. More can be done in showcasing our artists at key international platforms, travelling our exhibitions to international museums and galleries, and involving our artists and galleries at reputable art fairs.

**Threats**

12. While audience numbers continue to grow steadily, attending visual arts events is still perceived by many non-arts attendees as a low priority activity. There are also many competing arts events in the cultural calendar, which makes it challenging for the sector to grow new audiences. Although visual arts events provide a lower barrier of entry (generally non-ticketed), free programmes offer little to no cost recovery for their organisers. In the long run, this perpetuates an unwillingness to pay for visual arts events and affect the overall sustainability of the ecosystem.

13. Emerging art cities like Hong Kong, Jakarta and Bangkok are putting in place new infrastructure, institutions and high-signature platforms to brand themselves as art destinations. New regional contemporary art biennales are also emerging, in Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok. These new developments will rival Singapore’s position of being the visual arts city of the region. In terms of art commerce, Singapore is still behind more mature regional art markets like Beijing and Hong Kong who continue to be dominant platforms in Asia.

**Envisioned State and Outcomes**

14. Singapore will be recognised as the visual arts city for Southeast Asian art globally. Local and foreign visitors enjoy visiting our art institutions and galleries, and are enthusiastic by the year-round programming. Our ecosystem is robust, and we have an art industry that is supported by a strong appreciation for art and deep patronage among audiences, including Singaporeans. Growing the next generation of audiences, our museums are key destinations for schools and meaningful public art can be found in many areas of our civic spaces, adding character to our visual landscape.

**Strategic Thrust 1: Inspire Our People**

*Our art institutions and intermediaries will contribute significantly towards a sustainable ecosystem*

15. Our art institutions and companies will play a key role in creating opportunities for our artists and contributing towards growing professional capabilities for the sector. As the biggest employers and most well-resourced, our art institutions can develop training programmes that benefit the wider art sector. These programmes can focus on professional development in areas of curating, exhibition management and other supporting roles. In particular, growing critical art writing will be a key focus to grow more art writers. To encourage more industry led efforts in developing the sector, art companies will be encouraged to grow residency programmes which will be instrumental in grooming our next generation of prominent visual artists. This is with the aim of supporting our artists to develop an oeuvre of artworks which will add to our distinct art narrative.

*Ensuring our National Collection will be in good stead for current and future audiences*

16. To ensure that our National Collection continues to be in a good stead, an overall acquisition strategy can be developed to guide our National Institutions in building and enhancing the collection.

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5 Data from Population Survey on the Arts 2015
This is important as both acquisition and presentation of the collection in exhibitions are key to strengthening Singapore’s position as thought leader in Southeast Asian art. National Gallery, SAM and STPI will work together to find synergies and create shared services that would help the institutions benefit from economies of scale. One area in particular is in acquisition and conservation of artworks, where research of new methods for storage and conservation of art can be conducted. These institutions can then advise on possible new infrastructure and enhance processes to ensure that standards of artwork care are continuously developed.

**More support for development of contemporary art**

17. A stronger support to develop contemporary art will be an area of focus as it is about the present and future. It will be important to invest further and support SAM in growing contemporary art appreciation, via commissioning, acquiring, and documenting the present for a future visual art narrative. SAM will also be supported to invest more into their education and outreach efforts. With the expected completion of SAM’s new facility by 2021, the museum will be a key driver in championing contemporary art of Singapore and Southeast Asia.

**More opportunities for artists to create and display their art**

18. Bringing art to the public is an immediate and direct way of creating presentation opportunities for artists and enhancing the visual aesthetics of a city. Public art will remain a key feature in VA’s major events such as Singapore Art Week and Singapore Biennale. Along with public art, interim use of unused public properties will be explored to create more short-term production and presentation spaces. Use of alternative presentation spaces for art such as shop houses and vacant commercial units in shopping malls etc. will also be encouraged to allow for growth of new alternative arts spaces.

**Strategic Thrust 2: Connect Our Communities**

**Grow research on visual arts audience segments and behaviours**

19. More research will be commissioned to gather data which will give the community a better understanding of our current visual arts audiences and non-audiences. Such data is important and beneficial for developing effective outreach initiatives to grow new audiences, and for arts groups and festival organisers to create meaningful programming and ensure that their communication strategies are effective in reaching out to their target segments.

**Reach under-reached segments of audiences through public art and accessible programmes**

20. Art will be brought to the people through art presentations and programmes near their homes. New public art trails will be created, and public agencies will be partnered to unlock spaces for more community art displays. To grow meaningful engagements between artists and the wider public, People’s Association will be partnered to draw on their expertise in galvanising the community and programming co-creation projects. To reach a wider group of audiences, artists and art groups will be encouraged to leverage on commissioning and presentation opportunities offered by lifestyle events in Singapore. These events will also be encouraged to feature art as part of their offerings.

**Heightening awareness of Singapore art in schools**

21. As a longer-term strategy to nurture a more art literate public especially in Singapore art, NAC will work with MOE to heighten the awareness of key Singapore artists and artworks across all levels
through engaging programmes, as well as teaching and learning resources, including digital resources. This will be in tandem with efforts to encourage all Singapore schools to participate in museum activities especially at cohort level.

**Encouraging digitisation of research, knowledge and content to create new entry points**

22. Singapore’s strength in technology can be leveraged on to grow new audiences through digital engagement. For a start, efforts will be made to complete the digitisation of our National Collection and key institution exhibitions so as to create new entry points and increase accessibility. Technology and new media can also be leveraged on to encourage collaboration between art and science.

**Develop capabilities of art galleries and privately funded art intermediaries to cultivate patronage and grow new collectors**

23. Cultural institutions such as STPI who have established themselves as a top tier international gallery within the global art fair circuit, can work closely with art gallery associations to consider new ways to support art businesses, grow new members, and represent the interests of galleries in working with public agencies, media and stakeholders.

24. Through regular engagements, art galleries can be encouraged to adopt good business practices to ensure that their commercial dealings with artists and buyers are fair, and share ideas on how the commercial sector’s need for skilled and professionally trained gallery managers can be met. The growth of privately funded intermediaries such as private museums and collector led art spaces will also be encouraged. These intermediaries can play a role in creating opportunities for our artists and developing patronage through programmes and initiatives such as collectors’ talks, workshops and presentations of private art collections.

**Strategic Thrust 3: Position Singapore Globally**

**Forge new partnerships to provide opportunities for Singapore artists to gain exposure and grow Singapore’s reputation internationally**

25. Partnerships with acclaimed international and regional residency platforms will be forged to provide opportunities for more Singapore artists to gain exposure and connect with the art world. Our art companies will also be supported to programme symposia and conferences that will contribute towards establishing Singapore as a centre for visual arts discourse. Also, support for intermediaries such as art societies will be sustained to enable our older generation of artists to continue creating and presenting new artworks internationally.

**Continue to increase Singapore’s international standing in art**

26. Singapore will continue to support our artists to participate and present their work in key platforms internationally. Singapore is committed to showcasing Singapore artists at the Venice Biennale until its 2033 edition, and support will continue for artists who are invited to key Biennales and international contemporary art exhibitions. Our institutions will travel our exhibitions to international museums and galleries overseas, and art galleries will be supported to present Singapore artists at reputable art fair platforms. To foster greater appreciation for our cultural icons, our Cultural Medallion artists and significant artworks will be foregrounded through our institutions programming, so as to highlight Singapore’s unique art history and narrative. Our institutions will continue to spearhead efforts to write, record and preserve our art historical narrative, to reinforce our identity and values, and share these globally.
Summary

27. The VA sectoral plan will lead Singapore’s drive to be positioned as a visual arts destination that has a vibrant art scene and market, one that is internationally recognised as a thought leader in Southeast Asian modern and contemporary art. Singaporeans and visitors alike, will have ample opportunities to experience and be inspired by the visual arts in spaces where they work and live, produced by artists and shaped by art professionals who are supported to create quality art that engages and grow new audiences.

28. In summary, efforts to develop the visual arts sector will go towards: (a) equipping our art institutions and companies to develop manpower capabilities for the sector; (b) encourage programming that increase public’s access to impactful art experiences; and (c) create meaningful opportunities to share our art and artists to international audiences.
Capability Development

1. With the Arts and Culture Strategic Review (ACSR) Capability Development Fund, NAC expanded the scope of capability development initiatives which had, up to 2011, largely comprised scholarships and bursaries, training grants, music competitions and recognition platforms including the Cultural Medallion and Young Artist Awards. Up till then, previous efforts in developing capabilities had also focused on ‘practice-based areas’, i.e. artists and content creators (e.g. performers, directors).

2. New initiatives supported under ACSR sought to create momentum in building up non-practice-based skills (i.e. ‘supporting skills’), especially in areas where there were critical gaps (e.g. arts management, technical production, arts education, curatorship). Both practice-based and non-practice based skills were necessary in enabling the value chain of cultural content, from content creation, production, through to distribution and consumption, to ensure a thriving arts ecosystem.

3. The Pre-Employment Training (PET) landscape then had the majority of training being offered at diploma level (by the arts colleges - LASALLE and NAFA - and three polytechnics) with few degree options offered in scattered schools in autonomous universities - National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technological University. NAC worked to grow the number of Continuing Education and Training (CET) programmes and providers, in partnership with education institutions and arts organisations locally and overseas.

4. This was critical as Singapore’s arts and culture scene developed, to ensure that there were opportunities for arts professionals to upskill and be equipped to move into related roles within the arts sector, or for others with valuable skills in other sectors to join the arts sector. In addition, funding support was reviewed to ensure different ways of learning initiated by arts professionals and potential new entrants can be supported. The new Capability Development Grant launched in 2012 as part of the new grants framework, supports mentorship, apprenticeships and internships.

5. With ACSR support, the capability development work of NAC grew to also include organisation capability development, leadership development for emerging and mid-career leaders, and manpower related research. Overall, with ACSR support, there were 40 new CET programmes, attended by 10,000 persons.

Current State of the Arts Workforce, Education & Training Landscape for the Arts

6. Since 2012, there are now more opportunities for education and training in the arts at both PET and CET levels locally (e.g. new undergraduate programmes in arts education by Singapore University of Social Sciences - SUSS, new Masters in Museum Studies and Curatorial Practices by NTU). With proactive facilitation from NAC and partnerships with international organisations, arts professionals can look forward to a myriad of opportunities for overseas exposure and exchanges in both practice-based and non-practice-based areas (e.g. creative producing, leadership development, arts education, teaching artistry). Arts workers today are also a lot more aware and interested in undergoing training.

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6 NAC piloted several leadership development programmes such as Lead the Way (with British Council), International Society for Performing Arts (ISPA) Fellowship and the NAC Cultural Fellowship (with Lasalle College of the Arts).
7 ACES 2016 showed that 80% of the respondents intending to pursue training in the next 12 months, by attending workshops, short courses, conferences, seminars or masterclasses
7. There is now a better understanding of the employment conditions in the arts through the Arts and Culture Employment Study (ACES), allowing for more proactive interventions by government, arts companies and arts workers themselves. ACES 2016 estimated that 47% of those working in the arts are freelancers and this mode of work does present some challenges. While freelancing has been understood to be prevalent in the arts in Singapore and internationally, in 2017, a tripartite workgroup comprising members from the Ministry of Manpower, National Trades Union Congress and the Singapore National Employers Federation was formed to look into the needs of self-employed persons (SEPs) in light of the growth of the gig or freelance economy across various sectors. There is now opportunity for the arts to ride on such a national movement to improve the employment conditions and retirement adequacy for arts workers.

Strengths
8. The arts workforce comprises highly educated people who are very passionate about contributing positively to society. We have a strong pool of artists, many of whom have international clout, as well as well-established/ regarded cultural institutions. Additionally, there is a base of Institutes of Higher Learning (IHL) and training providers that provide training for a range of skills at both pre-employment and continuing education levels.

Weaknesses
9. The skillsets required for a thriving arts ecosystem are diverse and wide-ranging. However, the diversity of the sector (across art forms and occupational groups) in a comparatively small sector of approximately 20,425 people working in about 110 different occupations, existing in a small market, does pose significant challenges on the sustainability of PET and CET programmes. Therefore, opportunities for training across different areas can be uneven. In addition, while there are more training opportunities, the development pathway for some areas remain unclear and would pose challenges to the attraction, retention and development of talent.

10. In addition, with nearly half the sector comprising freelancers, there is a need to better equip and support them in sustaining a career in the gig economy, and to improve working conditions. Furthermore, the paucity of research on arts manpower poses challenges for policy or programme interventions.

Opportunities
11. There is room for closer collaboration and partnership with the various training institutions and relevant government bodies. Furthermore, with the growing acceptance of freelancing as a legitimate mode of work, the arts sector can ride on the various initiatives launched at the national level and arising from the recommendations of the Tripartite Workgroup to develop more

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8 An earlier study by Lily Kong in 2007 indicated a much higher percentage (66%) of those working the arts were freelancers.
9 The workgroup released its recommendation report in Feb 2018.
10 The arts can be broadly categorised into literary, performing and visual arts. However, within each art form, there are genres and sub-genres that can have very different characteristics and needs. This is compounded by Singapore’s multicultural and multilingual make-up.
11 Broadly, ACES classifies occupational groups into the following six categories: (i) creative and performance; (ii) arts education / community arts; (iii) arts business, management administration; (iv) arts production and technical support; (v) equipment and service providers; (vi) arts research, documentation and writing.
12 This figure includes total employment for the Literary, Performing and Visual Arts only. (Source: Singapore Cultural Statistics 2017).
13 Based on NAC’s scan of the occupations within the arts sector and does not account for specialisations within each occupation.
14 The 4 common challenges are: payment related disputes, loss of income due to prolonged illness or injury, lack of CPF savings for healthcare and retirement, and lack of occupation specific competency framework.
opportunities and platforms for arts professionals. In addition, as NAC’s efforts to develop future leaders gradually gain traction, there is opportunity to work towards positioning Singapore as a thought leader in the region.

**Threats**

12. Our society continues to face declining birth rates. Possible implications include falling enrolment that could result in the discontinuation of training programmes, and therefore lesser training opportunities. In addition, the advancement of technology is causing disruptions to industries and jobs all over the world.

13. A lack of empirical evidence and understanding of the value of an education in the arts would limit the potential contribution of the arts and arts graduates to the arts sector and other sectors by way of: transferable skillsets to sectors such as tourism, design and media; as well as individuals with a disposition and mind-set necessary to cope in an increasingly complex and volatile world, and having empathy and the ability to manage and collaborate with people with diverse perspectives.

**Envisioned State of the Arts Workforce, Education & Training Landscape**

14. The ACSR phase has helped to enable a more holistic framework for growing capabilities in the arts sector, and NAC will continue to build on these four areas: (i) manpower development; (ii) organisation development; (iii) leadership development; and (iv) research. In the longer term, NAC envisions that the arts landscape is characterised by innovative and self-reliant individuals, and enterprising organisations that are resilient and resourceful in identifying and maximising growth opportunities in any situation.

15. By 2022, NAC envisions that the arts sector grows in its ability to attract, retain and develop individuals who can contribute to Singapore’s arts and culture development while enabling them to sustain and grow meaningful careers. As the global environment and Singapore society changes, arts workers will be able to respond swiftly to these changes and new opportunities through upskilling and exposure. NAC hopes to ensure that there is a base of strong arts organisations that have good management and governance capabilities, are financially sound and have good employment practices. Singapore has a pioneering batch of arts professionals and organisations that are established and some have gained headway in regional and international markets.

16. To continue to chart the way forward for the arts sector, there needs to be a pipeline of talents who can champion artistic development and lead organisations. A robust body of research and empirical data will undergird NAC’s work to deepen understanding of arts manpower, inform policies on curriculum and training, and overtime, position Singapore as a thought leader in the region. Importantly, such research will also enable NAC to advocate for the value of an education in the arts, including the value-add to other sectors and domains, which could be due to transferable skillsets that they bring, and attributes to deal with an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world.

**Strategic Directions**

17. In support of NAC’s strategic thrusts and the desired outcomes above, there will be focus on:

   a. Establishing a better support framework for arts freelancers to improve employment conditions through initiatives such as the Freelancers Resource Centre (working title) so that these individuals will be able to grow meaningful careers and continue to contribute to Singapore’s arts and culture development;
b. Facilitating closer coordination and collaboration across PET and CET providers to:
   i. Ensure industry’s needs for talent and skillsets are met without duplication of resources
   ii. Build necessary skillsets that enable arts workers to sustain careers (e.g. financial and career planning, fundraising) and tap on new opportunities (e.g. digital technology, engagement and facilitation skills)
   iii. Articulate development pathways and skills frameworks for priority areas;

c. Growing arts organisations which have strong management and governance capabilities, are financially sound and have good hiring practices

d. Identify opportunities for emerging leaders who can inspire their peers and galvanise the scene, to further their practice, grow in their international networks and exposure, and contribution to the larger Singapore arts and culture sector.

e. Develop a robust body of research in areas such as employment conditions, career outcomes and contributions of arts graduates, and sizing of priority sectors (e.g. artist-educators and arts instructors).

Summary

18. In summary, NAC’s capability development efforts will go towards: (a) establishing a better support framework for arts freelancers; (b) facilitating closer coordination and collaboration across PET and CET providers to address industry’s skill-needs across both practice and non-practice based areas; (c) growing arts organisations which are well managed and financially sustainable; (d) leadership development, and (e) building robust research on arts manpower.
Community Engagement

1. The following outlines NAC’s Community Engagement Plan from 2018-2022 in connecting communities with shared experiences, in and through the arts, as part of the overall mission of making the arts an integral part of Singaporeans’ lives. The Plan will harness the social values of the arts to bridge Singapore’s diverse communities, strengthen social networks and foster positive relationships.

2. Under the Renaissance City Plans in the 2000s, NAC’s arts outreach took a broad-based approach in bringing the arts to the community. Priority was given to strengthen arts education in mainstream schools and community outreach programmes. For instance, District Arts Festivals were established island-wide, through partnerships with People’s Association (PA) and the Community Development Councils (CDC).

3. With changing social context, NAC reconsidered its broad-based approach to community outreach in the final phase of RCP. RCP III saw a shift away from “one size fits all” approach, and saw the early developments of demographic-specific strategies such as a Silver Arts Programme for seniors, and Youth Engagement through the Arts (YEA!) Programme.

4. With the formalising of the Arts & Culture Strategic Review (ACSR) in 2012, community engagement was one of the pillars in demonstrating the social value of the arts in raising the quality of life of Singaporeans, and that arts as a social lubricant in forging a sense of cultural pride and identity. To this end, under ACSR’s Community Arts Engagement Plan, NAC as the champion agency, undertook the task of “bringing the arts and culture to everyone, everywhere, everyday”, with 5 key strategies:
   a. Empowering individuals for a culture of active arts participation in the community
   b. Seeding key community nodes, spaces and multipliers
   c. Deepening engagement and creating new demand for the arts as a lifestyle
   d. Integrating the arts in the social sector
   e. Building capacity of practitioners in community arts

Current State of Community Arts Engagement

2012 – 2017: Five Years of ACSR Implementation

5. In the five years since the initiation of ACSR, NAC has encouraged arts engagement and participation through the strategies outlined above, and laid strong foundation in two key ways: (i) by geographical spread and (ii) by demographic reach. These efforts have allowed opportunities for communities such as families and children, youths, and seniors – including the underserved communities within these demographic groups to have shared experiences in the arts through sustained activities and events with mass outreach, and encouraged a shift from passive attendance to active participation in the arts, with the more targeted approaches.

6. Since 2012, NAC has worked alongside like-minded partners such as People’s Association to lay strong foundations for establishing community arts as a practice, and in bringing the arts to wider

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1 Renaissance City Plan III, p. 6
2 NAC had taken into account findings from a MICA-commissioned study by Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) on “People, Private and Public Sectors” to increase Singaporeans’ exposure to arts and culture by bringing it to the heartlands, leveraging existing facilities within community, and consider a more inclusive approach by enhancing arts access for those from low-income families and persons with special needs.
3 National Arts Council RF Proposal: Championing Community Arts Engagement
communities. NAC also oversees the place-making efforts of the Civic District as Singapore’s premier cultural destination, working alongside key stakeholders including the Esplanade, National Gallery Singapore, Asian Civilisations Museum and The Arts House Limited, Urban Redevelopment Authority, and NParks. The outdoor space has seen more footfall through high-point events such as Light to Night Festival, Civic District Outdoor Festival, as well as regular arts and culture programming and precinct marketing year-round.

7. We observed the following:

a. **Increase in number of touchpoints to bring arts and culture to diverse communities**
   In 2017, NAC has established 16 arts and culture nodes across the island, increasing the number of arts programmes year-round, for Singaporeans to encounter the arts regularly. Together with neighbourhood-centric activities such as Arts in Your Neighbourhood (AYN), and targeted platforms such as Silver Arts for seniors and Noise Singapore for youths, the variety of offerings has increased and reached a steady state.

   Taking into consideration of the rapidly-ageing population, with 1 in 4 Singaporeans aged 65 and older by 2030 (up from 1 in 5 Singaporeans aged 65 and above in 2015)\(^4\), and riding the upward trend of youths attending and participating in the arts\(^5\), NAC will continue to take a targeted approach in reaching out to various demographic segments.

   In addition, the arts could also be harnessed as an inclusive social space in bringing diverse communities together, to facilitate improved mixing, and provide opportunities to strengthen social capital through fostering interactions across social divides.\(^6\)

b. **Increased mindshare on the social value of the arts, through advocacy efforts and cross-sector partnerships**
   NAC has established strong partnerships with a range of community partners, space owners and social service organisations. These partnerships have broadened NAC’s reach in bringing the arts to different people in different social settings, and have provided artists access to new spaces and communities. In addition, through NAC-initiated annual platforms such as the Arts in Eldercare Seminar and Arts & Disability Forum, more stakeholders from the arts and non-arts sectors have come on-board for greater synergy and to create new value for the arts. Through these platforms, NAC continues to build regional and international networks, profiling and exchanging good practices in community arts and engagement.

c. **Establish baseline studies to track future impact, and mount evidence-based research studies**
   In the past 5 years, NAC has embarked on various studies in community spaces to allow for future impact measurements on how the inclusion of arts in these spaces can shape communities and foster stronger networks. NAC completed the “Arts for Ageing Well”, a two-year research study exploring arts engagement and holistic wellbeing among current and future seniors in Singapore. These researches have informed NAC better in refining strategies and programmes, to be tailored for specific demographics.

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\(^4\) Based on National Council of Social Services’ Understanding the Quality of Life of Seniors (2017)

\(^5\) Based on NAC’s Population Survey on the Arts 2015, there was a 27% and 28% increase in arts attendance for those between the age 15-24 bracket and 25 to 34 bracket respectively, and a 20% and 15% increase in arts participation in those respective age brackets.

\(^6\) NAC had taken into account findings from an Institute of Policy Studies on “A Study on Social Capital in Singapore, supported by MCCY, that suggests that government agencies and community leaders can do more to create structure and programmes that encourage social mixing.
d. Establishing community arts as authentic artistic practice

There has been an increase in take-up amongst artists to work with communities. Beyond the annual NAC-led platforms, NAC has also supported ground-up organisations such as Superhero Me and ArtsWok Collective, whose core work is focused on using the arts to engage and co-create with communities, with organisational development grants. NAC’s Presentation & Participation Grant and the introduction of WeCare Arts Fund, has also enabled greater support for artists to work with communities, with the Fund supporting 90 artists across art-forms to engage with 170 centres within the social service sector.

However, community arts practice is still at a nascent stage and more Singaporean artists need to be engaged to see its full potential. There remains scope to develop the practice of facilitating creative expressions from within communities, and involving the community as co-creator and co-producer of programmes that forge a deeper sense of appreciation for the arts and the other.

e. Inclusive place-making with community arts, to build a distinct place identity.

The arts play a key role in articulating our sense of identity through space and time, and providing platforms for shared social experiences. With NAC’s network of Arts and Culture Nodes as well as regular platforms such as AYN that looks at the unique identity of each focus town area, there is scope for NAC to build capabilities of and work alongside community partners and volunteers within the locale to leverage arts programmes featured to inculcate a stronger sense of belonging and ownership to these spaces.

There is also untapped potential for programmes to strengthen the involvement of the underserved community as part of the mainstream. In galvanising resources within the community, shared experience could be created meaningfully and in a sustainable manner.

Envisioned State of Community Arts

8. By 2022, NAC envisions that:

a. The community arts sector will enable shared experiences among diverse communities that are inclusive and connected in and through the arts. With an increase in arts participation and greater inclusivity, there is deepened engagement with the arts as well as understanding across communities.

b. The community arts sector will also be a viable channel for artists to expand their practice beyond studios and mainstream performance venues; instead, working in and alongside communities will create new opportunities for their artistic development, and create employment or commission opportunities, as part of an artist’s portfolio career.

c. Singapore will be positioned as a thought leader in the region by establishing benchmarks and a robust body of research in community arts practices. Leveraging existing annual platforms, NAC will aggregate national and regional practices to demonstrate best practices in working with specific demographics, communities and spaces.

Strategic Directions

9. In order to achieve this envisioned state, NAC will focus on the following strategic thrusts to be implemented through new initiatives and enhancing existing schemes:
A. Develop capabilities of artists, intermediaries and community partners in engaging communities

10. NAC has embarked on several capability development initiatives for artists and community stakeholders in the past 5 years, including a learning journey for node partners to better understand quality arts programming, and basic workshops for artists such as “Introduction to the Social Service Sector”, in partnership with Social Service Institute, to equip artists with fundamental knowledge of how the social services operates. NAC will develop a capability development framework in consultation with practitioners, and provide developmental opportunities for artists at various stages of their practice. These could include various modalities such as mentorships and residencies that provide practicum, time and space for practitioners to advance their practice in the community arts field; modular workshops focused on skills for community engagement in the arts (e.g. facilitation, evaluation).

11. NAC will also cultivate community partners and stakeholders as intermediaries, and equip them to support and collaborate with the arts sector to deliver quality arts programmes independently. While the needs for the spectrum of community partners are diverse, NAC will prioritise two areas of development: (i) planning and organising relevant arts programmes with and for the identified community, and (ii) expanding art-form and sector knowledge. NAC will also support community partners in specific areas that will catalyse their independence and increase capacity to implement arts activities such as volunteer management, evaluation and networking. NAC will also develop resources for stakeholders in the community arts landscape, to enable an ecosystem of self-help and self-evaluation in the field of arts engagement.

B. Strengthen existing advocacy platforms by aggregating local and regional efforts in community arts engagement practices, and conduct research and evidence-based studies to document social impact of the arts

12. With the establishing of advocacy platforms such as the Arts in Eldercare Seminar and the Arts & Disability Forum, NAC has created a valuable space for community partners and artists to gather annually, network and exchange ideas. These platforms have played a critical role in increasing mindshare, witnessed by the year-on-year increase in attendance in niche areas of work within specific communities, e.g. seniors and persons with disabilities. In 2018, NAC partnered with Very Special Arts (Singapore) to co-organise the Arts & Disability International Conference, marking the first time NAC has partnered with a social service organisation and a reflection of ground ownership and commitment in this field of work. Moving forward, NAC will continue to strengthen these platforms, working with intermediaries, as well as identifying thought leaders and inspirational speakers locally and internationally, to profile evidence-based programmes and good practices in Singapore and beyond. In positioning and growing the role of these platforms to advance the conversations in Singapore and the region, the social value of the arts in bringing communities together, as well as the merit of community arts practice shall be elevated in and beyond Singapore.

C. Sustain efforts in activating spaces to increase touchpoints for communities to encounter the arts

13. NAC has established 16 nodes island-wide, in partnership with PA, NLB, SAFRA and corporate partners. In the years ahead, NAC hopes to grow a network of 22 nodes, which includes new neighbourhoods that reach out to diverse communities. This is above and beyond existing efforts in sustaining current nodes, and supporting them in creating distinct identities for each node space, and be more effective in implementing inclusive arts programmes to reach their communities.
14. NAC will look beyond neighbourhoods to identify gathering points for young people, and seek to establish youth-centric touchpoints and leverage spaces with natural appeal to youths, and activate these spaces through partnerships and programmes to broaden reach to a diverse group of youths.

D. **Design programmes to create relevant and accessible content to encourage more and inclusive participation in the arts that build a strong sense of belonging and identity to spaces and communities**

15. Building on the existing AYN initiative, NAC will strengthen the narrative and programming in the two seasons, to highlight the focus town areas more prominently, and commission artists and arts group to conceive of arts programmes that encourage a strong sense of belonging and attachment, leveraging the distinct characteristics of these spaces. With its focus on family-friendly and interactive programming, AYN must provide opportunities for diverse communities to gather and inter-mingle as audience, participants and volunteers of the arts. NAC will also look at strengthening partnerships with space owners, community partners and local ground partners such as town councils and resident committees, to better inform programming needs and seed greater ownership in the longer term.

16. NAC will strengthen partnerships with the social service and healthcare sectors, to innovate and implement arts programmes that resonate with the identified demographics, e.g. seniors in community care settings, persons with disabilities and vulnerable children and youth. Programmes for these under-reached communities will focus on wellness and fostering social connections, and complement broad-based engagement strategies, to ensure that communities of diverse backgrounds and abilities have access to the arts. These partnerships will be supported by research and documentation, to capture salient insights into programme design substantiated by evidence, and shared amongst peers in the social service sector to seed the multiplier effects.

**Summary**

17. The Community Engagement Plan leverages the value of the arts to connect our diverse communities, create vibrancy in shared capital and cultivate social capital. For the individual, the arts can enable creative expression that reflects our identity, improve sense of well-being and strengthen social connectivity. These plans will foster a more creative, inclusive and caring society.

18. The plans detailed will go towards: (a) developing capabilities of key players in the community arts landscape to better engage communities; (b) strengthening advocacy around community arts engagement practices through research and documentation, and profiling of local and regional efforts in this field; (c) sustaining existing efforts in activating more spaces as touchpoints for communities to encounter the arts; and (d) designing relevant, accessible and inclusive programmes that build a strong sense of belonging and identity to spaces and communities.
Education

1. The Pre-Tertiary Education Masterplan (2012) for arts and culture submitted under the Arts and Culture Strategic Review (ACSR) aimed to provide our young with opportunities for wider exposure to the arts through quality instruction in the core curriculum, co-curricular activities (CCAs) and enrichment programmes. These efforts complemented pre-existing initiatives (e.g. the longstanding NAC Arts Education Programme funded by Tote Board since 1993), heightening the role of the arts in education.

2. The following desired outcomes of arts education were articulated:
   a. By the time they complete secondary school, every child will have:
      i. Exposure to arts programmes across all five art forms (i.e. visual arts, literary arts, dance, theatre and music)
      ii. Attended a performance or exhibition in a professional arts venue
      iii. A learning experience in school with a Singapore artist or arts group
   b. To enable the delivery of quality arts education to every child:
      i. Every teaching artist and arts instructor will be trained not only in the art form but the basics of teaching and learning
      ii. Every arts educator (i.e. arts teacher in schools) will have the opportunity to collaborate with a Singapore artist, arts group or arts institution, to facilitate the exchange of ideas and practices across the education and arts sector
      iii. Every school will be committed to develop a holistic and integrated arts education programme

3. Early exposure to the arts has an impact on growing audiences, lifelong engagement in the arts, nurturing a pipeline of arts professionals and developing all-rounded individuals. While research on the impact of early exposure to the arts in the Singapore context is currently unavailable, broadly, the Population Survey in the Arts suggests that childhood engagement in the arts has a positive impact on people’s attendance, participation and interest levels in the arts.

4. In addition, the 2016 Arts and Culture Employment Survey also revealed that 92% of arts workers were involved in arts activities before starting work in the arts. 69% were involved in an arts-related co-curricular/extracurricular activity. Based on overseas research, it has been found that early exposure to the arts brings about social and emotional benefits that last for a long time.

5. With this background, the Education Plan (2018-2022) builds on the outcomes achieved during ACSR and responds to critical developments in the education and arts landscape as outlined below.

Current State of Arts Education

6. Since 2012, there has been a greater awareness of the importance of the arts, and the need to improve the quality of arts experiences for students in the formal mainstream curriculum. To ensure a coordinated approach, MOE conducted a re-organisation to bring all curricula and co-curricular units in the Visual and Performing Art forms (Art, Music, Theatre, Dance) under the ambit of the Arts

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1 The 2015 Population Survey in the Arts revealed that those who took part in arts and cultural activities during their childhood had a higher level of attendance (80% vs 72%), participation (32% vs 19%) and interest (44% vs 32%) in the arts than those who did not.
Education Branch in 2011. Further, to support the professional development of Visual Art and Music teachers, the MOE-Singapore Teachers Academy for the Arts (MOE-STAR) was set-up in 2012 to support quality Art and Music instruction in the formal curriculum. In 2017, the Programme for Active Learning (PAL) was fully rolled out to all Primary Schools and the revised Visual Art syllabus was launched. Work in the Special Education (SPED) and preschool sectors has been gaining traction, and there has been increasing interest in how the arts can provide positive inclusive experiences, and enhance students’ skills.

**Strengths**

7. Overall, there has been an increase in the supply of arts education programmes and NAC support provided to preschools, SPED and mainstream schools. This included providing greater opportunities for partnerships with Singapore artists, and enabling students to have deeper engagement in and through the arts. NAC has also grown efforts to ensure quality of instruction through a range of tiered professional development initiatives for artists and arts instructors in partnership with key institutions. To date, ~85% of the artists in NAC’s database, have attained basic pedagogical qualifications through these courses. Beyond the formal school curriculum, there has been growth in regular family programmes that cater to children, such as those by our key cultural institutions.

**Weaknesses**

8. There is limited local research on the impact of arts education and early exposure to the arts which would provide greater levers to in order to shape programmes, policies and influence curriculum and pedagogy developments. In relation to arts instructors and teaching artists, there is currently no clearly structured framework that articulates a professional development pathway. In addition, there is currently a shortage of specially trained artists to address the needs of the preschool and SPED sectors, as well as a limited pool of master teaching artists able to provide leadership and mentorship for the broader sector, or engage in research and develop signature pedagogies. Further, teaching artists and arts instructors need to develop deeper knowledge and skills to design and implement programme and curriculum to achieve arts educational goals and outcomes for in-school and out-of-school context.

**Opportunities**

9. With the increased attention on the preschool sector, there is scope to provide increased early exposure to the arts by working with key partners. There is, however, an immediate need to train artists and preschool educators in the arts for early childhood to support this growth. Similarly, efforts

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2 Previously, Theatre Studies and Drama resided with the English Language and Literature Branch, while the Visual and Performing Arts CCAs were under the CCA Office. Both are now overseen by the Arts Education Branch. Note: Literature still remains under the English Language and Literature Branch.

3 The Programme for Active Learning (PAL) was a recommendation by the 2009 Primary Education Review Implementation (PERI) Committee to provide greater emphasis on non-academic programmes for all Primary 1 and 2 students. PAL is part of the curriculum and offered during time-tabled time. In PAL, students are exposed to varied learning experiences in four domains: Sports & Games, Outdoor Education, Performing Arts and Visual Arts. Students also learn socio-emotional competences in line with the 21st Century Competencies (21CC) Framework.

4 Examples include: NIE International (for the Essentials of Teaching and Learning and a Specialist Diploma in Arts Education), Seed Institute (for the Teaching the Arts in the Early Childhood Environment programme) and Social Service Institute (SSI) (for the Facilitating Arts Based Learning for Children with Special Needs programme).

5 ~1200 of the ~1400 artists (across mainstream, SPED and preschool) in the NAC database have been trained.

6 Examples include the National Heritage Board’s Children’s Season, National Gallery Singapore’s Children’s Festival, Singapore Art Museum’s Imaginarium, and PLAYtime! and Octoburst!, presented by the Esplanade. With The Artground (an initiative and space set up in partnership with NAC), there are now more platforms to incubate works for young audiences.

7 The Early Childhood Development Agency was formed in 2013, and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong announced at the 2017 National Day Rally that 40,000 new preschool places would be added by 2022, and a new National Institute of Early Childhood Development (NIEC) would be set up.
in the SPED schools have been growing\(^8\) and there are opportunities to support platforms that encourage greater inclusivity so that more can benefit from the arts. In addition, there is scope to integrate the arts into a variety of learning areas\(^9\) and for NAC to strengthen collaborations with schools keen to grow their arts programmes through the Applied Learning Programme (ALP) and Learning for Life Programme (LLP).

**Threats**

10. A couple of factors may impact the arts education ecosystem. The declining birth rate has resulted in the merger of some schools and smaller student populations in schools could result in insufficient resources to support arts education programmes. In addition, our schools are faced with increasingly crowded time-tables with many competing demands which could result in the arts being given less priority.

**Envisioned State and Outcomes of Arts Education**

11. Arts exposure at an early age continues to be important to achieve many outcomes. Equitable access to well-designed and facilitated arts education experiences, supports the holistic development of the child, seeds the development of future audiences while increasing the social commons. At the same time, an education in and through the arts helps students appreciate other cultures and develop Singapore pride.

12. By 2022, the NAC envisions that the arts education sector will be a professional sector, with a sustainable base of artist-educators who have attained minimum qualifications in both their art form practice as well as pedagogy. There will also be a pool of master teaching artists who will be able provide leadership in the area of arts education through engaging in research and providing mentorship and training. In addition, our Cultural institutions, National Companies and Major Companies will dedicate resources to providing engaging educational experiences in support of audience development. To complement these efforts, arts educators within the formal school system will also have the avenues to deepen their practice in the art form.

13. NAC also hopes to position Singapore as thought leader in the region by developing a robust body of research in arts education. We will work with partners to explore the impact of early exposure to the arts as well as signature pedagogies for an arts-enhanced education in order to influence future programmes.

14. Finally, to support the holistic development of the child while fostering an appreciation of other cultures and developing Singapore pride, every child and school will have access to quality content and an experience with a Singapore artist/arts group.

15. In order to achieve the vision for Arts Education and in support of our strategic priorities, there will be a focus on the following areas:

   A. Developing a professional sector to support quality instruction in and through the arts;
   B. Growing thought leadership;
   C. Seeking strategic intervention at the policy and curriculum level to increase access to quality experiences in and through the arts;

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\(^8\) For example, in 2018, SPED schools have been invited to participate in the Singapore Youth Festival (SYF) together with mainstream schools.

\(^9\) From 2013-2017, NAC piloted the Teaching through the Arts Programme (TTAP), working with primary school math and science teachers to use the arts as a pedagogical tool. The pilot phase has provided some insights on how such pedagogies could be further developed.
A. Developing a professional sector to support quality instruction in and through the arts

16. NAC is keen to develop a more structured plan for professionalising the arts education sector (comprising teaching artists, arts instructors and arts educators who work across different contexts and domains), which may include a skills or competency framework and articulation of a professional development pathway. This will entail scoping and sizing the sector, as well as conducting research on skills and development needs. Concurrently, NAC hopes to continue working with partners both local and international to provide training opportunities and to also address the needs of specific areas, such as in the preschool and SPED sectors. There is also a need to develop facilitation and audience engagement skills of artists (an example is the concept of Teaching Artistry\(^\text{\textsuperscript{11}}\)) and their and ability to work in different contexts (both in schools and outside of schools), for example, designing and implementing programmes and documenting the successful engagement approaches to support the desired outcomes of audience development.

17. Finally, efforts to support quality arts instruction must continue to include support for arts educators within schools to deepen their own creative practices. NAC hopes to strengthen existing collaborations with MOE and work with new partners such as the newly formed NIEC to support the professional development of preschool teachers in the arts through Pre-Employment Training (PET) and Continuing Education and Training (CET) efforts respectively.

B. Growing thought leadership

18. NAC hopes to embark on a range of research and documentation projects with partners to understand more deeply, in the local context, the impact of early experiences in the arts on children, and document the pedagogies of an aesthetic education\(^\text{\textsuperscript{12}}\). To augment this effort, NAC will to convene a roundtable for arts education that could include MOE, education institutions such as School of the Arts (SOTA), the education arms of key cultural institutions and master teaching artists to support future advocacy efforts for the arts, develop signature pedagogies, conduct research, and pave the way for becoming thought leaders in arts pedagogy, both locally and internationally. The roundtable could also contribute or lead in the development of the professional development plan.

C. Seeking strategic intervention at the policy/curriculum level to increase access to quality experiences in and through the arts

19. NAC will continue to work closely with MOE to augment the opportunities available for students to engage with the arts as part of their studies, co-curricular activities and enrichment programmes, especially to develop interest in the traditional arts from a young age. NAC hopes for a more holistic and aligned approach to providing all students with access to quality experiences in and through the arts. NAC and MOE are already collaborating with key cultural institutions, to provide schools the

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\(^{10}\) Schools that have a holistic and integrated approach to incorporating the arts across curricular/co-curricular domains, and may offer distinctive arts programmes that deepen student engagement in and through the arts.

\(^{11}\) According to a definition from USA-based Dr. Eric Booth (eminent teaching artist, scholar, actor), a Teaching Artist is a practicing professional artist with the complementary skills, curiosities, and habits of mind of an educator, who can effectively engage a wide range of people in learning experiences in, through and about the arts. See [http://ericbooth.net/the-history-of-teaching-artistry/](http://ericbooth.net/the-history-of-teaching-artistry/)

\(^{12}\) The term ‘aesthetic education’ is borrowed from the late Maxine Greene, eminent philosopher at Teachers College, Columbia University, who espoused that aesthetic literacy (developing the capacity to perceive and attend) and robust imagining are keys to the flourishing of learning and democracy.
opportunity to participate in specially designed programmes at museums and performing arts centres that offer students authentic experiences linked to their school curriculum.

20. We will also continue our work with MOE to incorporate the arts into learning areas that extend the main arts curricula, looking especially at Character and Citizenship Education and deeper learning about our multi-cultural heritage. We will also explore how the arts can be further used to better enhance the school experience for students with disabilities.

21. In addition, NAC hopes to work closely with MOE on arts programming for key arts education platforms such as Singapore Youth Festival and the biennial Arts Education Conference to increase the reach of Singapore arts content and artists. NAC will support the development of digital content and approaches for the teaching and learning of Singapore content that can be made available on MOE’s online platforms such as the Student Learning Space to build greater awareness of Singapore artists.

D. Deepening engagement with schools and nurturing distinctive schools in the arts

22. While there is a good range of schemes from NAC that support arts programmes in schools today, the programmes are largely ad-hoc and may not be part of a longer term vision for how the arts can play a more integral role in schools. NAC will deepen engagement by brokering strong and sustained artist-school partnerships. In line with this endeavour we hope to provide customised support to schools that have indicated a niche area in the arts, and nurture these as distinctive schools in the mainstream, special education and early childhood sectors that can serve as beacons and role-models for others. NAC envisions that these distinctive schools are characterised by a holistic and integrated approach to incorporating the arts across curricular/co-curricular domains, or offer distinctive arts programmes that deepen student engagement in and through the arts.

E. Supporting positive first experiences in the early childhood sector

23. Working with partners in the early childhood sector, NAC hopes to develop teaching resources to complement the Nurturing Early Learners (NEL) Framework, share best practices of integrating the arts into early childhood learning with preschools through online resources, Communities of Practices, and learning journeys; look into facilitating the exchange of ideas and practices between preschool teachers and artists; as well as the training and development of artists who wish to conduct programmes in the early childhood sector.

Summary

24. In summary, the Education Plan will focus on (a) developing a professional sector to improve the quality of instruction; (b) building a robust body of research in the area of arts education, with a long-term view to position Singapore as a thought leader in the region; (c) strategic intervention at the systems/policy level to increase access to quality arts experiences; (d) deepening engagement by nurturing distinctive schools in the arts through sustained artist-school partnerships; and (e) working with key partners in the early childhood sector to expand the reach of best practices in the arts.
Research

1. Research studies are designed to provide robust empirical evidence on Singapore’s arts and cultural landscape for sectoral policy and programme development. In order to foster the use of these findings, the Research unit also contributes to building research and data analytics capabilities for the Council and the arts and culture sector.

Analysis of Current State

Strengths

2. As a leader in the area of cultural research, NAC seeks to ensure empirical evidence undergirds the development of policies and strategies. In this regard, industry data from, among others, ticketing agents and performing arts centres are regularly compiled to glean insights. Existing regular studies including the Population Survey on the Arts, Singapore Cultural Statistics and the Arts and Culture Employment Study enable NAC to quantify the impact the arts have on the life of Singaporeans and the state of the industry.

Weaknesses

3. Assessment of a sector’s health and outlook hinges on the availability of data. While there are some data series on the arts and cultural sector, the scope of these may cover companies which have little to do with the arts sector; and due to the small size of this sector, insights may not be as useful to the industry and art form champions. In addition, the effective application of research findings requires stronger capabilities in data analytics and data visualisation among the arts community and policy officers, and there could be more synergies between the academic and arts communities.

Opportunities

4. There are opportunities for NAC to collaborate with national CLGs and orchestras – The Esplanade Company Limited (TECL), Arts House Limited (AHL), the Singapore Symphonia Company Limited (SSCL) and the Singapore Chinese Orchestra (SCO) – to undertake audience research. Outside the arts and culture landscape, NAC will deepen existing collaborations with universities and other research institutions to elevate the status of the arts in the research community. The evolution of society driven by technology is another impetus for NAC to understand the role, impact and new forms of making and consuming art.

Threats

5. Juxtaposed against quickly evolving consumption habits and trends, the time lag between the start of research studies and the production of findings may affect the relevance of insights as well as NAC’s response to these industry changes.

Envisioned State and Outcomes of Arts Research

6. By 2022, NAC envisions a research landscape that produces robust evidence to inform policy making and demonstrate the impact of the arts. Research interests will be furthered by public-private partnerships that feed into a larger research network for the sharing of data and insights. Arts research will expand from quantitative data collection to new areas comprising qualitative and behavioural studies, to better understand art-form-specific developments and programme impact. The arts sector will have adequate statistical knowledge to appreciate and interpret data as well as to conduct their own research projects. Links between academics and practitioners, as well as between NAC and its sister public agencies, will be strengthened towards producing research that is relevant to the cultural sector as well as across Government.
7. In order to grow the quantity, quality and relevance of research, the following policy shifts will be made:

*Working Closer with Industry Partners to Drive a National Arts Research Agenda*

8. To strengthen the research ecosystem for arts and culture, NAC will work more closely with the national CLGs and universities on research projects in areas pertinent to the needs of the wider sector. NAC will also take the lead in commissioning sector-wide academia-practitioner research projects to tap the specific expertise (e.g. documentation) of academics and experience of arts groups.

*Strengthening Capabilities and Collaborations Within the Arts Research Ecosystem*

9. Enlarging the body of arts and cultural research will require NAC to cultivate deeper interest in research among academics and practitioners, as well as foster collaboration between them. NAC will thus build on the research symposium that it started in 2017 primarily for arts researchers, and expand this to include more practitioners so that both communities can network, nudge the community to respond with research projects and raise awareness of new methods of studying arts and culture. NAC will also reach out to academics who list arts and culture research (and adjacent areas such as the creative industries) among their research areas, to publicise their relevant work and expertise.

*Translating Research to Digestible and Actionable Items*

10. As part of engaging the wider arts community and advocating arts and culture, producing reports, infographics and dashboards that are layman-friendly would help the industry understand and apply research findings. Information from studies and surveys by NAC, the CLGs and cultural institutions could also be discussed at regular research seminars. In moving towards more data-driven approaches for the sector, NAC will customise available studies for different cultural stakeholders, and tap on focused platforms which allow researchers/academics and artists/arts groups to network and share ideas, so that research output can be translated into programmes and policies.

11. In terms of research topics, the following considerations were used to identify priority areas for inquiry, informing NAC’s work in our strategic thrusts:

a. Measuring the Impact of the arts  
b. Understanding the quantity and quality of arts Activities  
c. Ascertaining the adequacy of infrastructural, human and organisational Assets needed to drive or facilitate arts activities

**Strategic Thrust 1: Inspire Our People**

12. In articulating the impact of the arts on the lives of Singaporeans, NAC will expand on existing ways of articulating the value of the arts through new measurements of artistic excellence and success. These could include artform-specific attributes of excellence, alternative KPIs for funding, studies on the effectiveness of signature pedagogical methods, as well as indicators on the impact and value of arts exposure.

13. Sectoral plans to develop a body of distinctive content that resonates with Singaporeans requires identifying Singapore content to be documented and archived. Practice-based research is thus needed to inform our understanding and recognition of a Singapore voice in the arts. In a
crowded international market of arts and culture offerings, it is essential for Singapore to articulate our individuality in a contemporary way that is rooted in Singapore’s multiculturalism and diversity as a value proposition to local and international audiences. For relevance to the wider sector, research into these areas should be informed by academic and practice-based perspectives. Documentation and archival are critical to taking stock of our content, and considerations for how we optimise digital platforms and catalogue selection will become increasingly important. Research will also inform how technology can be leveraged for art-making.

14. Quality arts manpower and physical infrastructure are key drivers of arts making and consuming. Research will build on the Arts and Culture Employment Study to help NAC understand the labour supply side of the sector, capability gaps as well as the future needs and gaps of the arts ecosystem. This will support NAC’s Capability Development Plan for the training of future and current arts workers, especially in developing the skills required for future challenges, as well as ensuring the financial sustainability of key arts organisations, businesses and overall industry.

15. NAC will work with sister agencies such as NHB, museums and National Gallery Singapore to understand the role and effectiveness of place-making. Findings will inform NAC’s infrastructure and*urban planning for housing artists and the geographical spread of arts activities.

**Strategic Thrust 2: Connect Our Communities**

16. Making the supply of Singapore arts and culture attractive to audiences in general requires us to develop strategies to reach out to new audiences guided by data on audience segments’ evolving needs and tastes by offering innovative and resonant arts and culture offerings. There is potential to harness the energies of the arts community for practitioner research on art-making, audience development approaches and the documentation of Singapore content that leverage technology or emerging forms.

17. New data sources such as big data and in-depth qualitative studies to understand new consumption patterns and drivers will provide deeper understanding of high potential audience segments within specific artforms. Increasingly, engagement strategies for the arts need to consider new research questions such as how digital modalities for arts engagement complement the live experience, as well as volunteerism in the arts. Findings from these new research areas are key for NAC’s Capability Development Plan for arts organisations and workers, as well as NAC’s Community Engagement Plan, which calls for research on how the arts sector can better tap on volunteers as another resource to supplement the manpower needs of the sector and to groom new advocates and supporters of the arts.

18. To better articulate the impact of the arts on various aspects of public and private life, the role of the arts in community bonding will be better understood through studies on the impact of arts activities on identity, social trust, integration of disadvantaged segments and other whole-of-government outcomes. At the individual level, studies on how artists and different audience segments have been impacted (e.g. aesthetic gains, well-being and personal fulfilment, increased creative capacity) will inform strategies for arts advocacy.

**Strategic Thrust 3: Position Singapore Globally**

19. On the journey of articulating our cultural identity, research that undergirds our recognition of a Singapore voice and identity in the arts needs to continue. Distinctive areas that have been identified include intercultural practices – understanding the state of and development of vernacular forms and its role in social integration – and development of signature pedagogies, can raise
Singapore’s prominence in the education and arts landscapes. In developing distinctive content that positions Singapore globally, new research into the international reputation of Singapore and Singapore arts and metrics for international benchmarking of artistic excellence will inform our internationalisation approaches, such as on the type of content to push out and the strategic messages behind each pitch. Understanding the role that the arts plays in the lives of cities will inform the value proposition of the arts on liveability, a common currency to measure a city’s global standing and vibrancy. For this, research on metrics for international benchmarking of liveability will be required.

20. Singapore’s unique geographical position presents opportunities for us to work more closely with our neighbours on cultural exchanges as part of relationship-building. This will require research to understand Singapore’s cultural role in South-East Asia.

Summary

21. Effective policy-making and programme development hinges on timely and insightful analysis of data. To this end, the Research plan will (a) drive more evidence-based policies and programme evaluation, (b) broaden the circle of academics and practitioners interested in arts research, and (c) cultivate a data- and research-savvy arts community. These will reinforce the foundations of an arts community that is collaborative and confident of their role in inspiring and connecting Singaporeans, as well as placing Singapore on the international stage.
Key Data Trends

1. Government funding to the arts & heritage has increased with ACSR from 2013

![Bar chart showing government funding to the arts & heritage from FY11 to FY16.](chart.png)

- Cultural Matching Fund
- Operating and development expenditure for arts & heritage sector

2. Overall growth in NAC’s Supported Arts Spaces Gross Floor Area (GFA) is almost 5 times since 1985

![Line chart showing the growth in supported arts spaces GFA from 1985 to 2020.](chart2.png)

*Diversified Spaces includes spaces that are co-located either with government agencies (mainly PA) in civic centres or in commercial malls.*
3. Population Survey on the Arts* – Key Points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Singaporeans who had attended at least one arts event in the past year</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Singaporeans who had participated in at least one arts event in the past year</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Singaporeans who said they were interested in the arts</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 The arts improved the quality of life for everyone</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 The arts and culture are something that Singaporeans can be proud of</td>
<td>N.A.*</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 The local arts scene had become more vibrant over the last five years</td>
<td>N.A.*</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 The arts give us a better understanding of people of different backgrounds and culture</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Articulates who we are as a society and country</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data will be refreshed with 2017 figures once ready; *N.A.: new indicators tracked from 2013 onwards

4. Positive shifts from 2013 to 2015

[Diagram showing percentage changes from 2013 to 2015]

Top 2 boxes (rated “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” on a 5-point scale) are shown
*New statements in 2015