

Statement issued by the National Arts Council of South Africa

Date: 5 May 2020

NAC INVITES ARTS PROJECT APPLICATIONS THAT ENCOURAGE DIGITAL INNOVATION AMID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The National Arts Council (NAC) met last week to consider measures that would support the arts sector through the Covid-19 crisis and that would complement steps already taken by the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture and the government.

It is clear that the arts and culture sector of South Africa has been decimated by the impact of Covid-19 and by the emergency lockdown measures that were, out of necessity, put in place to stem the tide of infections. Sector activities such as live performances and on-site exhibitions were among the first to be cancelled; they are also likely to be among the last activities to come back on stream.

It is evident that the sector needs to rethink how it can function in this environment.

The Council's recommendations, which involve the reprioritisation of funds within the mandate of the NAC, make provision for two steps.

The first step is the provision of immediate emergency relief to support the livelihoods of currently funded individual artists who have received the first tranche of funding from the NAC and have been severely impacted by the loss of income from the cancellation of events and other activities. These beneficiaries will be contacted soon.

The NAC is cognisant of the tragedy that the pandemic has caused to the sector and will be working with partners to roll out a relief support. Announcements of these measures will be made in due course.

This effort will inject much-needed funds back into the arts and culture system so that artists and the organisations that support them can continue to survive.

National Arts Council

an Agency of the Department of Arts & Culture

The second step is to focus the 2020/21 project funding cycle on initiatives that stimulate the use of Information Technology and digital platforms to promote and deliver cultural products, create new paradigms for viewing and understanding the place of art during this time thus responding to lockdown conditions and restrictions.

To this end, the NAC invites artists and arts organisations to apply for funding for arts projects that, in the implementation thereof, will comply with Covid-19 restrictions.

This new project call supersedes and replaces the one that closed on 30 April 2020, and is part of the NAC's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Artists may remove, amend or resubmit their existing applications online before the 19 June 2020 deadline, or submit new applications.

Applicants have until Friday, 19 June 2020, to submit applications. Considering the urgency of the situation following the devastating effects of the Covid-19 restrictions and protocols, the NAC will start adjudicating applications as they are received. Announcement of the outcomes will be made on Tuesday, 30 June 2020.

Individuals and registered arts organisations are requested to propose projects that are aimed at educating and entertaining using Information Technology and digital innovation, with the focus being on creating, exhibiting and showcasing works in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The NAC encourages the arts community to respond with agility to new ways of developing, promoting, selling and creating art. This includes reimagining audience interaction with the arts, the creation of new paradigms for viewing and understanding the place of art during this time of the pandemic. The creation of advocacy opportunities to reposition the arts in the Covid-19 environment taking into cognisance restrictions from levels 5 to 2 will be an advantage.

Please see the new applications call for further information. Funding guidelines will be made available on the NAC's website, www.nac.org.za. Interested parties should email info@nac.org.za with queries. Online applications may be made at <https://nac.praxisgms.co.za/>.