SUSTAIN THE ARTS (stART) FUND OPEN CALL GUIDELINES

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

It is the first arts philanthropic fund launched and administered by NAC in 2021 to help arts organisations, which have limited resources to scale up and establish robust governance structures. It also aims to help small arts organisations create and present quality programmes that contribute to the vibrancy of Singapore's arts and culture ecosystem. Such programmes include those with community impact that enable more people to enjoy the arts, enhance the arts experience through digital technology, and encourage audiences to reflect on and celebrate Singapore's cultural identity. In addition, the stART Fund aims to catalyse giving and develop organisational capabilities of small arts organisations, ensuring that they are better equipped to sustain their practice for the long-term.

What does the stART Fund Support?
The stART Fund supports arts organisations which meet the following criteria:

- Registered with the Commissioner of Charities (COC), Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA) or the Registry of Societies (ROS); and
- Total Operating Expenditure (TOE) of less than $1 million.

Eligible art organisations can receive funding from the stART Fund through either one of the two tracks: **Organisation funding** or **Programme funding**

- For **organisation funding**, awarded arts organisations would receive funding from the stART Fund to help scale-up their organisations to attain a Charity and/or IPC status.
  - (*NEW*) Arts organisations registered under ACRA must be under non-profit Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG).
- For **programme funding**, arts organisations are encouraged to put in proposals under any of the stART major donors' support areas. [Refer to Table 1 on donors' interest areas]
  - Arts organisations with IPC status may apply if they meet the above criteria.
  - (*NEW*) Each arts organisation may submit a maximum of two proposals, with a cap of one project supported per organisation.

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

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

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

Table 1: Programme Track - Donors' Award

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

What is the level of funding support under stART Fund?

The quantum for each grant under the stART fund is estimated to be between $20,000 to $50,000 for each programme and/or organisation.

Each proposal should reflect:

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

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

What are the assessment criteria?

The application will be assessed in the following criteria:

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

50%	50%
Readiness and Capacity	Governance

Programme Track:

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

Who is not eligible to apply for stART Fund?

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

- Proposed project has already commenced prior to the time of approval and taking place before 1st August 2025.
- Does not have a clearly defined arts component, including projects primarily aimed at promoting religious causes;
- Is held at a religious venue;
- Is not intended for public consumption;
- Is intended for fundraising purposes;
- Is presented under the auspicious of a school or tertiary institution, or is part of its curriculum;
- Is intended specifically for academic purposes;
- Have pending/outstanding:
  - Evaluation reports on the use of previous grants from NAC;
  - Debts with NAC (you are eligible to apply once you have cleared your outstanding debts).

A note on Funding Guidelines
While we celebrate diversity of expression and open, balanced dialogue in the arts, as a statutory body disbursing funds in line with Government policies, NAC has to prioritise funding to proposals which do not:
- Advocate or lobby for lifestyles seen as objectionable by the general public;
- Denigrate or debase a person, group or class of individuals on the basis of race or religion, or serve to create conflict or misunderstanding in our multicultural and multi-religious society;
- Undermine the authority or legitimacy of the government and public institutions, or threaten the nation's security or stability.

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

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

Submission

How do I apply for the stART Fund?

(*NEW*) As of 2025 open call, all applications must be submitted online via Our Singapore Grants Portal (OSG). Applicants will need to provide the following information:

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

For guidance on using the OSG portal, please refer to the step-by-step guide available on the stART Fund website [insert link].

Notification

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

Open on	Apply by	Notified by	For projects taking place on or after
13 Jan 2025 (Mon)	7 Mar 2025 (Fri)	1 July 2025 (Tue)	1 August 2025

Please note that:
1. You can submit an application or your project at any point before the 'apply by' date indicated in tables above.
2. The project's start date refers to the date of the first event, performance, exhibition, album release, book publication, etc.
3. All applications have to be submitted by 1700hrs on the closing date. Late applications will not be accepted.

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

All applications will be rigorously assessed by NAC and you may be contacted via email if more information is required. Your application will either be assessed by an internal team or by a combination of internal and donor assessors. All proposals submitted to the Council will be treated in the strictest confidence.

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

NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL
SINGAPORE