

Grant Scheme for Music Hubs in the field of pop, hip hop and dance music: explanatory notes

Introduction

This grant scheme is for collaborative ventures that engage in talent development in pop, hip hop and dance music.

The Performing Arts Fund NL offers grants to collaborating parties to enable them to provide talents with opportunities for development and presentation. The activities typically consist of providing opportunities for personal research and development, facilitating performances, stimulating talents in their artistic development, and offering coaching with regard to business aspects.

The grant scheme focuses on pop, hip hop and dance music. The Fund wishes to support these different musical genres, each with their own talent development aspects. The collaborating parties focus on the specific needs of the talents they seek to support.

Partners can fulfil different roles in the collaboration. Music venues are likely to play a role in offering performance opportunities, while management agencies can assist in business coaching. The grant is furthermore intended to facilitate the collaboration between the partners, to stimulate knowledge sharing in the sector, and in that way to contribute to the professionalisation of the entire music sector.

The general aim of this grant scheme is to invest in durable partnerships that can support several generations of future performers.

The grant scheme is intended for talents throughout the Netherlands, including the Caribbean part of the Kingdom. The Fund has therefore chosen to allocate the budget per national region. The grant scheme stipulates that the grant sums available for the different national regions are allocated for a period of three years.

This grant scheme was established following State Secretary Gunay Uslu's instruction for additional investments in developing the talent of new music makers. The general aim is to stimulate talent development in the area of pop, hip hop and dance music and to create more opportunities for live performances. An annual budget of 1 million euros was made available for the period of 2023-2024. This budget has been raised to 2 million euros per year for the period from 2026 to 2028.

To implement the scheme's grant allocation for the period 2026-2028, the Fund has modified and supplemented the scheme in a number of respects. These are mainly technical changes, changes resulting from experiences with grant allocations in the period 2023-2024, and changes motivated by the general principle of transparency. The scheme was amended in March 2026 to also make the Caribbean part of the Kingdom eligible for grants from the available budget. Paragraph 4 contains the relevant new provisions in this regard. In this way, the scheme aims to allocate grants in a way that suits the musical infrastructure on the islands and that fulfils the purpose of the scheme. The provisions of this paragraph are explained further in a separate text section, under the heading 'Budget distribution in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom'. This text describes how to apply for the grant, who is eligible to apply, and how the grant is distributed.

Who can apply?

Applications should be submitted by one of the partners of the collaboration.

The grant can only be applied for if the applicant has legal personality and is not a profit-seeking legal person. Profit-seeking legal persons can however be part of the collaboration.

Eligibility for the grant is conditional on the application of and compliance with the Governance Code for Culture, the Fair Practice Code, and the Diversity and Inclusion Code. Applicants must declare that they apply these codes upon submitting their application. The application requires applicants to reflect on their role and on how they apply these codes in their policies and in the activities for which the grant is requested. This also pertains to how the applicant ensures fair remuneration for employees.

Parties already receiving a multiple-year production grant for the period 2025-2028 or a multiple-year festival grant for the period 2025-2028 from the Performing Arts Fund NL, or a multiple-year institutional grant from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, are not eligible for this grant. Such parties can however be part of the collaboration.

What can be applied for?

A grant can be applied for to support a collaborative venture engaging in talent development in the area of pop, hip hop or dance music. The grant is meant to support activities undertaken as part of the collaborative venture, hence not to support any one partner's own regular activities. The grant should benefit the performing artists as directly and as much as possible, or should serve to help cover the costs directly involved in enabling the performers' development.

The grant scheme is intended for upcoming talents with the ambition to eventually become a professional performer in the music sector, or for talents aiming to professionalise their practice. It is therefore possible for the collaborating parties to focus on talents in different stages of their development. The Fund also aims to take account of the different development paths that exist within pop, hip hop and dance music. The grant scheme is not intended for performing artists who are already far advanced in their development. This means, in any case, performers already having a successful national or international career. It is the partners' responsibility to select talents for the scheme according to a transparent selection procedure that is considerate of the talent's safety and position of dependency.

The activities for which the grant is requested must be aimed at stimulating talent development. Such activities typically include providing opportunities for personal research and development, facilitating performance opportunities, stimulating artistic development and offering coaching with regard to business aspects. Talent development can also involve behind-the-scenes activities, for instance in the area of production. It is up to the partnerships to elaborate this more concretely. Options are to facilitate development and research programmes, to award assignments, to offer residencies or development budgets, and so on.

Applications are assessed based on a plan and a budget.

The grant sum

Per applicant, the minimum amount awarded to support the partnership's activities is 100,000 euros per calendar year, and the maximum amount is 285,714 euros per calendar year.

The Board can decide to deviate from the awarded amount to the detriment of the recipient, if a strict implementation of the available sum were to clearly result in an unfair outcome. This could be the case if, considering the applicant's proposed programmes and output, the amount of the requested grant sum strongly deviates from other applicants.

The grant is primarily intended for the talents and to stimulate their development. For this reason, not more than 25% of the awarded grant sum may be spent on organisational and overhead costs.

Conditions to apply

Applications may only be submitted if the collaboration aims to support talent development in the area of pop, hip hop and dance music. A collaboration does not need to engage with all these genres but can concentrate on any one specific genre.

The collaboration must furthermore be a long-term commitment. This commitment must minimally extend to the end of the grant period. This must be demonstrated by means of an agreement signed by all collaboration partners.

The Performing Arts Fund NL finds it important to distribute the available money across the country as much as possible. The Fund also sees added value in collaborations that involve more than one province, giving performers the opportunity to build a network outside their own environment and to exchange with other performers. For that reason, a collaborative venture must minimally include one partner based in each

province making up the national region represented in the application. For example: an application submitted by a partnership representing South Netherlands (*landsdeel Zuid*) must minimally include an organisation based in Noord Brabant, an organisation based in Limburg, and an organisation based in Zeeland.

One of the partners must furthermore fulfil a presentation function. This means: a performance venue or a festival.

The Fund will stringently test whether an applicant fulfils these conditions. Any failure to fulfil the conditions will in principle result in a rejection.

Assessment criteria

To determine which applications best fulfil the Fund's objectives generally and this grant scheme in particular, all applications that meet the formal requirements will be assessed with respect to the following criteria:

- a) the quality of the intended collaboration;
- b) the development opportunities offered to talents;
- c) the durability of the collaboration;
- d) the budget and (co-) financing.

a. *The quality of the intended collaboration*

Assessing criterion a) means assessing the artistic and business qualities of the collaborating partners. Relevant questions include:

- What experience do the partners have with respect to talent development in pop, hip hop or dance music? What can the partners achieve additional to that, through their joint plan? How do the activities described in the application differ from each partner's own regular activities?
- Are the formulated goals and the different partners' experience appropriate to a collaboration aimed at talent development? Are these goals described clearly, do they fit with the partners, and are they realistic?
- What does the collaborative venture's selection procedure for talents look like, and how is this considerate of the talents' position of dependency?
- To what extent are the roles and tasks of the different partners in the collaboration and specifically in the development programmes clearly defined?

The assessments and corresponding scores are as follows:

<i>assessment</i>	<i>score</i>	<i>explanation</i>
Very good	4	There are no points of criticism
Good	3	Positive, almost no points of criticism
Ample sufficient	2	Positive, but with some points of criticism
Sufficient	1	Still positive, but with some strong points of criticism
Poor	-1	Inadequate; some positive elements, but the points of criticism are predominant
Insufficient	-2	There are (almost) no positive elements.

b. *The development opportunities offered to talents*

Criterion b) examines the development opportunities offered to the intended talents and their teams. How does the collaborative venture go about creating research and development opportunities, facilitating performances, and offering guidance in both artistic and business respects?

Relevant questions include:

- Does the plan clarify what type of performing artists the partnership aims to support? This can pertain to different stages in the talent's career, artistic principles, and/or the performer's target audience.
- Does the plan persuasively describe how the talents will be recruited and selected?
- Does the plan show a thorough understanding of the environment in which the talents work, and an awareness of their specific needs?
- How are the development programmes designed with a view to the talents' needs?
- To what extent are the proposed development programmes effective with respect to achieving the talents' ambitions and goals?

The assessments and corresponding scores are as follows:

<i>assessment</i>	<i>score</i>	<i>explanation</i>
Very good	4	There are no points of criticism
Good	3	Positive, almost no points of criticism
Amply sufficient	2	Positive, but with some points of criticism
Sufficient	1	Still positive, but with some strong points of criticism
Poor	-1	Inadequate; some positive elements, but the points of criticism are predominant
Insufficient	-2	There are (almost) no positive elements.

c. The durability of the collaboration

Criterion c) examines the potential durability of the collaboration between the partners.

Relevant questions include:

- Does the application make clear how the collaboration will be sustained in the longer term? And is this a realistic prospect?
- How do the parties ensure that the knowledge and experiences regarding talent development are shared both within and outside the collaborative venture?
- Does the application make clear how the activities within the collaborative venture will be monitored, and what quality assurance measures are in place? Is there a joint approach to mapping and monitoring the joint activities?

The assessments and corresponding scores are as follows:

<i>assessment</i>	<i>score</i>	<i>explanation</i>
Very good	4	There are no points of criticism
Good	3	Positive, almost no points of criticism
Amply sufficient	2	Positive, but with some points of criticism
Sufficient	1	Still positive, but with some strong points of criticism
Poor	-1	Inadequate; some positive elements, but the points of criticism are predominant
Insufficient	-2	There are (almost) no positive elements.

d. Budget and (co-)financing

Criterion d) pertains to the business aspects of the collaboration.

Relevant questions include:

- Is the budget clear and realistic with a view to financing the intended plans?
- Does the application persuasively break down the costs per performing artist in relation to the activities?
- Does the collaborative venture make clear how all the parties involved (performers and supervisors) are assured of fair and fitting pay?
- To what extent do local authorities (municipalities and/or provinces) contribute directly to the collaboration?
- To what extent do the collaborating partners draw on their own resources to contribute to the collaboration?
- To what extent do industry partners such as record companies and booking agencies contribute to the collaboration?

The assessments and corresponding scores are as follows:

<i>assessment</i>	<i>score</i>	<i>explanation</i>
Very good	4	There are no points of criticism
Good	3	Positive, almost no points of criticism
Amply sufficient	2	Positive, but with some points of criticism
Sufficient	1	Still positive, but with some strong points of criticism
Poor	-1	Inadequate; some positive elements, but the points of criticism are predominant
Insufficient	-2	There are (almost) no positive elements.

How to submit

Applications must be submitted using an application form. The activities need to be described based on a number of questions formulated by the Performing Arts Fund NL. The submission guidelines are available on the Fund's website. Whether the applicant is eligible for a grant is assessed on the basis of the application and all associated information. It is therefore important for the application to be clear and to give an accurate picture of the activities that the applicant aims to undertake.

Applications will only be processed if submitted before the deadline, if the application form is completed correctly, and if all the requested information is provided. The deadline is applied rigorously in order to ensure a level playing field for all applicants. For the same reason, information provided after the deadline will not be taken into consideration. The Fund will also not request further information if an application is insufficiently clear. No exceptions to these rules will be made.

Assessment and budget

The opinion of expert advisers ('peer review') plays a leading role in assessing the applications with respect to the criteria described above. This process adheres to the Fund's rules of procedure ('Huishoudelijk reglement', in Dutch only), which describe the procedure according to which the expert advisers fulfil their advisory role and thereby ensure a fair, scrupulous and transparent process.

All applications that meet the formal conditions are presented to an Advisory Committee. An Advisory Committee will be composed to assess the applications per national region. These national regions are (in

Dutch): Noord (Groningen, Friesland and Drenthe), Oost (Overijssel and Gelderland), Midden (Utrecht and Flevoland), Zuid (Zeeland, Noord-Brabant and Limburg) and West (Noord-Holland and Zuid-Holland). A grant budget will be determined for each national region.

The Fund reserves part of the budget for the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. This budget serves to support talented performers in the areas of pop, hip hop and dance music in their artistic development and presentation. The budget will be distributed in a way that fits the specific features of the pop, hip hop and dance sector in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom.

Distribution of the budget across the national regions

First, all the applications will be assessed per criterion. The assessment is then converted into a score. The assessment and the score are assigned independently per application, meaning that the applications are not compared to each other. All applications receiving a final score of at least 5 points are eligible for a grant within the national region where the applicant is based. If the available budget for a national region is insufficient to honour all eligible applications, the applications for that national region will be ranked in order of their total score. The application that scored highest is honoured first, followed by the application with the second-highest score, and so on.

If multiple applications within a national region receive the same score, and it would exceed the available budget for this national region to honour them all, then these applications are ranked based on the score awarded for the criterion of 'the quality of the intended collaboration'. Applications that received the same score for this criterion are subsequently ranked based on the criterion of 'the development opportunities offered to talents'. Applications that continue to have the same score are then ranked based on the criterion of 'the durability of the collaboration'. Applications that still have the same score are finally ranked based on the criterion of 'budget and (co-)financing.'

If, after applying this ranking method, there are still applications that end equally and thus remain eligible for the grant, then the decision will be made by drawing lots, performed by a civil notary.

Grants are not awarded if the amount to be awarded comes to less than 75% of the requested amount.

Distribution of the flexible budget

The flexible budget is intended for one or more applications by a national region that are eligible for a grant but cannot be honoured through that national region's budget, after the available budget has been distributed across all the national regions.

To distribute the flexible budget, the Fund will additionally consider how the eligible applications contribute to the diversity of the collaborative ventures dedicated to talent development in the area of pop, hip hop and dance music. And, thereby, to what extent they contribute additionally to the goal of the grant scheme as described in Article 1.2. This will depend on which applications have already been honoured in the national regions and on the nation-wide field that has emerged as a result. It means that, after the available budget has been distributed across the national regions, any applications from any of the regions that are eligible for a grant based on this regulation, but that cannot be honoured through the available budget for the national regions, will be presented to expert advisers. These advisers are asked to give their advice on how these applications contribute to the diversity of the total range of collaborative ventures in relation to the nation-wide field that has emerged through the distribution of the budget across the national regions. In this case, the final score awarded to the applications based on the four assessment criteria expressly does not play a role. The applications from all the national regions that are eligible to be honoured through the flexible budget will also not be ranked nationally based on the final score they achieved. Based on its advice regarding how the applications contribute to the diversity of the total range of collaborative ventures, the Advisory Committee will propose a ranking for the distribution of the flexible budget.

Budget distribution for the Caribbean part of the Kingdom

Paragraph 4 of the grant scheme contains provisions that concern the distribution of the grant sum available for the Caribbean part of the Kingdom, under this grant scheme. This budget is detailed in Article 1.4, clause

3. This section of the explanatory notes pertains to the provisions concerning the distribution of that budget, which includes how to apply for a grant from this budget, who is eligible, and how the budget is distributed.

What can be applied for

A grant can be applied for to offer one or more talents in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom the opportunity to work on their development and presentation. The grant is intended for activities such as providing opportunities for personal research and development, facilitating performance opportunities, stimulating artistic development, and coaching the talent in terms of business practices.

The activities for which the grant is applied must be aimed at stimulating talent development. Talent development can also involve behind-the-scenes activities, for instance in the area of production. It is up to the applicant to elaborate this more concretely. Options are to facilitate development and research programmes, to award assignments, to offer residencies or development budgets, and so on.

Additional grounds for rejection

Besides the rejection grounds stipulated in Article 1.5 of the grant scheme, applications to the budget for the Caribbean part of the Kingdom will also be rejected if the applicants do not reside in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom. If the applicant is a legal person, then the condition applies that this legal person is statutorily established in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom. This ensures that the available budget will indeed benefit performing artists based in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom.

The application can furthermore be rejected if one or more of the proposed talents featured in the application cannot be designated as a professional performing artist. This provision ensures that the grant is exclusively used to support professional performing artists, in accordance with the goal of the grant scheme. Intended beneficiaries are emerging professionals in pop, hip hop and/or dance music, including roles behind the scenes. The applicant can engage with emerging talents in various stages of their development, as long as the focus is on their further professionalisation.

Finally, the provision applies that not more than one grant can be allocated per calendar year, per applicant, under this grant scheme. If a grant has already been allocated in the same calendar year, a subsequent application will be rejected. This provision serves to achieve a balanced distribution of the available budget.

Grant ceiling

The Board can choose to set a grant ceiling for the budget that is available for the Caribbean part of the Kingdom under this grant scheme, per calendar year and for each island individually. The total annually available budget is 285,714 euros. By setting an individual grant ceiling per island, the Board can achieve a balanced and effective distribution of the resources available within the Caribbean part of the Kingdom.

Any decision to establish, to raise or to lower a grant ceiling will be announced in the Government Gazette (*Staatscourant*). This ensures a transparent and legally certain announcement, so that potential applicants are timely made aware of the available budget and any changes thereto.

Distribution of the budget

The grant is awarded based on the order in which fully complete applications that are eligible for the grant are received. If an application is not complete when submitted, the date on which the missing information is provided and the application is made complete will count as the date of reception. This ensures that all applications are treated equally and transparently.

In the event that multiple applications having the same reception date cause the grant ceiling to be reached or exceeded, the applications will be ranked based on the exact time of their reception. This offers an objective and unambiguous method to determine the order of reception, if multiple applications arrive on the same date.

If the grant ceiling for one or more islands is not reached within a calendar year, the Board can decide to add the remaining budget to the grant ceiling for one or more islands in the following calendar year.

Procedure

Applications must be submitted digitally using the application form drawn up by the Board. The applicant must describe the proposed activities based on a number of questions formulated by the Board. The submission guidelines are available at the bottom of the scheme page, under Downloads. Part of the application consists of the applicant's reflection on the applicable assessment criteria. This reflection forms an essential part of the application and will be assessed substantively.

The Board may choose to request advice regarding the submitted applications. If advisers are enlisted, they will take the provisions of this paragraph into account when assessing the applications.

An application is rejected if the assessment of the applicant's reflection on the assessment criteria contains three or more points of criticism. This sets a minimum level for the quality of applications that are eligible for a grant and ensures that the available budget is used for applications that sufficiently meet the assessment criteria.

Assessment criteria

The assessment is primarily based on the applicant's reflection on the assessment criteria, as requested in the application form. Applicants must describe in their reflection how they fulfil the criteria, to enable a substantive assessment.

The applicant's reflection on part a) must show that the applicant has a proven track record with respect to talent development in the field of pop, hip hop and/or dance music. The applicant is asked to provide examples of previous experiences and results to demonstrate that the applicant possesses the competence and the skills required to support talents.

The reflection on part b) must show that the grant application is aimed at providing talents with the opportunity for development and presentation within the existing musical infrastructure on the islands. As part of the reflection, the applicant must describe how the talents can actually grow and gain performance experience.

The reflection on part c) must show that the applicant has drawn up a realistic and market-level budget. The reflection must clarify the financial planning and how the resources will be used effectively towards talent development and presentation.

Grant amount

A grant will never amount to more than 40,000 euros if the applicant is a legal person, and never more than 20,000 euros if the applicant is a natural person. This distinction serves to take account of the nature and scale of the activities undertaken by different types of applicants.

The grant is primarily intended to facilitate the talents' development. For that reason, not more than 25% of the grant amount may be used to cover organisational and overhead costs. These costs are understood to consist of the indirect costs that are inevitably incurred to enable the performance of activities, but which cannot be attributed directly to any one specific activity. These are costs related to the overall organisation and to supporting the activities for which the grant is allocated.

Grant period

The activities described in the application for which the grant is allocated should be carried out over a period of at least 12 months, but should be completed within 24 months from the date on which the grant award was announced, according to the prescribed procedure.

Decision

The Board will notify the applicant of its decision in writing, within 13 weeks of the date on which the fully completed application was received. If the motivation for the decision refers to an advice offered about the application, then the text of this advice will be provided to the applicant.

Obligations

Once a grant has been awarded, all changes that have a direct bearing on the grant must be reported to the Fund. Examples of such changes are if certain activities are annulled, or there are changes among the (artistically) responsible personnel, or if there are considerable changes with regard to the financing of the activities. The grant decision may also include an obligation to report specific matters. The Fund will conduct a monitoring interview with the applicant (and the other partners) once during the grant period.

If it turns out afterwards that changes with a direct bearing on the grant were not reported, or if any of the conditions of this grant scheme or any of the obligations associated with the grant have not been fulfilled, the Fund may choose to retract or to lower the amount of the grant, to the applicant's detriment. This is entirely at the applicant's own risk. In case of any doubt, the applicant can contact the Fund to check whether a certain change has a direct bearing on the grant.

In principle, the plan that was submitted is the plan to be implemented. The three-year period is treated as a single period. Whether an applicant has fulfilled the requirements will be assessed once only, at the end of this period.

Accountability

Grants need to be accounted for, substantively and financially. The substantive accountability consists of a description of the activities that have been carried out. This accountability report must reflect on the development that the performers achieved and the further steps that they can take, going forward. This reflection should also refer back to the goals formulated in the original plan. The grant recipients are also asked to reflect on their application of the Fair Practice Code and the Diversity and Inclusion Code.

The financial accountability report must refer to the budget originally submitted. This report must contain an accountant's statement on the accuracy and legality of the report. Guidelines for how to draw up the report are available on the Fund's website.

For grants awarded from the budget for the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, as referred to in Article 1.4, clause 3 of the grant scheme, the award decision contains obligations regarding accountability for the grant, in accordance with Article 8 of the Funds' General Regulations (*Algemeen Reglement Fonds Podiumkunsten*) and with a view to the amount of the awarded grant.

Finally

These explanatory notes should be read in conjunction with the Grant Scheme for Music Hubs in the field of pop, hip hop and dance music. In case of any questions or if you would further information, please contact the Performing Arts Fund NL.