

2026 Strategic Project Awards Scheme

Wicklow Arts Office is pleased to announce the 13th edition of its Strategic Project Award Scheme and invites applications from artists, national resource organisations, individual curators, and/or artist collectives to propose projects which will nurture practice, enhance connectivity, generate new perspectives and support new voices within County Wicklow.

There are two streams available for the 2026 Strategic Project Award Scheme:

Stream A – Open for applications for new artistic projects

Stream B – Open for applications for the consolidation or development of strategic projects previously awarded under Stream A of this Award Scheme

A separate Application Form is available for each Stream.

The Award is open for applications between 1st August 2025 and 8th September 2025.

Applicants may only present one single application for the Award (e.g. either Stream A OR Stream B).

The closing date for receipt of completed applications is Monday 8th September 2025 at 4:00pm.

ABOUT THE SCHEME

The Scheme is open to individuals and organisations from across all arts disciplines. Reflecting the balance of other elements of the Arts Office programme, the Arts Office would particularly welcome strong applications in the art form areas of literature, film, dance, artist development, music and the visual arts. In previous years, the Arts Office has awarded projects where proposed project outcomes included the following:

- Development of the artist collection(s) / community(ies) of practice in the county
- Inter-regional collaborations by Wicklow-based artists, for work which culminate in presentation in the County
- Development and/or presentation of ambitious new work sited / situated in the County
- Projects which will create strategic connections for art form development
- Projects which propose high-quality public participation opportunities
- Projects which increase artists' networking and professional exchange in the county

Previously supported work under this scheme includes visual arts engagement, digital arts, arts in the public realm, arts and health, early years, and arts and disability.

Wicklow County Council Arts office welcomes applications from artists / groups / organisations that propose innovative artistic solutions which meet the strategic development goals of Wicklow County Council's Arts Office. The total fund available for both Streams is expected to be in the region of €100,000 to €110,000. All awards are subject to budget being available.

DETAILS OF WHAT CAN BE SUPPORTED

Stream A (MAX €15,000.00)

Support for new initiatives which add significant value to existing arts practice, experience and participation in Wicklow, and which support Wicklow County Council Art's Office's Strategic Goals, will be prioritised. Wicklow Arts Office welcomes projects which will take place in areas of the county less well served in terms of cultural provision, in line with the strategic aims of the County Wicklow Arts Plan 2020 – 2025.

Stream B (MAX €10,000.00)

Consideration will be given to developmental applications for existing Award recipients, from practitioners who wish to consolidate a current project or to further develop an area of practice previously awarded under the Scheme under Stream A.

***Note: Applicants can only apply for Stream B support once**

Applicants must evidence in their Stream B application, the requirement for additional support, work completed to date on the existing project funded, and clarify how additional funding under Stream B will add value / further enhance the initial project supported, and the strategic goals of Wicklow County Council's Arts Office.

Summary of acceptable new application proposals for 2026

- Development of the artist collection(s) / community(ies) of practice in the county
- Inter-regional collaborations by Wicklow-based artists, for work which culminate in presentation in the County
- Development and/or presentation of ambitious new work sited / situated in the County
- Projects which will create strategic connections for art form development
- Projects which propose high-quality public participation opportunities
- Projects which increase artists' networking and professional exchange in the county
- Initiatives which support artist's engagement with audiences differently or adapt their practice if their work necessitates a shift in focus
- Innovative proposals which support artists to collaborate differently and effectively

The Arts Office may fund selected projects up to a maximum of **€15,000** for any one application under Stream A, and a maximum of **€10,000** for any one application under Stream B in this call. We welcome applications where there is evidence of a wider budgetary framework, e.g. partner funding. In this case, applicants must specify confirmed sources of income (including those in-kind), which may contribute to the application.

COMPULSORY SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Checklist of information to be submitted:

- A completed online application form for either **Stream A OR Stream B**
- A full description of the project proposed or business or research plan
- A supporting budget detailing all costs, expenditure and income to be provided.
*Note: You must use the budget template provided for eligibility. Access Budget Templates [HERE](#) (you will find the Budget Templates and the Application Form located in the bottom section of the linked page)
- Up to **five** supporting images or pieces of writing to represent your idea
- Supporting documents such as artists / group / organisation biographies or profiles
- Confirmation of venues
- Confirmation of site permissions
- Letters of support
- Note that appropriate insurance cover will be required of successful applicants (where applicable)
- Other relevant supporting documents, e.g. images or materials which provide evidence of the track record of the applicant(s), can be provided as links, reviews, files or relevant websites and saved into a Word document

Please name all the files you upload, including your name, title of work and/or type of work. We are unable to accept links to Google Drive.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Applicants must demonstrate how their project responds to the following criteria, in their application to the Scheme:

- Distinctive nature and artistic merit of the proposal (30 marks)
- Excellence and demonstrated track record of applicant's/group's artistic practice (25 marks)
- Benefit of the Award to the artist(s)/group(s) artistic development or profile (10 marks)
- Benefit of the Award to the development of the Arts in Wicklow (10 marks)
- Feasibility of the proposal including evidence of advance planning (10 marks)
- Clear financial model to support delivery of the proposed project (including evidence of secured other funding should project budget exceed Stream A max funding of €15,000, Stream B max funding of €10,000 (15 marks)

Applicants must evidence adherence to the eligibility criteria, Guidelines, Child Protection Policies and appropriate insurance cover (where relevant), for their application to be considered for assessment.

What is not eligible for support

- Projects focusing primarily on community rather than arts outcomes
- For-profit or fundraising projects
- Competitive initiatives
- Deficits or start-up costs for new organisations
- Entertainment expenses
- Projects where the majority of activity takes place outside County Wicklow
- Insurance costs
- Capital improvements
- Projects/programmes where the majority of costs relate to equipment hire/administrative costs
- Publication costs or production-related costs for commercial activity

TERMS and CONDITIONS

1. All awards are subject to the availability of funds. Awards may be withheld or divided at the discretion of Wicklow County Council.
2. Wicklow County Council must be credited in any/all publicity relating to the work supported under this Scheme. A letter of offer will set out WCC's specific branding and crediting requirements.
3. Wicklow County Council reserves the right to cancel or postpone any activities under the Strategic Project Award Scheme.
4. Applicants must provide evidence that any organisational commitment referenced by the artist in support of their application has been confirmed e.g. letters of support to show that a particular mentor is available, a place on a course is secured, or an exhibition opportunity confirmed.
5. All applications must be complete and have all relevant support documentation.
Incomplete and/or late applications will not be accepted.
6. An online acknowledgement will be sent to the applicant confirming receipt of an application.
7. Applications must adhere to the guidelines and criteria for the Award Scheme.

Please note: *This is not a GRANT SCHEME; this is a Project Award to facilitate specific outcomes as outlined in the applicant's submission. Successful applicants will receive a contract; while some flexibility is offered, failure to deliver on the terms of the contract, or if the project becomes infeasible during the course of delivery, may result in funds being withheld by WCC or a refund being sought for failure to deliver on the contract terms. If your project better suits a grant application, the applications for 2026 will open in late December 2025 with a closing date in February 2026.*

8. Emailed applications will not be accepted. Applicants must provide all supporting information (application form and supporting documents) together in their online application
9. All applicants shall be notified of outcomes as soon as is practicable. It is anticipated that the notification of outcomes from the Scheme will be provided by end September 2025.

10. Shortlisting is likely to apply.
11. Applications will be assessed by a panel of professional arts practitioners and will include representation from Wicklow County Council.
12. Successful applicants will have sole responsibility for project management and production of the proposed project in line with the contractual agreement signed by both the applicant and the Wicklow Arts Office.
13. Successful applicants will be required to submit documentation and high-quality visuals along with a Project Report and Income and Expenditure account, prior to final drawdown of funding and project completion. (1st October 2026)
14. Successful applicants will be required to ensure that the appropriate insurances are put in place for project delivery. Insurance requirements include Professional Indemnity Insurance at a minimum and, potentially, Public Liability (minimum cover €6.5m) and Employers Liability Insurance (minimum cover €13.5m) depending on the nature of the awarded project. Insurance policies also need to include indemnity in favour of Wicklow County Council. Details of the level of Insurance cover required will be outlined in the Letter of Offer.
15. Wicklow County Council reserves the right to review the Award Scheme at any time and as a result may make any changes necessary without any prior notice.
16. Where relevant, adherence to, and compliance, with best practice and legislation in Child Protection as outlined by the Department of Health and Children – www.dohc.ie is required.
17. It is expected that proposals must be realised in full within the timeframe specified in the application and latest by 1st October 2026.
18. Applicants are required to read the Wicklow County Council GDPR statement in its entirety.
19. The provision of detailed feedback on applications submitted is not possible.
20. Projects awarded will not commence until 2026. Project elements already underway cannot be supported.
21. Projects must be completed during 2026.
22. If you are proposing a project which has a physical outcome in the public realm such as a mural, sculpture, or significant outdoor event on public lands, confirmation of appropriate permissions is required up to and including if the idea is subject to a planning application.

HOW TO APPLY

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: Monday 8th September 2025 at 4.00pm

PLEASE NOTE

Applicants must apply through the Arts Office's online platform [SUBMITTABLE](#) where they can upload all supporting materials along with the online Award Application Form. *The SUBMITTABLE platform works best on the most recent version of Google Chrome, Firefox, and Safari browsers. Internet Explorer is not supported.*

You will need to create a 'Submittable' password. You can save a draft of your application at any stage and access it again at a later time.

Make your subject line 'Strategic Project Award Scheme 2026 – Stream A or Stream B'

Wicklow County Council Arts Office strongly recommends that you test this process well in advance of the closing date for the Award, so that technical support can be provided, if required.

- E-mailed or posted Applications will not be accepted.
- Late and/or incomplete applications will not be considered

SUPPORT IN DEVELOPING YOUR APPLICATION

Questions relating to the Award application process should be directed to:

wao@wicklowcoco.ie

Support for application queries will close on Monday 1 September 2025.