



3. EVALUATING THE APPLICATIONS AND PROJECT, THE CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION AND THE PROCESS OF EVALUATION. HOW COULD THESE BE DEVELOPED?

- Art organisations as chameleons, depending on where they apply money from. Could the decisions be based more on the goals and values of the organisations, rather than on the agendas of the funders?
- Concrete questions related to seeking funding, and evaluating the applications

3. Miten hakemusten ja hankkeiden evaluointia, päätöksien perusteita ja prosessia voisi kehittää?

- Taideorganisaatiot kameleontteina riippuen mistä rahaa haetaan: Voisivatko rahoituspäätökset perustua enemmän toimijoiden omiin tavoitteisiin sen sijaan, että ne on aina muokattava rahoittajien agendoihin sopiviksi?
- Konkreettiset rahoituksen hakemiseen, hakemusten arviointiin liittyvät kysymykset, kuten mikä tai mitkä ovat tärkeimpiä asioita hakemuksen arvioinnissa? Hakijan, vertaisarvioitsijan, esittelijän, päättäjän näkökulmat.

TABLE A (Host: Suunnittelupäällikkö Tiina Kuoppa, Taiteen edistämiskeskus, Taike, scribe: Maija Karasvaara, Koneen Säätiö)

"Art must not be made on terms set by sponsors if the objective is to have sustainable forms of funding and forms of funding that are meaningful for art and culture."

In the art sector, applying for funding from many different sources is considered problematic because it often requires the applicant to transform themselves and their work to satisfy the priorities and desired forms of each sponsor. When applying for funding, the most worthwhile way to proceed would be to speak about one's activities in one's own words and focus on one's own strengths. From the point of view of



applicants, it is important to implement an approach that allows organisations or artists to present themselves as they are and communicate their goals, values and strengths more freely during the application process. The wish that sponsors would respect this was expressed during the discussion. Transforming and adapting oneself solely to the sponsors' requirements leads to organisations and artists presenting their activities based on certain conditions set by an external body. Meeting the expectations of sponsors in this way will create extra work and will require the artist or organisation to silence their own voice and the objectives set in advance for their activities in order to ensure that it will be possible for them to obtain funding on the sponsor's terms. It is important for an applicant to know various sponsors and forms of funding to ensure that they will not need to submit applications unnecessarily. It is also important that applicants understand their responsibility to provide the information requested and that they know about the funding models. For this reason, applying for funding and support for art must be an integral part of artists' education.

The question "how does this corresponds to the sponsor's strategic objectives" should be resolved by the sponsor or the assessor of the application, not by the applicant. The number of criteria set and emphasised by sponsors should remain reasonable and their meaning clear. From the point of view of an applicant, it would be useful to provide them with an opportunity to explain their values when applying, instead of focusing on predetermined priorities. "These are the ten things that are important to us" could be a meaningful way to approach sponsors. It is important that the set criteria resonate with the applicant's own activities and that they do not need to be emphasised if the strength of the applicant's activities lies elsewhere. On the other hand, the criteria, priorities and conditions imposed by sponsors on applications were seen as an opportunity to develop the organisation's activities. Primarily smaller and new players may pay attention to



accessibility, sustainability or diversity, if this is a prerequisite for receiving funding.

For an individual freelancer, opportunities for grants seem excessively laborious compared to the workload and the success rate of applying. The financial structures should support diversity, with smaller grants possible in tandem with larger funding covering several years, and not all funding must be allowed to cover several years. In order to obtain long-term funding, there should be opportunities to receive smaller grants for launching or preparing a project.

The possibility of dialogue with sponsors would improve trust between those receiving funds and the sponsors. Players in the field of art wish for evaluation criteria and evaluation processes that are clearly expressed and as transparent as possible. There is a strong perception and a feeling among applicants that the evaluation is not fair and lack of feedback increases this lack of certainty. A two-step application process with a lighter first stage was suggested as a solution to the large workload. There are already several well-functioning Finnish and international examples. Some sponsors already operate by creating partnerships that inevitably create a close dialogue between sponsors and those funded.

"Making a separate action plan for every sponsor is frustrating".

The preferred solution for the large workload is the joint development of application modes, formats and forms together with applicants. The amount of work required for an application is enormous, and it is not possible to approach several sponsors using the same application as the application requirements, starting from the number of characters, often differ from one another. Cooperation between sponsors should be increased to ensure that the application process is as simple and standardised as possible. The application process should be designed



with an understanding of the nature of the artistic work, its multiformity, the art organisations and the art sector, while reflecting these. One concrete proposal was the submission of applications by submitting an action plan and a budget to the sponsor, instead of an application. Similarly, reports on the work could be submitted in the form of financial statements and annual reports, which are produced in any case. The possibility of using databases and aggregated CV or portfolio sites might also lighten the application process if there was no need to provide each sponsor with CVs or samples of work in various forms. Reporting on artistic work should be self-evaluating and the objectives achieved should be examined qualitatively. The makers of art hope that the sponsor is primarily interested in the implementation of the artistic work, its content and significance. The reporting phase and the progress of the project also require more dialogue and the opportunity to describe the results of the work and the challenges encountered.

Suomeksi:

"Taiteen tekeminen ei saa tapahtua rahoittajien ehdoilla, jos rahoitusmuotojen halutaan olevan kestäviä ja mielekkäitä taiteen ja kulttuurin kentän kannalta."

Taiteen kentällä koetaan ongelmallisena se, että rahoituksen hakeminen monesta eri lähteestä merkitsee hakijalle usein vaatimusta muuntautumisesta kunkin rahoittajan painopisteisiin ja toivottuun muotoon. Rahoitusta hakiessa olisi mielekkäintä sanoittaa omaa toimintaansa omaäänisesti ja keskittyen oman toiminnan vahvuuksiin. Hakijoiden kannalta toimintamalli, jossa organisaatiot tai taiteen tekijät saisivat olla oman näkönsiään ja viestiä rahoitusta hakiessa omia tavoitteitaan, arvojaan ja vahvuuksiaan vapaammin on tärkeää. Keskustelussa esitettiin toivomus, että tätä arvostettaisiin rahoittajan taholta.. Pelkästään rahoittajia varten muokkautuminen ja mukautuminen ohjaa esittelemään omaa toimintaa tietyin, ulkopuolisen määrittelemien ehdoin. Tämä rahoittajien odotuksiin vastaaminen tuottaa lisätyötä, ja ohjaa taiteen tekijän tai organisaation hiljentämään omaa ääntään ja toiminnalle ennalta esitettyjä tavoitteita, jotta rahoituksen saaminen olisi mahdollista rahoittajan asettamilla ehdoilla. Hakijana on tärkeää tuntea eri rahoittajia ja rahoitusmuotoja, jolloin turhia hakemuksia ei tarvitsisi tuottaa. Hakijoiden



vastuu toimittaa pyydettyjä tietoja ja ymmärtää rahoitusmalleja on tärkeää. Tästä syystä taiteen rahoituksen ja tuen hakemisen tulee olla tiivis osa taiteilijan koulutusta.

Rahoitushakemuksissa ilmenevä kysymys "miten tämä vastaa rahoittajan strategiaan tavoitteisiin" tulisi ratkaista rahoittajan tai hakemuksen arvioijan toimesta, ei hakijan. Rahoittajien asettamien ja painottamien kriteerien määrän toivotaan pysyvän kohtuullisena ja niiden merkityksen selkeänä. Hakijan näkökulmasta olisi hyvä antaa mahdollisuus kertoa omista arvoista rahoitusta hakiessa ennalta määrättyjen painopisteiden sijaan. "Nämä kymmenen asiaa ovat meille tärkeitä" voisi olla mielekäs tapa lähestyä rahoittajia. On tärkeää, että asetetut kriteerit resonoivat oman toiminnan kanssa, eikä niitä jouduta painottamaan, jos oman toiminnan vahvuus on muualla. Toisaalta rahoittajien asettamat kriteerit, painopisteet ja ehdot hakemiselle nähtiin mahdollisuutena oman organisaation toiminnan kehittämiseen. Ensisijaisesti pienemmät ja uudet toimijat saattavat kiinnittää huomiota saavutettavuuteen, kestävytyteen tai moninaisuuteen, jos näiden asioiden huomioinen, on edellytys rahoituksen saamiselle.

Yksittäisen freelancerin kohdalla apurahamahdollisuudet tuntuvat tukahduttavan työläiltä verratessa hakemiseen kuluva työmäärä ja onnistumisprosenttia. Rahoitusrakenteiden tulisi tukea moninaisuutta, jossa pienemmät apurahat on oltava mahdollisia rinnakkain suurempien, monivuotisten rahoitusten kanssa, eikä kaikki rahoitus ei saa siirtyä monivuotiseksi. Pitkäjänteisen rahoituksen saamiseksi olisi hyvä olla mahdollisuuksia saada pienempiä projekteihin käynnistämiseen tai valmisteluun suunnattuja tukia.

Mahdollisuus dialogiin rahoittajien suuntaan parantaisi luottamusta rahoitettavien ja rahoittajien välillä. Taiteen kentällä toivotaan arviointikriteerien ja arviointiprosessin olevan selkeästi ilmaista ja mahdollisimman läpinäkyviä. Hakijoiden keskuudessa elää vahvana käsitys ja tunne, että arviointi ei ole reilua ja palautteen puuttuessa epätietoisuus kasvaa. Suureen työmäärään ehdotettiin ratkaisuna kaksivaiheista hakua, jossa ensimmäinen vaihe olisi kevyempi. Toimivia suomalaisia tai kansainvälisiä esimerkkejä on jo useita. Osa rahoittajista toimii jo nyt luomalla kumppanuuksia, joiden avulla dialogi rahoitettavien ja rahoittajien välillä on väistämättä tiivis.

"Oman toimintasuunnitelman tekeminen jokaista rahoittajaa varten on turhauttavaa".

Ratkaisuna suureen työmäärään toivottiin hakemisen tapojen, muotojen ja lomakkeiden yhteiskehittämistä hakijoiden kanssa. Hakemiseen käytetty työmäärä on valtava eikä samalla hakemuksella ole mahdollista lähestyä useampaa rahoittajaa, sillä hakemuksen muodot merkkimääristä lähtien poikkeavat usein toisistaan. Rahoittajien välistä yhteistyötä tulisi lisätä, jotta hakeminen olisi mahdollisimman yksinkertaista ja standardisoitua. Hakeminen tulisi toteuttaa taiteen tekijöiden työn luonnetta, monimuotoisuutta, taideorganisaatioita ja taiteen kenttää ymmärtäen ja heijastellen. Konkreettisenä ehdotuksena pohdittiin hakemista toimittamalla toimintasuunnitelma ja budjetti rahoittajalle hakemuksen sijaan. Vastaavasti työstä voisi raportoida tilinpäätöksen ja toimintakertomuksen muodossa, jotka tuotetaan joka tapauksessa. Mahdollisuus tietokantojen ja yhteen koottujen ansioluettelo- tai portfoliosivustojen käyttöön voisi myös keventää hakemista, jos jokaiselle rahoittajalle ei tarvitsisi toimittaa



ansioitaan tai työnäytteittäin eri muodoissa. Taiteellisesta työstä raportoinnin pitäisi olla itsearvioivaa ja tutkia laadullisesti saavutettuja tavoitteita. Rahoittajaa toivotaan kiinnostavaan ensisijaisesti taiteellisen työn toteutuminen, sen sisältö ja merkitys. Myös raportointivaihe ja hankkeen eteneminen kaipaavat enemmän dialogisuutta ja mahdollisuutta kertoa työn tuloksista ja kohdatuista haasteista.

TABLE B (Host: Toiminnanjohtaja Tomi Purovaara, Globe Art Point, scribe: Danai Anagnostou, HIAP)

Supplementary questions: How to ensure evaluator's sufficient expertise in relation to society's increasing cultural diversity and different minorities? Is the group of experts diverse enough?

Group 1:

During the first round of discussion, the group focused on evaluation protocols and the necessity to ensure that decision-making is transparent. To introduce the question, the host began with a remark on the ambiguous chameleon strategy that grant applicants frequently feel forced to follow. The group recognized how applicants feel urged to modify the projects they are applying with to match the open calls theme rather frequently.

The conversation quickly shifted and aimed attention on the role of the evaluator(s). The participants agreed that the application reviewers should be able to articulate and justify how they select certain projects instead of others. After this, a participating foundation introduced their pilot proposal to provide seminars that could help the evaluators understand and identify their own biases before they begin the assessments. The group responded very positively and fully supported the idea of coming up with a plan of action to ensure diversity for the



funded institutions and projects as well as within the boards of the funding bodies.

Another crucial point that was collectively expressed, was the wish for the continuation of the dialogue between the funders and the grant recipients following the allocation of the grant. According to the group, maintaining a discussion between both parties would benefit strengthening mutual trust. More specifically: Grant recipients shared a set of questions regarding the modifications that a project needs to undergo after being awarded the grant. For instance, how to plan when they receive less funding than expected, how does their final report affect future applications, or how to communicate in the case of a mistake.

The discussion expanded on the topic communication:

- How crucial can the role of our 'contact person' be?
- How could we approach each other respectfully and professionally?
- How could we prevent organizations from becoming isomorphic?

While concluding the first discussion session the participants wished for diversity and sustainability to be considered on a larger scale.

Group 2:

The second round began with a request for a more explicit introduction to each foundation's criteria. The participants discussed the plethora of applications that do fit the criteria, yet don't get funding, to point out the necessity for continuous mutual feedback & discussions once more.

Colleagues from funding institutions argued how the format of a text-based application might not be suitable for everyone and suggested that alternative methods could be introduced. In addition, they emphasized



how the option to attach links to one's application has not been fully taken up yet.

Despite acknowledging the restriction of the resources for such endeavors, the group was excited about making meeting applicants and/or funders face to face possible. A concern that came into the discussion

was that the artists who live in remote parts of Finland are represented mainly by their annual application and that in many cases the evaluator is not familiar with their work.

Another remark was it can be anyhow difficult to gather an evaluation committee due to conflict of interests and lack of sufficient payment. This complicates further the effort to form a diverse group of experts. More thoughts on the essentiality of making the evaluators' participation more convenient followed: an idea was to simplify the assessment by introducing a point-based system.

Towards the closure of the round of discussion, most representatives of organizations pointed out that they are currently relying on both private and public funds. Grants from public foundations were used to cover the operation costs most commonly, while private funds to sustain projects. The group wished for more transparency and for more efforts to developing tenable funding strategies further.

Group 3:

The third round of the conversation began with a request that the funding institutions designate their evaluation criteria before the application period. Some participants entered the discussion voicing out their frustration regarding the fact that their programme was not granted support even if it seemingly corresponded to the criteria of the



application. The group agreed that there could be a feedback session for those who were short-listed to increase their chances of getting funded on the next round.

A participant then raised another important question regarding the handling of possible fluctuations in an organization's funding:

- What would be a fair method and timeframe for downsizing when a large organization stops being financially affluent?

The group soon agreed that the field of arts & cultures should make a collective effort and put pressure on issues of diversity and sustainability throughout all its aspects, from appointing evaluation committees to track our carbon footprint. The next point was to consider how different we understand what diversity is based on our own experiences and ideas.

Finally, the conversation shifted to auditing. The participants argued that the report reviewers should be able to understand the language and the goals of the projects they are working with, otherwise, it would be impossible to examine the expenses made. The group wished for alterations in the means of communicating with the funders and for mutual feedback exchange at all the stages of the process, from applying to reporting.

Briefly:

- Acknowledge the necessity to establish discussions equal to both parties.
- Work on establishing trust between the individuals and the institutions in the field.
- Specify and articulate the criteria of each foundation.
- Specify and articulate the aims and goals of each organization or



individual applicant.

- Discuss with the evaluators about their own blindfolds and biases.
- Value diversity and sustainability in a broader sense.
- Propose alternative application formats based on mediums different than text.
- Propose more personalized ways of reporting the grant.

TABLE C (Host: Kulttuurisuunnittelija Jenni Peisa, Helsingin kaupunki, scribe Rosa Kuosmanen, Suomen Taiteilijaseura)

Group 1:

Jenni Peisa / City of Helsinki: The funders have to be able to explain why they are supporting certain projects and what the criteria for funding are. Due to the lack of resources, feedback for thousands of applicants is not realistic.

Amrit Gill / Australia Council for the Arts: The Australia Council has pool of 600–700 people who read the applications. The Council uses a separate sitting fee vs. reading fee. The assessors get 450–500 dollars a day for the work. Four hundred people per year read applications on 25 different panels. The challenge lies in the national and geographical spread: it's highly important to have peers and evaluators around the nation. Also, the evaluators may often have some kind of conflict of interest, and it's important to ensure that evaluation is unbiased.

"Unfunded excellency": applications that fill the criteria but are not funded. It's also a way to negotiate more funding: so many projects that fill the criteria are not being funded.



Sören Lillkung: Svenska Kulturfonden's assessment system has 14 groups for different fields of art. One person reads applications, and peers discuss them together. Two to four people get paid in the process. "We should be closer to the artists," says Lillkung. "SK tries to do it more: travel around the country, see performances and follow artists' careers and work. It's hard to evaluate based only on the application. Some are more competent in writing applications than others." Feedback is valuable, but it also poses problems and is a question of resources for the funders.

Tuuli Penttinen-Lampisuo / AVEK: Long-term, operational funding would offer more flexibility to established organizations. Acting as a commissioner offers an excellent experience (a member's term is max. 4 years; frequent rotation is beneficial and advances equality). Commissioners also get paid for reading applications. As well, regional committees are important for geographic equality. Experts need to get paid for reading and evaluating the application (at Taike [Arts promotion Centre], for example).

What is difficult for the applicant is the lack of feedback. At AVEK they have phone time once a week, during which applicants can ask for feedback or advice for filling out the application or just discussing the project.

Tuulikki Koskinen / Taike: Every department and the evaluation system at Taike is under construction at the moment. Committees of 12 people is too heavy a system. It's hard to find people, because they don't get paid. Pool of assessors would be a good solution, as they have done at the Australia Council. Taike receives 13,000 applications each year, so giving feedback to applicants is a question of resources. Taike organizes "info days" in different parts of the country, which are very popular and needed.



Group 2:

When an evaluator reads an application, it's important to define what they're evaluating – the substance, the idea behind the application, how it is all articulated, what is written and artistic excellence. The guidelines for the application should be very clear, and the applicants should always be aware of evaluation criteria.

Should funding be more focused? The funding of many organizations is currently quite shattered and comes from small streams. Could funders give more funding to fewer applicants or somehow coordinate who funds whom – or at least use similar application forms to allow applicants to use the same documents for separate applications?

Vesa Vehviläinen / AV-arkki: Funders have to be open about their interests, criteria and strategy, as well as the reasons why, which and what kind of projects they fund.

Hanna Maria Anttila / AV-arkki: A very good example of an application and advising process is the AVEK production advisor, which you can call beforehand to ask for advice and feedback.

Power is now being concentrated too much, because often people have other jobs, such as professors and teachers, which makes it hard to find experts to do the job for free. Dialogue between funders and grant recipients has to be enhanced. As well,

Taike needs to pay their evaluators, because they are professionals.

Established organizations like AV-arkki, Frame, etc. should get fixed funding from the state (Taike) but short-term projects should be applied



for from a different box. It's a problem that very different kinds of actors apply from the same "box" of funding.

Group 3:

Marjo Mäenpää / Cupore, Finland: Trust is crucial in evaluating applications: Does the applicant trust that the evaluator is the right person to assess their work?

Elina Suoyrjö / Arte Association, Finland: It is important to have dialogue during the evaluation; there should be a channel for communication between the sponsor and the applicant.

Henri Terho: Above all, there should be dialogue when the application period is not in progress: people should be able to ask for advice and feedback before applying, which is when they can be more objective and their feelings are less involved. Right now, they ask for justification for the decisions made and for feedback after a disappointing result (receiving a negative decision), which makes constructive discussion difficult.

For the sponsor: Going through the application process in a critical way, considering why certain questions are asked and whether all the questions and all the documents required from the applicants are necessary. Would it be possible for all the sponsors to have broadly the same requirements, such as standard documentation: for example, an equality plan, sustainable development plan and equal opportunities programme for the organisation/project applying for funding. This would ease the burden on the applicants.

The structural problem with funding: there are always a lot more of those who meet all the criteria. How do you justify the fact that some people



meet all the criteria but still do not receive the funding? The criteria should be such that the number of people who meet them exactly equals the amount of money to be distributed.

Kaisa Paavulainen / Theatre Centre, Finland: The importance and clarity of the criteria should be explicit to both the organisation seeking funding and the sponsor. What is transparent to applicants and how to ensure this transparency? The ability to conceive and explain the application and evaluation process is important to applicants.

Could there, for example, be pitching meetings with sponsors where the project could be presented to various funding bodies and where it would potentially become clearer which entity would be the best partner for the project?

Jenni Peisa: The places where each applicant should apply for funding should be explicit to avoid wasting the applicants' time and resources (criteria, the sponsor's objectives, strategy, etc.)

Keskustelu käytiin suomeksi:

Marjo Mäenpää / Cupore: Luottamus on ensisijaisen tärkeää hakemusten arvioinnissa: Luottaako hakija siihen, että arvioija on oikea henkilö arvioimaan hänen työtään?

Elina Suoyrjö / Arte ry: Dialogin merkitys arvioinnissa tärkeää, rahoittajan ja hakijan välillä tulisi olla keskusteluyhteys.

Henri Terho: Dialogia tulisi käydä ennen kaikkea siinä vaiheessa, kun hakemuskausi ei ole meneillään: kysyä neuvoa ja palautetta ennen hakemista, kun tunteet eivät ole pelissä. Nyt perusteluja ja palautetta pyydetään pettymyksen jälkeen (kielteisen päätöksen saatuaan), jolloin on vaikeaa keskustella rakentavasti.

Rahoittajalle: Oman hakuprosessin läpikäynti kriittisesti, miksi mitään kysytään ja onko kaikki kysymykset ja hakijoilta vaaditut dokumentit tarpeellisia? Voisiko kaikilla rahoittajilla olla suurin piirtein samat vaatimukset, kuten standardidokumentaatio: esim. rahoitusta hakevan



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organisaation/projektin tasa-arvosuunnitelma, kestävän kehityksen ohjelma, yhdenvertaisuusohjelma. Keventäisi hakijoiden hakutaakkaa.

Rahoituksen rakenteellinen ongelma: aina paljon enemmän niitä, jotka täyttää kaikki kriteerit. Miten perustellaan se, että jotkut täyttää kaikki kriteerit, mutta eivät silti saa rahaa? Kriteerien tulisi olla sellaiset, että ne täyttäviä henkilöitä olisi tasan yhtä paljon kuin jaettavaa rahaa. Kaisa Paavolainen / Teatterikeskus: Kriteerien tärkeys ja kirkkaus, jotka tulisi olla selvillä sekä rahoitusta hakevalle organisaatiolle että rahoittajalle itselleen. Mikä on läpinäkyvää hakijoille ja miten varmistaa se? Haku- ja arviointiprosessin hahmottaminen ja avaaminen tärkeää hakijalle.

Voisiko olla esimerkiksi pitchaus-tapaamisia rahoittajien kanssa, joissa hanketta voisi esitellä eri rahoittajatahoille ja miettiä, mikä taho olisi paras yhteistyökumppani hankkeelle?

Jenni Peisa: Pitäisi olla selkeää, mistä kenenkin kannattaa hakea, jotta hakijoiden aikaa ja resursseja ei tuhlat (kriteerit, rahoittajan tavoitteet, strategia yms.).