

SCAN Survey: Initial response to survey on take-up of Cultural Organisations and Venues Recovery Fund

2 October 2020

Introduction

SCAN ran a member survey during the week 28/09/20 – 02/10/20 on their take-up of Creative Scotland's Cultural Organisations and Venues Recovery Fund.

Initial findings echo what we have heard already from our membership and wider sector; that the primary reason for not applying was around the criteria for immediate insolvency, but that the need for targeted support is still great. Our results show that the threat to sustainability and employment will come soon after the March 2021 cut-off for the COVR fund.

We know that organisations will be taking budgets to their boards at the end of this calendar year. With an uncertain financial outlook, boards may be forced to make decisions on jobs by April 2021; the 'second cliff-edge' may come sooner than we think.

The survey also shows the extent to which visual art organisations have 'juggled' and done what they can to remain afloat to date. We know that this cannot last – but it does show that the contemporary visual community is innovative and agile. With the right support, these organisations will continue to play a role in sparking wider cultural and societal change.

Who applied to the COVR Fund?

62% of organisations responding **did not apply**. The most cited reason for not applying was because the organisation did not face insolvency between October 2020 and March 2021 (26%).

Other reasons were:

- Part of a university
- Part of a local authority where an application had already been made to the Performing Arts Venues Relief Fund
- Process too onerous

38% of organisations **did apply**, with one citing they would still need to raise a further £50k in order to prevent insolvency by March 2021.

It is important to note that while those who did not apply for the main reason of not facing insolvency in the period October 2020-March 2021, the scale of need remained urgent and threat came soon after that period.

Of those who did not apply, comments include:

‘The only reason we are not facing insolvency is due to securing Creative Scotland Funding via the revised Open Project fund (along with some smaller grants from local Trusts and Council). Our grants secured will enable us to continue for 9 months, carrying us through to June 2021’

While the applicant did not fit criteria of COVR fund, the coming year presents ‘grave financial uncertainty.’

‘We are still trying to fundraise between £5-10k for match funding for projects though and also to help with knock on effects which we anticipate for next Spring. It is likely we will not find all that we need. We will manage until April 2021, our biggest concern is June onwards.’

1. Has your situation improved since we last surveyed in July 2020?

We asked whether respondents situations had improved, remained the same or worsened since July 2020.

Of those who responded the responses were as follows:

- **47%** said their situation remained the same
- **29%** said their situation had worsened
- **24%** had seen their situation had improved

Comments from those who said their situation remained the same:

‘We have cancelled some public programmes and been extremely tough on imposing savings. We need assistance, but the criteria have to be around adaptability to a new world rather than survival within an old paradigm.’

‘Unless we receive a further 50K, above the COVR ceiling, we MUST generate 50K of income from our self-generated income activity. Our ability to do this is very limited in current Covid circumstances. This puts tremendous pressure on our staff to move things forward in a certain direction. Our organisation could/should play a vital part in stimulating the economy of visual arts in Scotland and yet we must focus on generating income, the amount we charge in session fees etc.’

‘COVR only addressed jobs and lost income rather than giving an opportunity to really address value or how to renew and recover. I was assured by CS staff that they believe that is still to come.’

‘The uncertainty about the future has worsened.’

‘We need at least the amount lost through lost income and partnerships. This is approximately £20,000. We will try to compete for funding from Foundations and Trusts and continue discussions with our Local Authority to cover wages.’

Comments from those who said their situation had worsened:

‘Our building project is delayed and there are ongoing complications due to COVID-19. This delay costs us money and loses us ways to make money.’

‘Because the CS Open Project Fund has been capped at £50,000 during the pandemic we have to make three applications for a year's artistic programme instead of one. This is not insignificant.’

‘The lack of facility income (courses and members etc) as well as sales we have managed to juggle. However that situation has been compounded by the remaining threat of massive service charge increases and more significantly the lack of support from Glasgow City Council as a result of the recent decisions on the Glasgow Community Fund.’

‘Staff are off furlough and there is less support available with no real end in sight to the effects that Covid is having on our income.’

Comments from those who said their situation had improved:

‘We are hopeful of funding ourselves till April 2021 by means of our own activities and possibly a public appeal. The medium to long term is far, far less secure and very dependent on the wider economic and social and health situation.’

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Scottish Contemporary Art Network (SCAN) is a member led network committed to championing and supporting the contemporary art sector in Scotland.
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