

1.1 Succeeding in Culture

The process that is completed by the publication of this advice by the Council has made clear to which extent the austerity measures, resulting in spending cuts of more than 25% on the national budget, affect the cultural sector. The Council cannot avoid coming to the conclusion that the magnitude of the austerity measures in the basic infrastructure, combined with spending cuts by other authorities, affect the core of the system.

In previous advices, the Council has underlined the importance of the cultural chain.^[1] The basic principle of the Council is to preserve the crucial links in that chain.^[2] Without education, there is no culture-loving audience. Without places for experimenting and developing, there is no breeding ground for young talent. Without young talent, there are no appealing, innovating cultural expressions. Without all this, there is no excellence. Both large and smaller cultural institutions, in the Randstad and beyond, publicly funded and commercial institutions, play a role. They form the basis of a high-quality cultural life.

Due to the reduction of the basic infrastructure and the fact that funds and decentralised authorities can no longer finance as many provisions, the Council believes that some crucial links in this chain are placed in a vulnerable position. The main concern is the *development of talent* and the *creation & production* of a multiform cultural offering. The Council urges to take measures in order to reinforce these vulnerable links.

The development of talent together with cultural education and arts education forms the basis of a cultural system. The breeding grounds for high-quality, innovative productions are under severe pressure.

Postgraduate institutions for visual arts will lose their government grant after 2016 (2013 – 2016 is a transit period). Furthermore, in the same sector, young talents lose a podium due to the disappearance of a number of presentation institutions from the basic infrastructure. In the sector of performing arts, the production companies no longer receive a government grant. The Council is aware that big institutions for performing arts, to a certain extent, take young talents under their wings, but the essence of a production company has disappeared.

The Council also believes that the multiformity of the cultural and arts offering is in danger. This is partially due to the reduction of the provisions for development of talent, since that is the area where emerging creators realise innovative productions. However, the declining offering of dance and visual arts is also to blame. In these sectors, the basic infrastructure loses high-quality provisions of national importance.

1
Council for Culture
To innovate, to
participate! Advice
agenda cultural
policy and Cultural
basic infrastructure
The Hague, 2007
Council for Culture
Necessary choices:
Advice austerity
measures culture
2013 – 2016,
The Hague 2011.

2
Unesco makes a
distinction between the
following links in the
cultural chain: creation,
production, distribution,
accessibility and
experience.
In this chain, cultural
expressions have a
central position.
The Council also considers
the chain, in which the
artist himself has a central
position, with the
following links: education,
amateur art, arts education,
research and development,
development of talent and
international top talent.

The disappearance of the so-called 'e-culture institutions' from the basic infrastructure also constitutes a heavy loss. The digital production of arts and culture deserves its due place in the system. For many youngsters, digital arts and digitally disclosed cultural expressions are important gateways to the cultural sector.

However, the Council also saw promising developments during this assessment cycle. The spending cuts have set the sector in motion. The transition to a cultural sector that is less dependent on the government is in full swing. Many institutions are aware of the importance to tap into other income resources and are taking the necessary steps in order to do so.

However, the Council observes that there still is a world to conquer as regards the future sustainability of the business plans: the financial positions of many institutions are vulnerable, the ambitions in respect of audience outreach and income generation are unrealistically high, entrepreneurship still plays a limited role in the governance structure of institutions and often, there is no strategy in case of disappointing revenues. The next years will be crucial for the success of this cultural transition, from which the government cannot retract. It has to provide institutions with chances to build a market position through tax-friendly measures. The recent measure to decrease the VAT rate from 19% to 6% for performing arts is a good first step. The government should also stimulate the use and the offering of educational facilities - it would greatly benefit the professionalization of the policy and management of cultural institutions.

Austerity measures are now implemented at a rapid pace. As a consequence, institutions were compelled to drastically change the organisation of their primary process and operational management in a relatively short period of time. A number of institutions have entered into a close collaboration with other institutions or into a merger. The Council applauds the institutions for maintaining the offering of shows, exhibitions, services and performances to the highest possible extent. However, it is aware of the fact that the decisions, taken on the basis of this advice, have drastic consequences for the institutions, their employees and the individual artists, who work with these organisations.

This advice consists of four parts. The first part elucidates the way in which the Council proceeded in the assessment of the applications and which general observations are made on the basis of the assessments. Part 2 contains an overview of all the grant advices. The individual grant advices are included in part 3, they are presented by sector and preceded by an introduction; this part discusses sector-specific considerations and/or questions of the Secretary of State. Part 4 contains the appendices.

1.2 Request for advice and assessment framework

On 15 February, the Secretary of State of Cultural Affairs submitted his request for advice cultural basic infrastructure 2013 – 2016 to the Council (see appendix 1). With this advice, the Council answers this request and indicates which institutions it considers eligible for a grant of the national government. It concerns a grant in the context of the regulation basic infrastructure 2013 – 2016.^[3] On the basis of this advice, the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Education, Cultural Affairs and Science decides on the awarding of the grants. He will publish his decision in September 2012.

The Council makes a clear distinction between grant advices and policy advices. The present advice focuses on grant advices of individual institutions. In principle, policy advices are not included in this advice. However, the experiences and observations from this consultation cycle form the basis on which the bottlenecks in the government policy are reported and they determine the subjects that are put on the agenda for consultancy in the next period.

The applications are assessed by the Council according to the criteria from the grant scheme: quality, audience outreach, entrepreneurship, (collections of) (inter)national importance, education, geographical spreading and (for some institutions) development of talent. Furthermore, the sector Museums was also assessed with regard to substantiation of the scientific function. The request for advice and the grant scheme indicate how these criteria should be understood. In the grant scheme, meeting the so-called ‘own income’ requirement is a ground of refusal in the awarding of grants. The Council tested the own income of the institutions against this standard.^[4]

The Council assessed how the institution performs in respect of each of the criteria and considered for each criterion the feasibility and the effectiveness of the plans and ambitions. If the quality of the institution has been assessed as insufficient, this assessment cannot be compensated by a (very) positive assessment in respect of other criteria. Therefore, in these cases, the Council issued a negative grant advice and/or advised the institution to adapt the grant application.

For the assessment, the Council also considered the mission, vision and objectives of the institution. For instance, an institution can choose to emphasise a specific profile. This choice may have consequences for the performances of the institution in respect of other criteria. For instance, a focus on the development of talent may be to the disadvantage of audience outreach. The Council took such profile choices of an institution into consideration.

Furthermore, the Council took account of the place of the institution in the system. For the assessment of the criteria, the Council considered the importance of the institution in the chain and the way in which it substantiates its collaboration with other partners.

3
Regulation of the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Education, Cultural Affairs and Science, WJZ/204802 (8258), containing the rules for the subsidy of cultural expressions. When in this advice, mention is made of the ‘subsidy regulation’; reference is made to this regulation.

4
These tests were based on the information on the own income of the applicants, which was sent to the Council by letter from the Secretary of State of Cultural Affairs on 1 May 2012.

1.3 Procedure

For its advice, the Council made use of committees, which are composed by experts (*peers*). The Council set up a committee for each group of similar institutions. This assessment involved ten committees, each of which comprises approximately five experts. The experts are mainly active in the cultural field and are in each case well-acquainted with the sector to be assessed. The committees prepared a preliminary advice to the Council. It is their expertise, experience and 'professional eye' that co-determined the advice of the Council. The appendix contains an overview of the composition of the committees.

In support of the assessment, the Council appointed additional specialised expertise. Each grant application has been analysed by experts in the field of entrepreneurship (RebelGroup/Kwink Groep) and of education & development of talent (Research and Consultancy bureau Claudia de Graauw). The committees used these additional analyses to come to an assessment with respect to the relevant criteria.

The Council systematically worked towards an assessment of the applications. The committee members prepared their meeting(s) by first assessing the grant applications individually. Each of the members has, independently from one another, assigned a score per criterion, with specification of the underlying reasons. Subsequently, the committee convened in order to come to a joint assessment.

Subsequently, the assessment of the committees was submitted to the Council in the form of preliminary advices. The Council assessed the preliminary advices on the basis of the following questions:

- Is the advice in line with the basic principles of the Council, as described in paragraph 1.2?
- Is the advice properly substantiated?
- Have all the criteria been adequately treated?
- Does the advice not contradict the other advices?
- Is the advice consistent and is it clearly formulated?

Following the consultations in the Council, the preliminary advices were amended, where necessary, and established. The Council has the responsibility for the final advices.

The Council would have liked to build in a step, during which the applicants would have had the occasion to explain their application to the committee. However, this proved to be impossible due to the short advice period.

The grant advices are based on the applications submitted by the institutions to the Ministry of Education, Cultural Affairs and Science. Additionally, the Council used - if available - reports of monitoring interviews, insofar as it concerns institutions from the current basic infrastructure (2009 – 2012). For the institutions for performing arts, the Council also used reports of committee members and show visitors. In the other sectors, the committee members also visit institutions, but those visits are not recorded. Other sources, consulted by the Council are annual reports, visitation reports on the (previously) long-term subsidised institutions and other public documents.^[5]

The structure of the advice texts reflects the approach of the Council. The advice provides an assessment on the extent to which the application meets the individual requirements. The grant advice itself is based on the mutual weighing between the criteria. The grant advices can have the following outcomes:

- the institution/applicant is grant-eligible
- the institution/applicant is grant-eligible, but the Council advises the Secretary of State to connect one or more conditions to the grant award and to (instruct to) assess whether or not they are met
- the institution/applicant is not grant-eligible
- the institution/applicant is not grant-eligible and the Council advises the Secretary of State to reopen the unfulfilled place in the basic infrastructure (possibly under adjusted conditions)

1.4 **Basic infrastructure 2013 – 2016: general view**

The grant scheme, on which the Council has based its grant advices, is derived from the policy letter ‘More than quality’ and it reflects the substantive policy choices, made by the government. Independent of these substantive policy aspects the design of the regulation is detrimental to a balanced and effective basic infrastructure on a number of points.

In the opinion of the Council, the strict determination of the number of places available per sector in the basic infrastructure renders the regulation unnecessarily inflexible. The application of standard amounts contributes to this inflexibility; it is no longer possible to honour institutions with less or more financial resources. In particular for the sectors of performing arts and visual arts, the Council advises to evaluate whether or not it is possible to offer more customised solutions, in view of a better spreading and larger multiformity of cultural provisions.

Due to the use of standard amounts, the institutions have prepared their budget in such a way as to ensure that the requested grant mostly corresponds to the standard amount. The institutions are not stimulated to determine the required grant amount on the basis of commercial considerations. The Council points out the possibility to utilise a total amount per sector, possibly complemented with budget indications at institution level.

Below, the Council will discuss a number of cross-sectoral subjects. These are derived from the advice questions of the Secretary of State and from general observations following the grant applications.

118 Applications

118 applications have been assessed by the Council.^[6] The number of applications for the new four-year grant period has decreased compared to the previous period; there are less places available in the basic infrastructure. At the same time, the area of advice of the Council has expanded, because the phenomenon of the long-term grant has been abandoned. For instance, museums, orchestras and dance and opera companies form part of the assessment and the advice of the Council again.

The applications for the cultural basic infrastructure 2013 – 2016 concern a very wide range of institutions. From sectoral institutions to museums, from youth theatre companies to presentation institutions. From institutions with less than two employees to large organisations employing more than 400 employees. For the assessment of the applications, the Council took account of the differences between the institutions, their significance for the local and/or national infrastructure and their international position.

6
A list of 119 applying institutions is enclosed with the advice application (see appendix 2). The application of the African Roots Festival has been declared inadmissible by the Ministry of Education, Cultural Affairs and Science and has therefore not been assessed by the Council.

For many sectors, the regulation determines the number of places in the basic infrastructure and also indicates the grant ceiling. In some cases, it concerns one application for one place in the new basic infrastructure; while in other cases, multiple applicants compete for a limited number of places. If there are more applications than available grant-eligible places, the Council makes a choice. For museums and film festivals, there is a grant ceiling for a whole sector/category and in its advice the Council makes a proposition for the distribution of the grant over the grant-eligible applicants.

The coordination between the state, authorities and funds

In the request for advice, the Council is requested to take account of the intentions of decentralised authorities respectively funds. This is a justified request in itself, but it is impeded by the current planning of the various assessment cycles, which renders a real coordination impossible.

The Council emphasises that the relevance, and even the necessity, of coordination have only increased. However, coordination requires the presence of clear preconditions.

The Council advises the Secretary of State to clarify, before the start of the next grant period, the reasons why which cultural provisions pertain to the responsibility of the national government, and which responsibilities the different parties, including decentralised authorities, can fulfil in the system. An orderly coordination takes account of these responsibilities.

In the current situation, the cultural system would greatly benefit if, in the first instance, grants for the basic infrastructure would be awarded at a realistic pace, to be followed by the publication of the multiannual grants by the funds (in particular the Fund for Performing Arts), on the basis of which the local authorities are able to establish their cultural plans. The Council will come back to this matter later in its exploration of the basic principles of cultural policy and in an advice on the relationship between national and decentralised cultural policies.

In this cycle, the institutions only learn that they can count on financing at a late stage. The final assignments of national and decentralised grants for 2013 are only published in the autumn of 2012. In the opinion of the Council, this is too late. Cultural institutions, especially the producing and presenting institutions, plan a long time in advance. They schedule their shows, contract companies or artists and enter into artistic cooperation relationships in a timely manner. A timely planning is part of smart cultural entrepreneurship; the government, on its part, can stimulate this by conducting the grant cycles in a timely manner.

The Council informed the major municipalities (the G9) and the provinces of the approach and planning of the grant advice. This also applies to the urban advisory boards of Amsterdam, Den Haag, Groningen and Rotterdam. Consultations have been conducted with the Fund for Performing Arts on the way in which the offering of performing arts in the basic infrastructure relates to the institution/events that the fund will be financing.

Assessment and justification

From institutions which receive contributions from public resources, it can be expected that they provide a justification for their performances and functioning. However, the Council observes that, during the preceding two years, the cultural institutions were faced with varying assessment and monitoring regimes.

It is important to come to a transparent assessment and monitoring of cultural institutions and to limit the administrative burdens for the institutions to the highest possible extent by a proper coordination of authorities and funds. In 2012, the Council will issue an advice on the substantiation of the (periodic) assessment and monitoring of institutions in the cultural basic infrastructure and also consider the assessment regimes of other instances.

Sector in motion

In general, it seems that the grant applicants are not yet used to the new frameworks, within which they are assessed. Often, their prognoses and expectations are high, sometimes unrealistically high, and they often lack a convincing underpinning. This is largely due to the pace at which the institutions have to implement drastic course changes and/or spending cuts.

The Council observes that institutions need time to transform into institutions that are less dependent on public funds. This cultural transition, which is now being enforced under the pressure of the austerity measures, demands a lot of the institutions. However, given the financial situation of many situations, the urgency is high. In the coming years, the further professionalization of the management and the direction of cultural institutions will need attention and support.

In a number of cases, especially in case of supporting institutions, there has been an enforced merger. Some institutions still find themselves in the middle of this process, and this is noticeable in the application. The Council has taken this into consideration in its advice. In a number of cases, this led to a positive grant advice, under the condition of submittal of a new or more elaborate application.

1.5 Observations on the assessment criteria

The Council assessed the applications in respect of each of the criteria from the regulation. Below, the most important considerations and findings are discussed per criterion.

Quality

The Council agrees with the Secretary of State that the quality of the activities of a cultural institution is a *sine qua non*: if the collection, productions, presentations or other activities of a cultural institution do not possess sufficient quality, it does not belong in the basic infrastructure.

In the grant advice, the assessment on the quality was achieved in an intersubjective way. It is based on a joint judgement of the members of the committees on the basis of their expertise and experience with the sector and the artistic context. Therefore, they also evaluate the performances of the institutions in view of the profile and the ambitions of the institution itself.

The Council assessed the culture-creating institutions on the basis of the quality of the activities they deliver. Important aspects for the assessment are the following: the skilfulness of the activities, their originality, the expressiveness and the innovative nature. For the other institutions (museums, presentation institutions, festivals and supporting institutions), the quality is mainly assessed on the basis of a convincing positioning and the development thereof, the expressiveness and the innovative nature of the activities and/or the care and handling of collections.

Audience outreach

The audience outreach depends heavily on the profile of the institutions, since certain expressions have a limited outreach, due to their nature. This is, for instance, the case for initiatives that are focused on innovation and development, which, by definition, do not trigger the interest of large audiences. Furthermore, the deployment of resources and capacity in the field of cultural education is not always targeted to attract an as large as possible audience in the short term, but should rather be seen as an investment in the future. In its assessment of the applications, the Council has taken account of such differences.

Jointly, the applicants assume that the Dutch public will visit a cultural institution 34% more often and spend an extra 42 million Euros. Especially the sector of theatres and youth theatres count on a strong growth: 90%. Although the annual growth of visitors amounted to an average of 6% between 2005 and 2009 (Cultuur in Beeld), the expected average increase is unrealistic. The expected growth of visitors of museums also seems unrealistic, given the annual increase of merely a few percentages in this sector.

The cultural sector competes for the favour of the public with other leisure activities, such as sports and media. Recent figures indicate that visits to performing arts are sensitive to economic cycles and that the visitor numbers of subsidised institutions are stagnating instead of rising.

However, the Council sees opportunities to increase the audience outreach. This starts with the realisation of a good (artistic) product. It also requires an elaborate strategy in order to reach (potential) target audiences. Sound analyses of target audiences and visitors are indispensable for this purpose, but often they have not yet been conducted by the applying institutions.

The Council emphasises the importance of a broad approach of audience outreach: it is necessary to investigate the potential of target audiences with a different background, age, stage of life, education. The extent to which an institution is able to reach various target audiences is not only important from the viewpoint of cultural outreach and participation, but it is also an essential part of the earning strategy of an institution.

Cultural entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is more than meeting the 'own income' requirement. The Council expects from cultural institutions in the basic infrastructure that they have an orderly, future-proof operational management and, insofar as reasonably possible, generate resources from sources other than public financing. Cultural entrepreneurship is closely related to the artistic process. In the end, the cultural product is the basis for the business plan of each institution.

The consultancy bureau RebelGroup/Kwink Groep analysed the plans in respect of the entrepreneurship criterion, in support of the assessment on individual institutions by the Council. Both the quantitative aspects (such as the 'own income' standard, financial position, development of revenues and expenses) and the qualitative aspects (such as the positioning of the institution, cooperation, marketing, governance and earning model) have been taken into consideration. Although there are significant differences between the institutions, it is possible to make some general observations on the basis of the way in which the applying institutions dealt with this criterion.

In almost all the applications, the Council finds a focus on entrepreneurship. Most of the institutions are aware of the fact that they have to widen their earning model. They know their position in the field, enter into (strategic) partnerships and mention alternative income sources. Many institutions fully integrate cultural entrepreneurship in their vision. However, at the same time they fail to translate important parts into practice. More institutions should directly link their artistic vision to audience groups, partnerships and new products.

The institutions expect a growth of their own income of an average of 27% in 2013, to 36% in 2016. Theatre and youth theatre companies even foresee a growth of more than 90% of their own income, of which 60% would be generated from revenues from the public. In spite of the high expectations for the growth of sponsor contributions, it still constitutes a relatively small part of the (expected) income of the institutions.

Most institutions meet the 'own income' requirement. However, the differences between the sectors are significant: the film festivals achieve an average of 162%, opera institutions an average of 30%. A relatively large part of the presentation institutions shows huge fluctuations over the years; in a number of cases, there is a difference of a factor five between two consecutive years. The Council is of the opinion that these fluctuations are inherent to the innovative and often experimental work executed by the presentation institutions.

Successful entrepreneurship starts with ambition. On the whole, the ambitions are high to very high. This is the way the institutions react to the policy changes of the Secretary of State. However, in the preparation of the plans they appear to lack sufficient information for underpinning the strategic choices and ambitions. Most of the time, the institutions still have to build up expertise and instruments within the own organisation. Furthermore, entrepreneurship plays a too limited role in the governance structures, which are still strongly oriented towards the (political) support basis of the institution, and less towards the acquisition of the necessary expertise for the management of a cultural enterprise.

In the plans, the decline of the grant funds of the Ministry of Education, Cultural Affairs and Science is compensated by an expected increase of the grants of local authorities and by the increase of the own income. The lower grant of the Ministry of Education, Cultural Affairs and Science constitutes only for a few institutions a reason to change the internal cost structure and to, for instance, reduce the fixed costs and the management costs. For the symphonic orchestras, it is important to introduce a new collective labour agreement, which is consistent with the current, more flexible practice. The Council observes that the different orchestras individually prepare their own labour conditions package.

Different indicators show a weak financial starting position on certain places in the basic infrastructure: 20% of the institutions have limited equity and 35% of the institutions have limited financial resilience. This starting position does not necessarily have to be alarming; a substantial grant ensures the income for a few years. However, the institutions are pushed towards the market and will have to take more risks in order to develop their entrepreneurship.

When ambitions are limitedly underpinned, very high, or even unrealistic and if there is no strategy in case of disappointing revenues, the weak financial starting position becomes problematic. This is especially the case for institutions for performing arts. These institutions should receive and use more possibilities to build up equity.

The council has included the subject of cultural entrepreneurship in the advice programme for 2012 and the next years. The central question is in how entrepreneurship develops itself in the cultural sector, what the effects of the government policy are and which strategies are successful.

The Council proposes that the Secretary of State provides periodic analyses of the developments in the field of entrepreneurship and subsidised institutions. In this context, it should also be considered to which extent the analyses of the business plans, which have been conducted for this assessment cycle, can be used as baseline measurement in the coming period.

Education

With the subsidised sector shrinking, cultural education becomes even more important. It reaches people of all ages, within and outside educational structures. Starting cultural education from a young age increases cultural participation at a later age.

Together with the Education Council, the Council is preparing an advice on cultural education which will be published in the beginning of the summer. This advice is mainly focused on primary education, but also discusses general aspects, such as distribution of responsibilities of the various authorities and tasks of the cultural institutions in relation to educational structures.

Besides the specific assessments of each institution, the Secretary of State also requests a general assessment on education in the different sectors. Generally, the Council is positive about the attention paid to education in the applications of the institutions. This is a positive development compared to previous grant periods. The Council observes that the nature and the size of the applying institutions are very diverse. This has consequences for the substantiation of the educational activities, which also differ per sector or institution. There are sectors or institutions where, due to their profile or place in the chain, attention paid to education is less evident.

From the applications as a whole, it can be concluded that the cultural institutions wish to substantially intensify the relation with educational structures. They have high ambitions. For instance, the theatre companies, as well as the symphonic orchestras, want to virtually double their performances in schools. Furthermore, the institutions wish to increase the student outreach with 50%. However, this is not always translated into the educational policy of the institution itself.

The Council believes that the staff deployment and the earmarked resources are not in line with the high level of ambition. Therefore, the veracity of these plans is limited.

Furthermore, it is remarkable that the institutions mainly express their commitment to education in offer-oriented activities. The number of planned activities is large and the Council foresees a proliferation of offerings for schools. The schools themselves have a limited budget and have to fit cultural education in with the educational curriculum. Therefore, the question is whether the offering will effectively be purchased. The Council believes that quality is more important than quantity and underlines the importance of sustainable partnerships between educational structures and the institutions. Knowledge and expertise within the educational departments of the institutions about the objectives of the educational structures in respect of arts, culture and heritage will require a lot of attention of the knowledge institute for cultural education and amateur art, which yet has to be founded.

Development of talent

The development of talent is a criterion for institutions in the sector of performing arts (with the exception of youth theatres and orchestras for the accompaniment of dance and opera). For the postgraduate visual arts institutions, the development of talent is a core task. The Council agrees with the Secretary of State that larger institutions in the basic infrastructure should also take responsibility for innovation and young talent. Therefore, it also examined the activities in the area of development of talent at festivals and presentation institutions in the visual arts sector; this way it can gain insight into the developments in this area.

The Council is concerned about the development of talent in the cultural area. It is put under pressure in various sectors. The postgraduate visual arts institutions will lose their government grant after 2016 (2013 – 2016 is a transition period). In the performing arts sector, the production houses no longer receive a government grant. The Council observes that the institutions for performing arts, which have submitted an application, do not take over all the tasks of the production houses. For instance, the theatre companies mainly pick the talents who have already been active in the theatre circuit for a while. The room for experiment, which was inherent to the purpose of a production house, has unfortunately been abandoned.

In the museum sector there are also worries about the development and the flow of talent. There is no senior secondary vocational education focused on this sector, and there is no optimal alignment between scientific education and the museum sector.^[7]

On the basis of these findings, the Council advises the Secretary of State to periodically monitor the state of affairs with respect to development of talent.

7
A good example
is the Master
"Museum
Conservator"
(Museum Curator)
at the Vrije
Universiteit
Amsterdam.

(Inter)national importance

In order for an institution to be placed in the basic infrastructure, according to the (inter)national importance criterion, the institution should perform activities and/or have a collection of (inter)national importance.

All the institutions that received a positive advice represent a national interest. This can be expressed in several ways and depends heavily on the tasks and the chosen profile of the institution. It can range from the performance of shows or exhibitions that are unique to the Netherlands, to the management of a collection of national interest. Also occupying a distinctive, relevant position within a sector may represent a national interest. This is for instance the case for some supporting institutions.

International importance implies great prestige on international podiums, relevant international cooperation or huge amounts of visitors of presentations abroad.

For museums, both the international activities and the importance of the collection have been considered. The Council will go further into the matter of national responsibility for collections in the system advice on the museums.

Geographical spreading

The Council finds it very important that people throughout the country are able to make use of the cultural offering. Because of the shrinking of the basic infrastructure, the role of funds and other authorities is of great importance for the geographical spreading of the offering.

Especially in the sector of performing arts, the small and medium-sized cultural institutions will have to reach a larger audience, not only in their place of residence, but also via performances elsewhere in the country. Geographical spreading does not have the same relevance for the different sectors within the basic infrastructure. While the applications for film festivals come from three big cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht), the applications for theatre are divided over more (big) cities in the Netherlands.

For all the sectors, the Council raised the question whether the whole of the institutions to be subsidised lead to a sufficient spreading of the cultural offering. In most sectors, the regulation offers little room to apply the criterion of spreading. The sector introductions indicate which considerations have been made.

Resources for internationalisation

In paragraph 3 of the Request for Advice cultural basic infrastructure 2013 – 2016, the Secretary of State requests the advice of the Council on the distribution of international resources over the funds. An amount of 1.8 million Euros is available to the funds from the so-called HGIS-budget, which is destined for:

- activities for market expansion in foreign countries;
- stimulating a good starting position for young Dutch talent on the international market;
- a high-quality presentation of Dutch proven talent and an innovative offering at relevant presentation places.

In his request for advice, the Secretary of State already stated that not all the funds submitted elaborate plans. This did indeed appear to be the case. The policy plans of most funds provided too little information in order to provide an underpinned and balanced advice regarding the distribution of the internationalisation resources.

Meanwhile, the Secretary of State provided all the funds with the opportunity to review their policy plans and to complement them, where necessary. The Council will therefore only answer the advice question on the distribution of the internationalisation resources in its complementary advice, which is expected to be issued in the middle of July 2012.

1.7 Conclusions and recommendations

- Stimulate the development of talent and multiformity in the cultural offering.
- Introduce more tax-friendly measures in order to enable institutions to build up a market position.
- Clarify, before the start of the next grant period, why which cultural provisions pertain to the responsibility of the national government and which responsibilities the different parties, including decentralised authorities and the funds, can fulfil in the system.
- Ensure that the order in which the grant decisions are published is workable for all the parties: grant providers and grant receivers.
- Strive for a grant scheme with more flexibility, involve the benefit and necessity of the use of standard amounts and a predetermined number of places.
- Initiate and support the professionalisation of the policy and the management of cultural institutions, especially in the area of audience outreach, entrepreneurship and education.
- Provide a periodic analysis of the development in the area of entrepreneurship and development of talent.

Following this grant advice, the Council intends to provide a further exploration or advice in respect of the following subjects:^[8]

Exploration of the basic principles of the cultural system; Advice on the assessment and quality assurance of publicly financed cultural institutions; Advice on cultural entrepreneurship; Advice on the development of talent; Advice on the museum regime.

