

# Access to culture

towards a new system in 2029

## Summary

Culture is everywhere. Whether it involves listening to music on a phone, visiting an historic building, reading a book, binge-watching a TV show or dancing at a festival: the value of culture cannot be underestimated. Culture adds colour to life.

Cultural policy aims to enable cultural values to achieve their full potential for every person and for society as a whole; to nurture and develop culture, allowing it to flourish; to enable new generations to discover culture, making it accessible to anyone interested. Cultural production and practice and the experience of culture are key contributors to prosperity for all in the Netherlands.

Government authorities provide funding for culture in order to create the conditions to achieve that. This helps to ensure that culture is made available that would not otherwise be possible, in places where it would otherwise not exist; that cultural initiatives can develop; that artists/creators can achieve their artistic potential and audiences can enjoy their work and participate in it; that creative talent can develop to the full; that people across the country can practise, experience and enjoy culture; that artists/creators have the freedom to reflect on society and fulfil their essential role in and for society.

## Background to the advisory report

The way in which the Dutch government currently funds culture generally works reasonably well for some artists/creators and cultural organisations. But this certainly does not apply to everyone and definitely not to the whole country. Over the course of time, the creative and cultural sector and wider society have changed. Flaws have also developed within the system, undermining the logic of its structure. A call for change is resonating across the creative and cultural sector. The State Secretary has solicited advice from the Council for Culture on how the culture system could be revised starting from 2029. In our advisory report, we make suggestions for improving the way in which government authorities fund culture to enable it to make the best possible contribution to a rich cultural life for everyone in the Netherlands. Our report is in the form of a 'prototype', providing a broad outline and ideas that can be further developed and elaborated on the road towards 2029.

An unusual approach has been adopted in the preparation of this advisory report. The Council has deliberately prioritised creativity and made concerted efforts to involve the cultural and creative sector. This included working with design teams, expertise and focus groups, and holding stakeholder roundtable meetings and a large-scale working conference. A total of around 400 people from the cultural sector have contributed to this report.

## Towards a more accessible system for funding culture

Conversations with the cultural and creative sector have highlighted the importance of improving the accessibility of the system for government culture funding. The primary argument for this is that culture is of great value for people and society as a whole. The system should therefore aim to create the right conditions for a varied and local cultural offering, irrespective of background or place of residence. It should also help to ensure that artists/creators and cultural organisations from a wide range of art disciplines are not only seen, but also have the opportunity to create

work and to develop. If everyone in the Netherlands is to truly benefit from the values of culture, this will require a more level playing field when it comes to accessing funding.

In its current state, the system is not sufficiently open to the diversity of art forms, artistic practices, artists/creators and cultural organisations that we see in the sector. Artists/creators and organisations in disciplines that are currently underrepresented or that work across or between disciplines deserve equal recognition, appreciation and the opportunity to achieve their artistic and audience potential. The system is less accessible for cultural organisations and artists/creators who do not fit easily within a (single) discipline or conform to the prevailing views about quality. The system could also be more effective in challenging artists/creators and cultural organisations to reach out to a wider public.

Moreover, the national government is currently not doing enough to encourage more local access to cultural activities and facilities across the country. This varies too much across the regions and national government funding is unevenly spread across the country.

For such a vital sector, an increased focus on education and talent development and efforts to forge more links between amateur and professional art are also essential.

Finally, the procedures for submitting applications and accounting for the spending of funds are currently insufficiently tailored to the practices that prevail in the sector and among the artists/creators and organisations for whom the funding is intended. Besides this, the system can at times appear illogical in structure.

The current system has its strengths, such as a clear focus on artistic quality, its contribution to the Netherlands' strong international cultural reputation and its determination to ensure strong disciplinary ecosystems, assuming that the discipline is included within the system. It is also reasonably transparent and provides incentives to provinces and municipalities to engage in (co)funding. It is important that these strengths are not overlooked. Equally, the weaknesses and flaws that we identified above cannot be sufficiently rectified by adopting a different approach to the existing system or tweaking it.

The challenge will be to strike a balance between stability and dynamism, between cherishing what we have and embracing the new. These things are not mutually exclusive and can exist side-by-side within a system that is more accessible in various different ways.

### *Improved access through focus on every region*

A more accessible system will mean that national government contributes to culture in every region of the country. This does not mean that the cultural activities and level of facilities available have to be identical everywhere. That would be impossible and is also unnecessary. But the regional variations are currently too great. The place where talented creators live or work is likely to be a strong determining factor in whether they will go on to have opportunities and the chance of being discovered. There are strong regional variations in terms of which cultural facilities are available locally and accessible, what can be seen and heard at theatres, concert halls, music venues, cinemas and museums and what opportunities there are for cultural participation. The funding available from national government is unevenly spread across the country. As a result, regions that are culturally strong are increasing in strength whereas opportunities and facilities in other regions are declining. We want to see a greater focus on culture in other parts of the country. Of course, this will also require continued commitment on the part of the provinces and local municipalities.

### *Increased access by opening up to a wide range of art forms, artistic practices and types of artists/creators*

In a more accessible system, a wider variety of artists/creators, styles and ways of creating art and sharing it with the public will be eligible for funding. Scarce resources will be more fairly distributed. There is a need for greater openness to different types of artists/creators, views of what constitutes art, to the different ways of exhibiting and collaborating and to multi- and interdisciplinarity. Much of this is underrepresented in the current system, partly as a result of the narrow view of art and quality and because some disciplines or artists/creators and organisations that work across disciplines can fall between the cracks when it comes to funding or schemes available. As a result of this, artists/creators and organisations do not have an equal opportunity to develop and create works. In addition, any cultural activities that do receive funding ultimately reach only a portion of the potential public. The existing offering does not appeal to everyone and many feel unrepresented by the culture that receives funding. A new system needs to provide space for the diversity within the cultural and creative sector, for future cultural developments and therefore also for different audiences.

### *Increased access to education, talent development and links with the amateur sector*

A more accessible system will place greater focus on education and talent development. These need to be more accessible for everyone. Currently, the system is failing to contribute sufficiently to equal opportunities for young people to engage with culture and develop creatively. Cultural education needs to be more firmly embedded in the school curriculum and outside it. The funding for talent development lacks consistency. There also needs to be a closer link between amateurs and professionals. In any new system, the distinction drawn between the world of professionals and amateurs needs to be less strict.

### *Increased access through more tailored procedures*

The current system places too great an administrative burden on artists/creators and organisations and is too time-consuming. The procedures are insufficiently aligned with creative practices and fail to take sufficient account of the diversity within the sector. Funding authorities fail to coordinate sufficiently with each other, leaving artists/creators and cultural organisations facing multiple requirements and all kinds of application and reporting obligations.

## **Prototype for a new approach to government funding for culture**

We have several suggestions for achieving a more accessible system.

### *Clearer allocation of responsibilities and better coordination between government authorities*

A 'Framework Act for Culture' will form the statutory basis for the new system. The duty of care for culture held by provinces and local municipalities will also be embedded in this. National government, the provinces and local municipalities will reach new agreements concerning the content of that duty of care and the allocation of responsibilities and cooperation between government authorities. There will be better coordinating mechanisms between government authorities. This will create a better working relationship in which the different layers of governance act as a single government, taking responsibility for culture in the Netherlands.

### *A single national culture fund divided into departments operating at provincial level or in the Caribbean Netherlands*

In the new system, a single national culture fund will be responsible for the funding of culture by national government. The six existing funds will be incorporated within this new fund. The responsibility for grants and subsidies for cultural organisations currently provided via the Ministry and the Council for Culture will also transfer to the new fund.

This will ensure that funding is in the hands of a single body that is able to gain a fuller and more cohesive overview of the sector and thereby prevent flaws from emerging in the system. In cases where there is significant variation in the cultural and creative sector, unity within the organisation will help to embrace that diversity. This will prevent disciplines and multi-/interdisciplinarity from falling between the cracks between funding organisations.

Organisational dividing lines in the responsibility for funding of parts of the sector will also disappear, for example between professionals and amateurs and between the arts and the creative industry.

Within the organisation of the new fund, knowledge of the different subsectors and disciplines will be safeguarded. At the same time, the fund will have departments operating at provincial level or in the Caribbean Netherlands in order to ensure that the regional perspective is more firmly embedded. These departments will serve as the general office for government funding available to artists/creators and cultural organisations in that specific area. For this purpose, the departments will have a budget specifically earmarked for their area and will work with staff who have a good knowledge of that area. Based on a national framework, this will therefore guarantee a national and international quality assessment about subsidy and grant applications that is rooted in the regions. A national department will be responsible for funding cultural organisations in a national portfolio and any activities that clearly transcend individual regions.

### *A broad definition of art and quality*

The new system will be founded on a broad definition of art and quality. It will be open to multiple voices in terms of how art is viewed. Quality will be approached from a range of different perspectives, and greater value will be placed on audience appeal and how artists/creators and cultural organisations relate to society based on their artistic qualities. Quality will also be assessed in a wider context. This means that disciplines, genres and styles will be assessed according to their own merits and funding authorities will take greater account of the geographic context in which artists/creators and cultural organisations are working and sharing their work with the public.

### *More openness and variation in funding possibilities*

The new system will have a more open and varied funding methodology that can effectively respond to diversity, differences and dynamism within the sector. Funding mechanisms will be less compartmentalised around disciplines and will not be specific to the type of organisation – for example, a festival, museum, platform or production company – that is eligible to apply. The system will also operate more varied types of grants and subsidies and alternative types of funding, such as guarantees. It will also have a balanced structure, creating a more level playing field in terms of funding for large institutions, medium-sized and small organisations and individual artists/creators.

As part of this national culture fund methodology, there will be a separate regime for a limited number of large or unique cultural organisations within the national portfolio. That regime will include a longer-term perspective based on funding for eight years.

Finally, there will be an ongoing assessment of how the requirements, obligations and criteria linked to the funding methodologies can be adapted in line with the way in which artists/creators

and cultural organisations work. In this, the fund will ensure that requirements and obligations incentivise collaboration and do not actively encourage excessively rapid turnover of productions and exhibitions.

### *Procedures and working methods that are more in line with creative practices*

The procedures and working methods applied by government funding authorities will be as far as possible in line with the creative practices in the sector. Having more varied working methods will guarantee that different artists/creators and organisations have more equal opportunities for funding. To achieve this, funding authorities will actively seek out artists/creators and cultural organisations that may be eligible for funding. There will be greater variation in the application procedures, by reducing the linguistic complexity, providing options for the verbal explanation of plans and by means of phased assessments. Monitoring and accountability will focus more on the conversation about the objectives that the artist/creator or organisation in receipt of funding and the funding authority aim to achieve.

### *A varied group of people will be involved in decisions and assessments*

A wide and varied group of people will be involved in any decisions about policy, the design of funding mechanisms, assessments and advice. This will ensure a variety of perspectives at all times and guarantee that multiple voices are involved in decision-making and assessments. All relevant knowledge and experience will be at the table and there will always be people involved who are able to assess art forms on their own merits and who have a good understanding of the specific context of disciplines and the specific region. Diversity in key positions within cultural organisations will continue to be encouraged and efforts will be made to ensure regular throughput within these organisations, in part by setting maximum terms of appointment.

### *What next: the process of change*

A lot of further work will be needed in the run-up to the introduction of the new system with effect from 1 January 2029. Where possible, this time can also be put to good use by working with or experimenting and testing alternative forms and mechanisms of funding, in field tests and pilots, for example. There will also be a need for investment programmes: in order to build or extend infrastructure that can be consolidated under the new system. We consider it to be important that throughout the process of change there is an ongoing conversation that involves the sector and makes effective use of the creativity of artists/creators and other employees of cultural organisations.

In conclusion: irrespective of the system, government funding of culture will always be a matter of distribution. No system review can ever result in the situation in which everyone who makes a claim for government funding actually receives it. The system of distribution can, however, suffer as a result of choices made in structuring the system and the organisation of decision-making, but also because of limited budgets. Currently, that budget is too tight. Additional budget will be required in order to introduce and effectively operate the new system.<sup>1</sup> Increased focus on all parts of the country and recognition and acknowledgement of the whole, widening range of art forms and practices simply requires more money. Some of this will be from incidental resources in order to ensure a smooth transition. However, the macro budget for the specific cultural policy will need to be permanently increased by €200 million. In addition, in view of the importance of ensuring continued access, the reduced VAT rate that currently applies for culture must be maintained.

## Give the Caribbean Netherlands a designated position within the system

Helena is a retired teacher and the mother of three children. She gave singing and music lessons on Statia. No longer working and with all her children studying in the United States, Helena has all the time she needs to spend with her husband Siegfried doing the things they enjoy. Helena loves music. Now that she has time to spare, she would like to attend some concerts, taking full advantage of all the different options to choose from. In the cultural agenda for Curaçao, she notices that her favourite singer and pianist are scheduled to perform together. Helena and Siegfried do have some spending money, but with three children studying abroad, getting to Curaçao is too expensive. So, Helena watches the concerts on Facebook and YouTube instead. She and Siegfried hope that one day, they will be able to experience a live concert again.

The dance school that Coritza runs on the island of Saba is set to close. The school building where the lessons take place has been flooded by the constant rain and it will take at least a year until the damage is repaired. Coritza cannot move her lessons to a different location. There isn't a suitable one on the island. When she has to cancel her lessons, she sees her income decline. Fortunately, she has another job opportunity in the offing. A while ago, a friend who organises dance lessons on a cruise ship asked her to take on a permanent job training cheerleaders in Miami. This will earn her a good salary, much more than on the island. Originally Coritza was planning to say no, because she prefers teaching dance to her 'own' young talented students. But with her teaching venue now disappearing, it makes sense to move to Miami where her financial situation and career opportunities will be better. So she decides to leave. She was the only dance teacher on the island.

Ignacio is a promising visual artist who was trained at academies in the European Netherlands. Born and bred on the island of Bonaire, Ignacio always wanted to set up his own artist's practice on Bonaire. He gains such inspiration from the island, the people, the ocean and nature and this enables him to produce work of high quality. Ignacio wants to apply to one of the national government culture funds in order to develop new work, but this is proving very difficult. The criteria outlined in the scheme completely fail to reflect his situation on Bonaire. He is lacking a local point of contact from the fund or a mentor on Bonaire to help and support him as a newly-graduated artist. Ignacio has no idea where to start. He is considering bringing an end to his artist's practice or relocating back to the European Netherlands.



As parts of the Netherlands, Bonaire (*Boneiru*), Statia and Saba are also subject to the statutory requirement to create the conditions for cultural activities and their development and expansion. The so-called BES Islands – together forming the Caribbean Netherlands – are public entities within the country of the Netherlands.<sup>2</sup> As such, they are part of the government funding system for culture.<sup>3</sup> Creating the right conditions for the development of cultural activities – and achieving the four objectives of cultural policy – will require designated and targeted provision within the system, in view of the islands' situation.

Curaçao, Aruba and Saint Martin are outside the government funding system for culture because they are autonomous countries within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands (*Statuut voor het Koninkrijk*) does not specifically name culture policy as a matter for the Kingdom,<sup>4</sup> but does state that cultural relationships between the countries are a matter for consultation.<sup>5</sup> It would be advisable for cultural relations between the four countries to be intensified, in consultation and based on equality.<sup>6</sup>

Proposals:

- Establish an investment programme in the short term in order to build a cultural infrastructure in the Caribbean Netherlands;
- Set up a Caribbean Netherlands department within the national culture fund, with a local presence on each of the three islands and an earmarked budget.

#### **A special part of the Netherlands<sup>7</sup>**

Bonaire, Statia and Saba are islands in the Caribbean Sea. They have a combined population of almost 30,000 people, 24,000 of whom live on Bonaire. Bonaire in particular has seen rapid population growth in recent years.<sup>8</sup> Many of the island residents have Papiamentu (*Papiamentu*) or English as their first language. The governance structure is different from the situation in the European Netherlands. The island governments are responsible for local cultural policy. The islands are not part of a province that can step in and set aside budget for culture alongside national government.

The small scale of the local communities makes collaboration and sharing essential. The critical mass required for fully-fledged independent facilities staffed on a full-time basis is lacking. Professionals working in the cultural sector, such as music teachers, have to combine jobs and assignments. On the other hand, because these are islands, it is not possible for inhabitants to go to a nearby municipality for a drawing or dance lesson, concert or theatre production. In order to access culture, they are dependent on the facilities on the island and on digital channels. However, with the exception of some museums, there are very few physical amenities, such as theatres or cinemas. There are some festivals on the islands.

Each of the islands maintains close bonds with other islands and countries within the Caribbean area, in addition to relationships with the European Netherlands. Because these are small, close-knit island communities, culture tends to be strongly linked to their own identity, tradition and heritage.<sup>9</sup> Each island is unique, with its own specific situation and cultural identity. At the same time, the colonial past and history of slavery have an impact on present-day life. Each island has a different approach to dealing with this painful past and healing from it.

### **7.1 Establish an investment programme in the short term**

In order to promote accessibility for artists/creators, cultural organisations and the public on Bonaire, Saba and Statia, it will be necessary to develop and extend the cultural infrastructure on the islands and make available government funding for this purpose and to design a cultural

<sup>2</sup> Also referred to colloquially as the 'special municipalities'. See Van Rijn, 2019, pp. 749-751.

<sup>3</sup> Section 1a, Cultural Policy (Special-Purpose Funding) Act (*Wet op het specifiek cultuurbeleid*).

<sup>4</sup> Article 3, Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands; Van Rijn, 2019, pp. 145-148.

<sup>5</sup> Article 37 2(a), Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands (See Van Rijn, 2019, p. 188). That consultation takes the form of the regular Ministry of Education, Culture and Science Four-Country Consultation (*Vierlandenoverleg OCW*)

<sup>6</sup> A proposal has now been put forward to establish a new culture fund in order to strengthen cultural collaboration between the countries (Education, Culture and Science, 2023b).

<sup>7</sup> Oostindie & Veenendaal, 2022, pp. 88-93, pp. 104-113; Van Rijn, 2019, pp. 750-755.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2023/16/bevolking-caribisch-nederland-in-2022-met-bijna-1-7-duizend-toegenomen>

<sup>9</sup> Van Bennekom, 2012, p. 26 and p. 68; Oostindie & Veenendaal, 2022, p. 93; Groenewoud, 2021, pp. 5-7.



policy that incentivises artistic development and a diverse public offering on a permanent basis. In the coming years, this will require an investment programme from national government in consultation with the islands.

In 2022, the island governments and the State Secretary for Culture and Media signed a culture covenant. Together, they are developing a long-term cultural policy and a strong cultural base on the islands, with a focus on cultural education, talent development, cultural participation, cultural heritage, libraries and archive storage facilities. As part of what was agreed in the covenant, the islands are also developing and implementing so-called cultural agendas. We recommend that these agreements be further developed by working with the island governments to investigate whether an investment programme can be part of the cultural agendas.<sup>10</sup>

After an assessment of the local needs, efforts must be made to identify ways of putting the results into practice. It will be necessary to identify what public facilities and amenities are already present on each island and which of these may be suitable for collaborating and sharing facilities with cultural amenities and activities. Investments are required in both the physical infrastructure and in knowledge and expertise. These investments must emphatically have a long-term impact; it must be possible to continue operations for many years. After a one-off boost, structural resources will be needed to keep the infrastructure strong and healthy.

## 7.2 Set up a Caribbean Netherlands department within the national culture fund

In line with the basic model for a new system, we propose setting up a specific department for the BES Islands within the national government fund. This department must have a local presence on each of the three islands. Just like the departments for each province in the European Netherlands, a department of this kind, coordinated by the national fund, can operate with local expertise in close proximity to artists/creators, cultural organisations and the public. The department will work with a budget that has been specifically earmarked for the islands.

### WHY?

In view of the islands' special status, the system needs to include a specific and targeted component for the Caribbean Netherlands in order to guarantee ongoing funding for the operation and maintenance of cultural amenities on the BES Islands and to provide long-term support to activities and local talent. This will require a specific approach of its own, as the cultural climate on the islands differs significantly from that in the European Netherlands. Therefore, European systems and approaches are not appropriate for the situation on the islands. It will be necessary to effectively align funding mechanisms and working procedures with the situation on each island.

Previous efforts have already been made to provide financial support to culture on the islands, but these have not resulted in permanent improvements.<sup>11</sup> Many artists/creators and cultural organisations on the islands find that the initiatives developed from the European Netherlands remain distant from their own working practices; they experience these as 'for us, about us, without us'.<sup>12</sup> In addition, any focus given to the Caribbean Netherlands tends to be fragmented. Currently, there is plenty of spending aimed at stakeholders on the European side of the ocean –

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<sup>10</sup> Culture Covenant 2022-2025 between the Ministry of Education, Culture & Science and the Public Entities of the Caribbean Netherlands, 27 September 2022 (*Cultuurconvenant 2022-2025 tussen het ministerie van OCW en de openbare lichamen Caribisch Nederland*, 27 september 2022 <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2022/09/27/cultuurconvenant-met-caribisch-nederland-getekend>).

<sup>11</sup> The KulturA subsidy scheme, for example (see Adams, 2014; Bezemer, 2011).

<sup>12</sup> Berentsen, 2021, p. 13.

including culture coaches and contact persons of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the national culture funds – when in fact what is needed is local capacity. A local presence is crucial. There is a need for key figures with a good understanding of the local sector and local standards and values who also have an insight into the European situation. They will be able to reduce the distance between the sector, facilities and funding opportunities.<sup>13</sup>

People living on the islands do not have the option of visiting another local municipality nearby that is a centre of culture, where major cultural organisations are based. The activities funded nationally are virtually unreachable for island residents, unlike the situation for residents of the European Netherlands who live in small municipalities. In fact – and partly also on a formal basis – artists/creators and cultural organisations on the BES Islands currently have only limited access to government funding that is essential for activities, facilities and professional development. It is true that the national culture funds and private funds are increasingly funding culture on the islands.<sup>14</sup> The existing national culture funds are now making schemes specifically or exclusively available to artists/creators and cultural organisations on the islands. The funds are also attempting to improve their own visibility and accessibility on the islands, partly through the development of a joint information desk.<sup>15</sup> Cultuur+Ondernemen, the knowledge centre for entrepreneurship in the cultural and creative sector, is collaborating with microfinance organisation Qredits on the BES Culture Loan (*BES-Cultuurlening*), for which entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sector are eligible.<sup>16</sup>

Despite the increasing focus on the islands, there are still obstacles that make access to government funding difficult, such as the geographical and mental distance between the European and Caribbean Netherlands. Despite the efforts of the culture funds, the funding opportunities available from national government are not effectively enough aligned to meet the needs and demand of artists/creators and cultural organisations on the islands. Artists/creators and cultural organisations on Bonaire, Statia and Saba say that they struggle to make headway with the existing funding opportunities. The funds on the other side of the ocean are literally and figuratively distant from their working practice.<sup>17</sup> Artists/creators face cultural differences in terms of working methods and codes of behaviour. Assessors find it difficult to evaluate applications from the islands properly.<sup>18</sup> According to the people we spoke to from the Caribbean Netherlands, the BES Islands also have their own rhythm: informal and personal forms of interaction and contacts are important there.<sup>19</sup> This is at odds with the bureaucratic working methods in the European Netherlands. Language can also create obstacles. While Dutch is the dominant language for the funding authorities, potential applicants from the Caribbean Netherlands are more likely to be fluent in Papiamentu or English.<sup>20</sup> The language used in the system therefore has a further limiting effect on access to it for artists/creators on the BES Islands.

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<sup>13</sup> Van Haeren, Van der Leden & Nuchelmans, 2021, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Groenewoud, 2021, p. 9; Berentsen, 2021, p. 15. See also <https://www.rijksdienstcn.com/onderwijs-cultuur-wetenschap/cultuur-en-media>

<sup>15</sup> <https://cultuurparticipatie.nl/actueel/99/fonds-vergroot-bereikbaarheid-in-caribisch-deel-koninkrijk>;  
<https://www.stimuleringsfonds.nl/nieuws/rijkscultuurfondsen-vergroten-bereikbaarheid-in-caribisch-deel-koninkrijk>;  
<https://www.letterenfonds.nl/nl/caribisch-gebied>; <https://www.mondriaanfonds.nl/actueel/nieuws/samenwerking-voor-vergroting-bereik-caribisch-deel-koninkrijk>;  
[https://fondspodiumkunsten.nl/nl/search/actueel/nieuws/samenwerking\\_rijkscultuurfondsen\\_vergroot\\_bereikbaarheid\\_in\\_caribisch\\_gebied](https://fondspodiumkunsten.nl/nl/search/actueel/nieuws/samenwerking_rijkscultuurfondsen_vergroot_bereikbaarheid_in_caribisch_gebied).

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.cultuur-ondernemen.nl/diensten/bes-cultuurlening>

<sup>17</sup> Benhammou, 2021, pp. 34-35.

<sup>18</sup> Berentsen, 2021, p. 14 and p. 17.

<sup>19</sup> See also Berentsen, 2021, p. 14.

<sup>20</sup> Van Bennekom, 2012, p. 218.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The Caribbean Netherlands' department will have its own earmarked budget, just like the other departments. Depending on the formula applied for distributing the budget of fund departments, a correction may be necessary for the islands or a different approach to setting the level of the budget. Otherwise the budget would be too limited to be of any use. The lack of a provincial layer of governance makes it legitimate for the national government to become involved at an earlier stage and acknowledge its duty to act as the government authority responsible for funding.<sup>21</sup> The average amount per inhabitant can be used as a guideline in calculating the total budget for national government subsidies.<sup>22</sup> In addition, there is also budget for the islands linked to other branches of cultural policy (e.g. archives, libraries and heritage management).

Key areas of focus will be:

- Work on the basis of a vision of the cultural infrastructure *for each island* but an integrated cultural policy as a whole. Cultural facilities on the islands are closely interrelated. The same applies to education, participation and professional artistic practice for the different subsectors, disciplines and styles.
- Work with the island governments and the RCN (National Office for the Caribbean Netherlands) to investigate how a department for the islands within the national culture fund can collaborate with them to achieve workable relationships and effective coordination of the spending of resources.
- Tap into the strength of the island communities. The emphasis should be on aligning with and promoting local initiatives in collaboration with the community and other social domains, such as education, healthcare and welfare.
- For each island, explore the establishment of a multifunctional cultural centre staffed by people living on the island who know it well. This could be a building with an auditorium for theatre, music and dance, a film screen, rehearsal and workshop area. This kind of centre helps to forge local links, supports and encourages (local) initiatives and talent development, pursues grassroots initiatives and serves as a source of information about private and public funding.
- Give creative talents on the islands the chance to develop, including overseas, and the opportunity to establish a professional practice on the island. For that purpose, make efforts to improve the attractiveness of the islands for setting up local business and offer incentives for people to return, for example in the form of a grant programme for local talent.<sup>23</sup>
- In addition to supporting cultural organisations, also work with small-scale funding for local projects; small amounts with few administrative burdens.
- Cultural facilities and activities that rely on local infrastructure can be enriched and deepened through collaboration with artists/creators and organisations within and beyond the specific island – based on equality. This could include the European Netherlands, Curaçao, Aruba, Saint Martin or neighbouring countries and islands in the region, such as St. Kitts. This collaboration could take the form of buddy programmes, shared programming at festivals, reciprocal cultural offices or residences. This kind of collaboration is already happening and can be further expanded.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Van Rijn, 2019, p. 754.

<sup>22</sup> Currently, the national government budget is approximately 28.50 euros per inhabitant per year. After the budget increase suggested in Chapter 14, this would be around 40 euro per inhabitant per year.

<sup>23</sup> Luckmann-Meijer, 2021, pp. 46-49.

<sup>24</sup> Groenewoud, 2021, p. 7.