



Introduction



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INTRODUCTION

The Association for Cultural Enterprises is pleased to announce year three of the Seeds of Change Prize, designed to support a sustainable initiative at a cultural organisation within our membership.

This funding opportunity aims to empower an organisation or organisations to deliver and design a sustainable project that should foster **community engagement**, promote the adoption of **sustainable practices**, and explore innovative new materials and technologies to create a new **commercial income stream** or to **significantly enhance an existing one**. We are also looking for the project to offer a degree of scale and designed to be replicated across the sector.

With a budget of **£10,000**, this programme aims to make a meaningful impact on local communities by encouraging creativity, sustainability, and collaboration.

You can apply for any figure up to and including **£10,000**, with the objectives and criteria set out in this document.

Discover our 2024 and 2025 Prize Fund Winners and Finalists [here](#).

PREVIOUS FINALISTS

Seeds of Change is designed to support and encourage sustainable initiatives within the cultural sector. Three projects were shortlisted for both the 2024 and 2025 prizes, based on their creativity and potential to be replicated across the sector, inspiring other venues to think about sustainable ways of generating income.

Thank you to [Insole Court Trust](#), [National Theatre](#) and [Fruitmarket](#) for your compelling and competitive 2024 entries and to [The Art House](#), [Fuel](#) and [The Hepworth Wakefield](#) for the inspiring 2025 entries.

The 2024 Seeds of Change £10,000 prize fund was awarded to Edinburgh based gallery Fruitmarket for its innovative Future Makers project. Future Makers is a mentoring programme investing in the future of eco-conscious making, selling and buying. It aims to support 10 local makers over 12 months to create bespoke products that are ethically and sustainably produced.

The 2025 prize fund was awarded to The Art House and their ambitious From Art to Cloth project. From Art to Cloth is a truly sustainable, collaborative project that looks to engage the wider community and creatives to learn about the natural dye process coming together to create bespoke fabrics in order to create a unique selection of goods for retail.

Head to the website to discover more about the successful [2024](#) and [2025](#) finalists to help inspire and guide your application.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES



01. Foster Sustainability in Income Generation

Encourage cultural organisations to incorporate sustainable practices in their income generating operations and project delivery, reducing their environmental impact and promoting a more sustainable future.



02. Community Engagement and Education

Support projects that actively engage local communities, providing educational and interactive experiences that raise awareness of sustainability and empower individuals to adopt sustainable practices.



03. Innovation and Collaboration

Encourage the use of innovative materials and technologies in the design and delivery of commercial cultural projects, fostering creativity and pushing boundaries to achieve sustainable outcomes.



04. Legacy Building

Equip cultural organisations with the necessary tools, knowledge, and resources to develop and deliver sustainable projects, promoting long-term sustainability within the sector.

This prize fund is designed to support:

- The establishment or significant enhancement of a sustainable income stream
- Commissioning research or consultancy to support the introduction of a sustainable income stream
- Projects that will lower carbon emissions or going plastic-free
- Creating tools to communicate and educate visitors in environmental responsibility e.g. marketing and design

Who can apply?

- Members and Associate Members of the Association for Cultural Enterprises
- Your organisation must be based in the United Kingdom
- A collaboration between two or more organisations, for example a venue and an Associate Member, is welcome

Eligibility Criteria:

- Cultural organisations, museums, and galleries that are current members of the Association for Cultural Enterprises and situated in the UK are eligible to apply.
- We are looking to support a new initiative or to significantly enhance an existing one.
- Proposed projects should have a clear focus on sustainability and align with the program objectives.
- The project should clearly demonstrate how it will contribute to sustainable income generation or making your organisation more financially secure.
- Projects should have a defined timeline, demonstrating the ability to be completed within the allocated funding and time frame.
- Applications must outline the intended impact on any of our objectives and engagement with the project.
- Organisations should demonstrate their capacity to deliver the proposed project successfully.
- The fund can support existing staff in delivery of the project, but must not cover core expenditure.

Not Eligible for Funding:

- Any project that has already been delivered or is underway
- Any project that has already received external funding
- Daily core operating and utilities costs
- Non members of the Association for Cultural Enterprises are not eligible

Selection Criteria:

Once you have submitted your application, we will check that we have everything that we require and will be in touch to let you know when you can expect a decision.

Should we require any further information we may be in touch after the deadline. Should we not receive any submissions that we feel meet the criteria, we do reserve the right to extend the deadlines.

Evaluation & Selection Process:

Our internal team will be responsible for the shortlist selection process.

Winners will be chosen by the Association for Cultural Enterprises from all complete entries received before the closing date. The decision of the Association for Cultural Enterprises regarding any aspect of the competition is final and binding and no correspondence will be entered into about it.

Our final panel of judges are made up of specialists from within our Membership, who sit within our Sustainability Working Group.

We will treat all project proposals fairly.

Timelines & Deadlines:

- Applications open **24th March 2026**
- Applications close **19th June 2026**
- While the project outcomes and impact may exceed 12 months we expect the prize fund to be invoiced within the first year
- We will issue the prize fund within thirty working days of the Prize Fund Deed of Grant being received

Payments & Invoicing:

We will issue the prize fund within thirty days of the Prize Fund Deed of Grant being received.

Terms & Conditions:

1. I have read the terms and conditions supplied with this application
2. I am authorised to submit an application on behalf of my organisation(s)
3. For collaborative or group applications I acknowledge that I am authorised to submit an application on behalf of the organisations mentioned in the application
4. My organisation is able to accept the terms and conditions for this prize, and understands and is able to pay back any grant funds prize money should the terms and conditions not be met
5. I acknowledge that my organisation will abide by any further terms set out in an awarding letter and agreement should my organisation be successful in its application
6. Acknowledge Seeds of Change and the Association for Cultural Enterprises as a funder on any physical or digital materials, including marketing and press, association with the project
7. Participate in any marketing or press activity to promote Seeds of Change
8. Spend the allocated prize fund within the first twelve months of receiving the funding
9. Submit a final report within twelve months of receiving the funds detailing the outcome(s) of the project
10. The prize fund must not be used for any other purposes other than that stated on the application

Publicity & Data Protection:

By entering the competition, entrants consent to the use of their personal data by the Association for Cultural Enterprises for the purposes of administration of the competition.

Winners further agree to participate in any reasonable publicity required by the Association for Cultural Enterprises which may include the publication of names and photographs in any media.

To find out more about how the Association for Cultural Enterprises looks after personal data, please see our [Privacy Policy](#).

Wider Sustainability Goals:

Seeds of Change is delivered by the Association for Cultural Enterprises, an Arts Council England funded organisation.

We referenced the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) while developing the award. We would recommend reading goals 8, 9, 11, and 12 when making your application.

- **Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth**
- **Goal 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure**
- **Goal 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities**
- **Goal 12 Responsible Consumption and Production**

Wider Sustainability Goals contd:

The Seeds of Change Prize supports the wider Arts Council England's Investment Principle: Environmental Sustainability and Dynamism. The Association for Cultural Enterprises is an Investment Principles Support Organisation (IPSO).

1. **Environmental Sustainability** - Demonstrating how you will embed environmental thinking in everything you do, from operations and logistics to considering how creation, programming and partnerships can help support your commitment and provoke debate.
 - a. Collect, analyse and communicate your environmental data.
 - b. Demonstrate how this project contributes to your wider environmental commitment.
 - c. Provide relevant training from your data, experiences and outcomes with your team and the wider sector.
2. **Dynamism** - Responding to the challenges of the next decade and creating a business model that is flexible and able to adapt to changing environments. Understanding the value you create for the communities you serve, whilst considering the needs of those you are yet to reach.
 - a. Demonstrate how you will take an entrepreneurial approach to developing and optimising your income streams and innovate your business model.
 - b. Recognise the diverse knowledge, skills and experience within your team and commit time and resources to continue to develop your team.
 - c. Use data to aid strategic decision making, to share with the wider sector and ensure that skills and confidence is built up across your organisation.