

Renovation of the Nordic Mobility and Artists-in-Residence Programmes

Background

In 2005-2007 the joint mobility and artist-in-residence programmes of the Nordic countries were radically renovated. This reorientation and organisation reform had a wider ramification in the joint Nordic planning work, which aims at increasing the competitive edge of the Nordic countries and the Baltic Sea Region in the globalising world. The reorganization was started by the Nordic culture ministers in their October 2005 meeting in Reykjavik where they decided to shut down 9 of the 21 committees and institutions within the system of the Nordic Cultural Co-operation .

The final products of the subsequent swift planning process were two frame programmes, the Mobility and Residence Programme and the Art and Culture. Both programmes have a modular structure and offer time limited project-type funding. The new co-ordinating and implementing body Kulturkontakt Nord (Nordic Culture Point) started to function in January 2007, new expert referee groups appointed soon afterwards and the first application round and funding decision were made in the latter half of the year.

Only the Mobility and Residence Programme is reviewed here. It consists of three modules which all are interesting from a wider global, pan-European and European regional points of view.

How it works

The Mobility and Residency programme is a cross-sector framework programme which provides funding for network building, residency centres and transborder individual mobility. It is open for professional artists and practitioners, producers and cultural operators in all fields of art and culture.

During the year 2008, the budget for the Mobility and Residency Programme is 10 million DKK (1.3 million EUR). From this amount 283 222 EUR is reserved for the residency module and the rest is divided between the mobility and the network modules.

Network Module

The module for network funding provides support for network building within the Nordic art world. New permanent institutional structures cannot be created through this module; yet, besides favouring new actors and partnership constellations, it also improves the conditions of established cultural institutions to work together, develop partnerships and learn from each other. The network funding is supposed to intensify the search for new personal contacts and modes of collaboration and thus strengthens the opportunities of the Nordic art world and artists to compete for international funding and for visibility in European and global art markets.

The network funding has two forms. *Short-term network* funding is granted for activities lasting one year. The maximum amount of the funding is 25 000 EUR and it will cover a maximum of 70% of the total expenses. The network must meet the costs of the rest of the financing itself and specify its source in the application. With a well-reasoned application, the network may obtain additional funding for one more year of activities. After this period, a well-functioning network may consider applying for long-term network funding. *Long-term network funding* is intended for activities lasting up to three years. The maximum amount of funding is 150 000 EUR and it will cover a maximum of 50 per cent of the total expenses. The other half must come from other sources, which must be specified in the application. (They have no more the continuation clause, thus delete).

Short term funding presupposes that the network has well-defined objectives and aims at creating new interfaces within its own field and, especially, through interdisciplinary initiatives, co-operation and partnerships. *Long term network funding* presupposes that the network has a well-defined action plan for realising innovative ideas and initiatives and is in all its activities transparent and communicative and effectively disseminates information about its functions and results.

The network funding can be applied by Nordic cultural and art institutions, organisations and artists who work effectively in building networks across activity levels and geographical, intellectual and disciplinary borders. The network must consist of partners from at least three Nordic countries or the autonomous territories (the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland); yet exceptions can be made when there are apparent reasons from a cultural policy point of view. Other network members can come from outside the Nordic regions. New networks and interdisciplinary and inter-sector partnerships which enhance cultural diversity are prioritised.

Artists' Residencies Module

This module provides funding for individual residency centres to support residency stays and for receiving artists, cultural workers and other art professionals from the Nordic countries. Each supported residency centre will receive annual funding to cover scholarships for 2 - 4 artists. From eight to sixteen residencies can participate in the network of supported residencies for a maximum time of three years. The scholarships will cover travel expenses and board and lodging for two months. The residencies themselves select the artists on the basis of their own criteria. The module also provides funding for organising annual meetings to exchange experiences and discussing main practical issues of residency policies and practices.

In order to secure funding, the residency centres are expected to have already established residency activities on a regular basis with professional artists and cultural operators and have explicit artistic objectives and a desire to support innovative artistic work. They are furthermore required to have the capacity to bring together and support the work processes of several artists-in-residency at the same time or have evidence that they have such partnerships with the local art scene in order to involve the artists in its activities. Special priority is given to centres having an ambition to create contacts between Nordic and other internationally renowned or promising artists and artistic professionals.

Individual Mobility Funding

The module offers funding for short term mobility to individuals working in all fields/sectors of art and culture in the Nordic countries. They can be artists of any art forms or genre or other art-related professionals such as authors, translators, curators, producers, cultural editors and researchers. These artists/professional practitioners can apply for a grant to cover the accommodation costs of their visits to another Nordic country. The grant covers the costs of a seven days' stay (five working days and a weekend) and the amount is graded according to living costs of countries and the centrality of the region (the capital region, the rest of the country).

No grant will be given for travel from one Nordic country to another. The only exception is a travel grant from the West Nordic region (the Faroe Islands, Greenland or Iceland) to the other Nordic countries or vice versa.

The applicants are expected to be mobile in order to learn about new art forms and expressions or to plan projects or research with Nordic relevance. All in all, new creative initiatives and novel artistic or production constellations are prioritised.

This module will replace *Sleipnir* the earlier similar individual intra-Nordic visiting programme. Sleipnir provided, however, also funding for artists from the Baltic countries, North West Russia, St Petersburg, Leningrad Oblast and Kaliningrad. Planning of new modes of Nordic-Baltic cooperation has been going on for several years.. There is already a draft programme for Nordic-Baltic mobility support for the arts and culture, and its implementation will start in 2009. Details of this draft are not yet known. Separate programmes are planned for the joint Nordic-Baltic mobility activities in public administration (for civil servants) and business (for entrepreneurs).

Results

The so-far granted funding is reported in the web-pages of the Nordic Culture Point. The reported funding decisions give an impression that the new frame programme, the eligibility criteria of its modules, and the use of multi-disciplinary referee groups in funding decision-making have enhanced and expanded the scope and diversity of the joint Nordic artistic and intellectual endeavours. It also seems that the funding of production oriented mobility has been increasing. On the other hand, it seems that the programme has problems in administering longer term funding within the present financing system of the Nordic cultural co-operation.

Sources

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