



**Kulturrådet
Kulturráðði
Kulturråde
Kultuvreraerie
Kulttuuriraati
O kultorrodo
Arts Council Norway**

Strategy 2025 - 2028

The Council's mission

The Act on Arts Council Norway (Lov om Norsk kulturråd) defines the Council's responsibilities, tasks and organisational structure:

Section 1 of the Act states that the purpose of Arts Council Norway (ACN) is to promote contemporary society's artistic and cultural expression and help ensure that art and culture is created, preserved, documented and made accessible to as many people as possible.

Section 2 specifies that ACN is a government administrative body whose remit encompasses the whole country.

ACN is tasked with administering the Norwegian Cultural Fund and other government grants for which the Council has been allocated responsibility and advising the government on cultural issues.

The Norwegian Cultural Fund is the most important source of government funding for free artistic and cultural activities nationwide. There are more than 40 grant schemes from which ACN awards funds to artists, organisers and enterprises in the areas: visual and performing arts, music, literature, journals and criticism, cultural heritage protection and multidisciplinary expressions and research. ACN's responsibilities range from the documentation and presentation of history, craft skills and cultural traditions, to innovative and experimental artistic expressions, knowledge development and the building of infrastructure and arenas for cultural activity.

Article 100 of the Norwegian Constitution states that "There shall be freedom of expression". The Article also states that: "The authorities of the state shall create conditions that facilitate open and enlightened public discourse." This includes expressions of an artistic and cultural nature. ACN's function and mission in Norwegian society is particularly important with respect to this latter requirement.

Basis for the Council's work during the strategy period

ACN is tasked with protecting the freedom expression of individuals and groups in society. We have a duty to provide opportunities for the creation and exercise of a wide range of artistic and cultural expressions. Diversity of artistic expression and more equal opportunities for participation in the cultural sphere depend on artists having a sound economic framework. ACN will strive to ensure better access to a wide selection of artistic and cultural experiences for people everywhere in Norway.

ACN will defend the arm's-length principle as a fundamental tenet of Norwegian cultural policy. This principle ensures that artists and those engaged in the cultural sphere are able to express themselves freely without any interference from the authorities. We will strive to increase the authorities and society's understanding of this principle, and to enable a larger share of the cultural budget to be allocated by arm's-length bodies such as Arts Council Norway. This is important to secure the decentralisation of power and as a bulwark against the negative developments with respect to artistic freedom and diversity of expression that we see in other countries, including the USA and Europe.

ACN considers the arts and culture to be important factors in cementing social cohesion in Norway. At a time characterised by war, conflict and insecurity, we wish to promote the role of the arts and culture as an element of critical societal infrastructure. ACN will monitor the way developments in technology impact how art is created and made available, and what implications these developments have on the cultural sector's framework conditions.

ACN will promote and embrace as broad a spectrum of artistic and cultural expressions as possible. Diversity is a driver of quality and innovation, and the value to society of a breadth of artistic and cultural expressions must be vigorously defended.

Basis for the Council's work during the strategy period

At all times, ACN will reflect critically on its own work and responsibilities. We will engage in continuous discussions about our priorities and different ways of understanding quality and professionalism. We will strive to uncover blind spots in the cultural sector and in our own funding allocation practices. We will engage with creators and representatives of cultural expressions that we have little contact with at present. We will dismantle obstacles faced by cultural practitioners by working in ways that challenge existing schemes. ACN will seek out knowledge and, where necessary, initiate its own knowledge-development projects.

ACN will strive to establish and preserve cultural workplaces and centres of expertise across the country. Those working in the arts and cultural sector shall have equal opportunities to create, practise and present expressions of art and culture, irrespective of gender, class, cultural background, disability or location.

Areas of special focus

Increased diversity, more voices

ACN's work to boost diversity in the arts and culture sector includes opening up for new expressions and qualities, and making space for standpoints that have previously been marginalised and under-represented.

Achieving greater diversity requires a lasting effort. ACN will keep a critical eye on its own administrative practices and will take steps to amplify more voices and ensure greater diversity in the arts and culture. Dominant perceptions of quality and the setting of boundaries in various areas of the arts and culture in accordance with one single tradition must not function as obstacles to creators working within different traditions and logics. ACN will strive to eliminate class distinctions within the cultural sector.

ACN will work to strengthen artists' financial position and improve the conditions under which artists work. We will strive to remove barriers that make it more difficult for some sectors of the population to work as artists.

Greater equality for the indigenous Sámi population and Norway's national minorities

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has documented that Norway's indigenous Sámi population and national minorities have – throughout history and even today – experienced systematic social exclusion and lack of recognition by society at large and the cultural sector. This also applies to the national minorities not mentioned in this report. The injustice and abuse inflicted on Forest Finns, Kvens, Norwegian Finns, Jews, Sámi people, Roma and Romani people have resulted in the loss of language, culture and identity, as well as marginalisation and an impoverished cultural life for all.

ACN will help Sámi and national minority artists and cultural practitioners to obtain better working conditions. ACN will recognise and support transgressive cultural expressions. The country's rich linguistic heritage must be strengthened and highlighted. This will be done in conjunction with practitioners and organisations from the affected groups.

Areas of special focus

An open and accessible cultural life

Increased social inequality means that not everyone has the same opportunities to participate in the nation's cultural life. ACN will strive to ensure the whole country has access to cultural infrastructure in the form of open cultural arenas that also help to build social cohesion. We will reduce barriers to encounters between art and the general public.

ACN will learn more about those groups which fall outside the cultural sphere and the reasons for this. We will support initiatives that make it easier to reach groups which at present rarely avail themselves of the opportunities to engage in the arts and culture.

Children and young people have as much right to a broad range of cultural activities as adults. ACN will strengthen children and young people's access to a tailored and diverse artistic and cultural offering, which reflects their everyday lives and encourages a sense of cohesion and belonging.

In particular, ACN will work to provide disabled people with greater opportunities to participate in cultural activities.

Areas of special focus

An arts and culture sector that addresses the current climate and environmental crises

Climate change and widespread environmental degradation require everyone to play their part in the transition to a more sustainable society. The arts and culture sector constitutes an important arena in which to explore complex social issues, contribute to solutions, communicate knowledge and reinforce social cohesion in times of upheaval.

The cultural sector must also take responsibility for its own climate and environmental footprint. Change affects conditions, methods and costs for the production and dissemination of art and culture. ACN will help the arts and culture sector to make more sustainable choices and adapt to the changes that have already taken place.

At the same time, ACN will help ensure that the transition neither impairs artists' ability to express themselves freely and critically, nor increases differences in the conditions under which artists and cultural practitioners work.

Arts Council Norway's strategy will be realised through

- Prioritisation in the award of funds
- Dialogue with the arts and culture sector
- Plans for each professional area
- Pilot projects and the further development of existing grant schemes
- Communication activities relating particularly to the grant schemes
- The selection of grants committee members
- Knowledge development
- Participation in the public debate
- The provision of cultural policy advice to public authorities