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Department:
Sport, Arts and Culture
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Mzansi Golden Economy (MGE)

Guidelines: Criteria, Eligibility, Processes & Systems

2026/2027



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ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

AFS	Audited Financial Statements
Co-financing	Project receiving funds from more than one source.
CCI	Cultural and Creative industries
DSAC	Department of Sport, Arts and Culture
Department	The Department of Sport, Arts & Culture
EOI	Expression of Interest
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MGE	Mzansi Golden Economy Strategy
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
Multidisciplinary	With more than one genre/discipline (e.g music, theatre, dance, visual art, etc.)
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NPO	Non-Profit Organization
Output	End-product of efforts made/ activities undertaken
SA ID	South African Identity Document
Tranche	Division of payment into certain percentages of total amount.



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SECTION A

Mzansi Golden Economy (MGE)

Overview

The Department Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC) has embarked on a strategy to reposition the arts, culture and heritage sector as key players in government's programme of action for social cohesion, creation of sustainable jobs and ensuring social and economic development. To this end the Department convened a consultative conference on 14 and 15 April 2011 for arts, culture and heritage sector stakeholders to deliberate on various proposals to optimize the contribution of these sectors to these priorities and specifically to the New Growth Path.

Prior to the conference there was a review of development efforts to date, accompanied by consultations with key role players. The review and consultations were used to generate a high level problem statement, develop a strategy and make specific proposals, including new large scale interventions focusing on the creative and cultural industries. The Mzansi Golden Economy Strategy (MGE) was the outcome of these processes.

The strategy considers the arts, culture and heritage sector as the "new gold" which has the potential to increase economic growth and create jobs in South Africa (Business and Arts South Africa, 2012). The DSAC has thus implemented MGE, which aims to enhance economic development and social cohesion for the country.

The purpose of MGE is to make strategic investments to optimize the economic benefit of the arts in South Africa. By improving investment in key areas of the creative economy, it is anticipated that job creation and productivity will be enhanced, and the sector's global competitiveness will be increased.

The envisioned overall impact of the MGE strategy on the creative economy is;

- To position the arts as a valuable contributor to economic growth and job creation
- To stimulate economic development
- To promote sustainability
- To raise the profile of South Africa as a destination for cultural consumers and increasing tourism (visitor) volume and spend
- To build the professional capacity of the sector
- To improve the production and dissemination of local content



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1.1 Objectives

The MGE objectives are:

- **Stimulate Demand:** the result will be the expansion of supply and work opportunities. The focus areas within this programme will consist of the Public Art Programme, Cultural Events, the Art Bank, and the Sourcing Enterprise.
- **Audience Development and Consumption:** Building on existing initiatives, the aim of this programme is to elevate projects into large scale national programme to develop audiences for the creative and cultural industries and increase consumption of the offerings of the arts, culture and heritage sector.
- **Building Heritage Resources:** Development of areas of heritage to change the colonial and apartheid bias of heritage exhibition and interpretation in the country. The three focus areas are Heritage Projects, the National Liberation Heritage Route and the Marine Heritage.
- **Information Gathering:** To collect evidence and analyse the performance of the arts, culture and heritage sector to inform policy shifts and guide future resource allocation.
- **Human Capital Development:** Focusing on the early identification and development of talent and influencing choice of career path. The focus areas include the Arts Education and National Cultural Industries Skills Academy.
- **Developing cultural entrepreneurs:** Focusing on the identification and development of the skills, products and services of the cultural entrepreneurs and the development of sustainable enterprises in the creative industries.



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SECTION B

Mzansi Golden Economy (MGE) Open Call

- The increased knowledge and understanding of the role that culture and creativity can play in economic development necessitates a more diversified approach to funding cultural and creative sectors with a greater emphasis placed on economic returns to government expenditure.
- The 2025/26 Open call will support **Cultural and Creative Industries Projects (CCIPs)** and **Touring Ventures**.
- The MGE open call is a competitive **grant funding**.
 - DSAC announces a request for proposals based on the current needs and emerging challenges of the arts, culture and heritage sector.
 - Funding is based on the merits of the submitted application.
 - Applications are reviewed for eligibility and completeness.
 - No applicant is automatically entitled to funding.
 - Financial support is designated for the financial year 2026/27.
- Support will be provided to projects/programmes that are to be implemented from **May 2026 to February 2027**.
- The Open Call will run from **05 December 2025 at 12h00 to 30 January 2026 at 17h00**.
- The result of the adjudication will be published prior to the commencement of the 2026/27 financial year.

2.1 SUMMARY OF APPLICATION PROCESS

All applications must be submitted through the MGE online portal.

2.1.1 Pre-Conditions of Application

The Applicant must have;

- accessed the e-services portal on www.eservices.gov.za;
- a valid email address;
- a valid RSA ID;
- a valid cellphone number.



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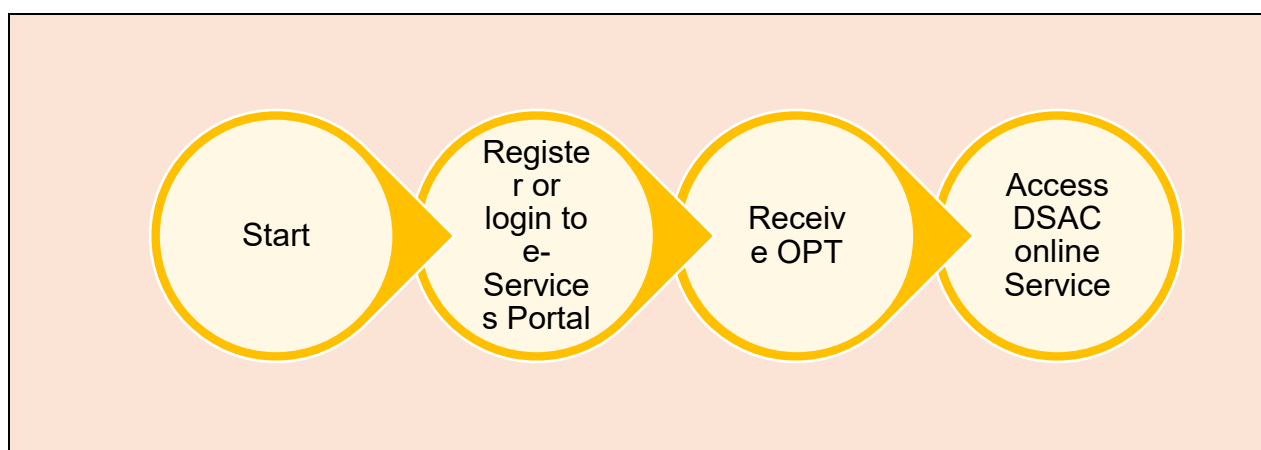
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2.2 e-SERVICES REGISTRATION AND LOGIN NARRATION

e-Services Registration and log in process	
Roles	(a) Applicant
Procedure	- An Applicant registers on the e-services portal. Once registered the Applicant will receive a One Time Pin (OTP) to their cellphone number to verify the user. - If the Applicant has an existing profile the Applicant logs into the portal with his/her existing credentials. - Once logged in the Applicant access the DSAC Grant Management system which will be listed under e-services menu.

2.2.1 e-Services Registration and Log in processes



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2.3 APPLICATION FOR FUNDING PROCESS NARRATION

MGE Open Call Application for funding process	
Roles	(a) Applicant
Procedure	- An Applicant registers and logs into the e-services portal and selects Sport, Arts and Culture. - The applicant will select the type of programme: (Touring Ventures or Cultural and Creative Industries Projects) and will select the application type. - The applicant is required to accept the Terms and Conditions before starting with the online application. - Applicant will complete the application details and attach the relevant documents to the system. - The applicant must accept or decline the declaration. Once the declaration has been accepted, the applicant will be able to submit the application and receive a unique reference number via email and SMS.

TIP: For accessible internet and Wi-Fi, please visit your nearest community library. Library Directory per provinces; <https://www.nlsa.ac.za/condgrant/>



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2.4 ATTACHMENTS REQUIRED FOR APPLICATION

Private/Public Companies (PTY limited)	Non-Profit organization (NGO'S, NPCs, Trusts)
1. A certified, clear/readable copy of the SA ID of one of the company's directors. (The Smart ID copy must include front and back details) 2. SARS Good Standing document with a valid General Tax Compliance Status (TCS) pin. 3. Proposal with budget breakdown. 4. Portfolio of Experience 5. Company registration certificate. 6. Invitation letter for Touring Ventures International applications or an artistic resume of the artist(s) involved in the national solo tours.	1. A certified, clear/readable copy of the SA ID of one of the company's directors. (The Smart ID copy must include front and back details) 2. SARS Good Standing document with a valid General Tax Compliance Status (TCS) pin. 3. Proposal with budget breakdown. 4. Portfolio of Experience 5. NPO registration Certificate issued by the Department of Social Development. 6. Invitation letter for Touring Ventures International applications or an artistic resume of the artist(s) involved in the national solo tours.

2.5 ONLINE APPLICATION RULES

Rules	
a)	All fields have to be completed as indicated in the Field Definition Table.
b)	The RSA ID Number must be a 13-digit number and must be validated using the following format: {YYMMDD}{G}{SSSS}{C}{A}{Z};
c)	Ensure all mandatory fields have been completed.
d)	For all date fields, display a calendar.
e)	Email addresses must contain an "@" character.
f)	Attached all required documents.
g)	Reference Number to be created once the user has submitted their application.
h)	The reference number will be auto-generated according to the chosen programme type (e.g. Cult001 or Tou001)
i)	The applicant must only update the application if the status is "Not completed".
j)	The applicant must only withdraw the application if the status is "Submitted".
k)	The system auto-saves the application when the applicant clicks on the next button;



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SECTION C

PROGRAMMES OVERVIEW

3.1 CULTURAL & CREATIVE INDUSTRIES PROJECTS (CCIP)

The Cultural and Creative Industries Projects workstream supports large and medium-scale national projects that promote the arts, culture and heritage and that contribute to local economic development, job creation and the development of audiences. The specific objectives of the workstream are to:

- To upscale existing projects, allowing increased diversity of cultural offerings, enhanced quality of productions, and extension of project timeframes.
- To support projects with obvious economic and social benefits for the location.
- To increase the audience and exposure that each production receives, which will in turn increase the number of jobs created, livelihoods supported, and income generated through the CCIPs.
- To enhance social cohesion in the country by promoting diversity of content and audiences in the specific location of the project.
- To increase the up-skilling opportunities for creative practitioners and communities.

3.2 TOURING VENTURES

The Touring Ventures programme aims to support broader, cost-effective opportunities for the nation's cultural output to be viewed, participated in and enjoyed within South Africa and abroad. The objectives are:

- To increase the audience and exposure that each production receives, which will in turn increase jobs created, livelihoods supported, and income generated through the events.
- To enhance social cohesion in the country by promoting diversity of content and audiences in the specific location of the project.
- To increase the upskilling opportunities for creative practitioners and communities.
- To support the national, provincial and local government, cultural institutions, cultural agencies, arts groupings and individual arts practitioners in a reciprocal and sustainable approach to touring.
- The development of new audiences for existing work development
- Creating market access through annual programmes aimed at the development and promotion of young artists.



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SECTION D

2026/27 CRITERIA

4.1 CULTURAL & CREATIVE INDUSTRIES PROJECTS (CCIPs)

The CCIP workstream will support national large and medium-scale cultural and creative initiatives that **1) create job opportunities for skilled practitioners /creatives/artists and contribute to local economic development.**

Objectives	- To support CCIPs projects as a driver of employment, providing work/job/gig opportunities for the arts, culture and heritage sector. - To support CCIPs that promote social inclusion and cultural diversity. - To upscale projects, allowing increased diversity of cultural offerings and enhanced quality of productions.
Target Events	- Cultural and Creative Industries Projects in the following disciplines will be considered for support: <u>Performance and Celebration</u> ➤ Theatre, Musical Theatre, Opera ➤ Dance ➤ Music: Mass participation, community-based (choirs, brass bands, etc) and traditional ➤ Music: Modern (era) sounds (kwaito, hip hop, amapiano, rock, Bacardi, etc), recording and business management. ➤ Music: Gooma, Kaapse klopse and folk ➤ Spoken Word, Poetry, Storytelling, Stand-up Comedy ➤ Technical Services and Productions. <u>Visual Arts and Crafts:</u> ➤ Fine Arts ➤ Crafts. <u>Books and Press:</u> ➤ Content developers and Creators ➤ Manufacturing and Distribution <u>Design and Creative Services:</u> ➤ Product, Jewellery, Fashion and Textile Design ➤ Communication Design <u>Audio-Visual and Interactive Media</u> ➤ Film, Cinema and television ➤ New Media ➤ Animation and Gaming <i>Film production and postproduction do not qualify (refer to the NFVF guidelines).</i> <i>Beauty pageants and modelling competitions/events do not qualify.</i> <i>Talent searches//discovery/scouting/competitions do not qualify.</i>



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General Criteria	1. Time Frame - Projects that will be implemented between May 2026 and February 2027 2. Job Creation & Local Economic Development - Improve employment and income opportunities for creative professionals/practitioners and promote vibrant cultural and creative industries. - The extent to which women, youth and people with disabilities enjoy a share of ownership, participation and employment, - the cost per job/work opportunity, - the number of jobs/work opportunities created for cultural and creative practitioners/ artists based within the specific local district, - the number of jobs/work opportunities created for supporting sectors within a local district/locality. 3. Stimulate demand and consumption - Incorporate economic activities that include the creation, production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services with cultural, artistic, or creative content. 4. Social Cohesion - Promoting a positive image and identity of our diverse nation through shared values, interests, and aspirations. - Diversity of programming, content and audiences/patrons. 5. Creative: Innovation & Competitiveness - Distinctiveness of the proposed project in the context of comparison activities in the proposed locality and province. - Quality of the cultural and creative programme content.
Grant Threshold	<i>The maximum available grant is R 2 million per grant per beneficiary. The grant amount will be awarded at the discretion of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC).</i>
Domain-specific criteria	<u>Performance and Celebration</u> - Projects must be implementation-ready and deliver outputs efficiently. - Projects must demonstrate meaningful collaborations or consortia (e.g., between established institutions, community-based organisations, and independent practitioners). <u>Visual Arts and Crafts</u> - Projects must promote a culture of appreciating local visual arts and crafts. - Artworks and craftworks must represent the visual landscape of these sectors in South Africa and must be of superior quality.



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Books and Press

- Projects must contribute meaningfully to the commercialisation of South African literature and storytelling.
- Projects must be geared towards promoting the love and culture of reading,

Design and Creative Services

- Projects must promote a culture of appreciating the design and creative services sector.
- Designs and artworks must be of a superior quality and serve as a tribute to the varied and multicultural landscape of South Africa.

Audio-Visual and Interactive Media

- Projects must foster and promote a deeper understanding and enjoyment of local audio-visual and interactive media creations.
- Projects must demonstrate meaningful collaborations or consortia (e.g., between established institutions, community-based organisations, and independent practitioners).



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4.2 TOURING VENTURES APPLICATION

The Touring Ventures workstream will support broader, cost-effective opportunities for the nation's cultural and creative outputs to be viewed, participated in and enjoyed internationally and nationally through solo tours

Objectives	• To facilitate cultural and creative products touring internationally to develop and explore new markets and provide employment opportunities for cultural and creative practitioners/artists. • To support national solo tour initiatives for artist(s) with a proven track record of high-quality performances/presentations/showcases and critical acclaim. • Showcase and promote diverse South African cultural and creative products.
Target ventures	• Touring Ventures that will be implemented between May 2026 and February 2027. • International Touring Ventures of existing product/s, production/s and/or exhibition/s in following genre; • ○ <u>Performance and Celebration</u> ➢ Theatre, Musical Theatre, Opera ➢ Dance ➢ Music: Mass participation, community based (choirs, brass bands, etc) and traditional ➢ Music: Modern (era) sounds (kwaito, hip hop, amapiano, rock, Bacardi etc) recoding and business management. ➢ Music: Gooma, Kaapse klopse and folk ➢ Spoken Word, Poetry, Storytelling, Stand-up Comedy ➢ Technical Services and Productions. ○ <u>Visual Arts and Crafts:</u> ➢ Fine Arts ➢ Crafts. ○ <u>Books and Press:</u> ➢ Content developers and Creators ➢ Manufacturing and Distribution ○ <u>Design and Creative Services:</u> ➢ Product, Jewellery, Fashion and Textile Design ➢ Communication Design ○ <u>Audio-Visual and Interactive Media</u> ➢ Film, Cinema and Television ➢ New Media ➢ Animation and Gaming



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	- National Solo tours in the following genre: <u>Performance and Celebration</u> - Dance. - Music <u>Visual Arts and Crafts:</u> - Fine Arts and Photography. <u>Design and Creative Services:</u> - Fashion
Compulsory	For international tours- applicants must produce a letter/invitation confirming their participation from an organisation/counterpart inviting them. For national solo tours – applicants must produce an artistic resume of the artist(s) involved, highlighting their achievements and past projects.
Criteria	- An existing cultural and creative product. - To an extent that the existing product can demonstrate that it is viable, marketable and potentially profitable. - Job Creation & Local Economic Development - The extent to which women, youth and people with disabilities enjoy a share of ownership, participation and employment, -the cost per job/work opportunity, -the number of jobs/work opportunities created for cultural and creative practitioners/ artists. - Market Access/Development -The extent to which the event will extend the market potential of participants -Provide details of the potential market that is being explored and/or developed. - Creative: Innovation & Competitiveness - Distinctiveness of the proposed project. - Quality of the cultural and creative programme content. For Solo National Tours - The artist (s) must have gained recognition through national and/or international acclaim. -The artist(s) should have a proven track record of high-quality performances/presentations, critical acclaim and commercial success. -The tour should demonstrate a high level of artistic innovation and creativity. -The project should have significant cultural value and contribute to the enrichment of the local arts scene. -The tour should have a clear strategy for engaging and developing local audiences. -A detailed tour plan including venues, dates, and logistical arrangements must be provided.
Grant Threshold	<i>The maximum available grant is R 1 million per grant per beneficiary. The grant amount will be awarded at the discretion of the National Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC).</i>



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SECTION E

STANDARD REQUIREMENTS

5.1. ELIGIBILITY

- This call is open to tax-compliant arts, culture and heritage organisations and enterprises that have independent legal status and are wholly owned and managed by South African Citizens.
- No beneficiary will be awarded two DSAC grants simultaneously, regardless of the size of the grant, sourced from any DSAC programme, in any given year. Organisations must declare any other involvement with DSAC.
- Only one application per organisation/company in one funding cycle is allowed.
- Depending on the total budget and the scale of the project, preference will be given to projects that are co-financed or part-financed or have any other form of partnership. Proof of such commitment must be provided.

5.2. ADMINISTRATIVE CRITERIA

The following will lead to automatic **disqualification**:

- Provision of dishonest and inaccurate information.
- Incomplete submission of Application Form, Proposal and/or Compliance Documentation.
- Submission of applications that do not adhere to the format and length guidelines established.
- Failure to disclose any form of conflicts of interest and any other involvement with DSAC.
- Failure to disclose any funding secured for the project being applied for and/or any current work being undertaken for the DSAC.
- Project timeframe falls outside of stated funding timeframes.
- Project that falls outside of domains and genres/disciplines stipulated under Section D.
- Requested funds exceeding the stated maximum thresholds of the individual open calls.
- Late submission of any documentation.
- Applications submitted by post, fax and/or email.
- Companies, individuals, including directors in companies that previously defaulted or failed to adequately report for any DSAC funding.
- Applications submitted by government employees, including public entities, schools, universities, and any other organs of state, as stated in the Treasury regulations.
- Applications received from non-South African citizens/companies/organisations.



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5.3 SELECTION CONSIDERATIONS

- *DSAC awards funds at its discretion, and grants may be awarded below the stated thresholds.*
- *Requests for Film Production funds should be directed to the National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF) and DTIC's Emerging Black Filmmakers Incentives*
- *Projects will not be supported retrospectively. Project activities should not commence before the grant commitment and signing of the necessary contractual documentation.*
- *All government employees, including public entities, are NOT eligible to apply for funding with the DSAC.*
- *Schools, universities, and any other organs of state, as stated in the Treasury regulations, are NOT eligible to apply for the 2025/26 MGE Open Call.*
- *Project that falls outside the domains and genre/ disciplines stipulated under Section D will not be considered.*
- *Guidelines will be reviewed annually for the improvement of the process.*

5.4 RESTRICTIONS

MGE Open Call grant does not cover/fund the following;

- *Payment of salaries of individuals in organisations/companies.*
- *Operational costs of organisations/companies.*
- *School fees or tertiary tuition of an individual or organisations/companies.*



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SECTION F

PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS

6.1 ADJUDICATION PROCESS

Step 1: Verification of Online Applications

DSAC officials will verify all applications before adjudication. The following applications will be immediately disqualified:

- applications with outstanding required compliance documents.
- applications with incorrect or invalid attachments as per the required compliance documents under Section B.
- applications received after the closing date.
- A project that falls outside the domains and genre/ disciplines stipulated under Section D will not be considered.

Step 2: Making the decision

A panel of experts has been appointed to evaluate the applications based on the merits and criteria of each funding instrument.

No urgent applications will be considered.

The recommendations of the panel for all projects will be tabled for approval by the relevant delegated official of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture.

Grants are awarded at the discretion of the Department, informed by the criteria, panel recommendations and available budgets in any given year.

Step 3: Notification

The Department will communicate the decision and the conditions of awarding the grants in writing. Lists of successful applicants/ beneficiaries will be placed on the DSAC website and social media platforms.

Step 4: Submission of a Full Proposal/revised Project Plan and Documentation

After the grant approval letter is received, prospective beneficiaries **will have a maximum of 21 working days** to submit compliance documents and a full proposal/revised Project Plan as directed by the Department, with a full budget breakdown based on the approved budget.

Failure to submit compliance documents and a full proposal/revised Project Plan as directed by the Department within **21 working days** could result in the forfeiture of the awarded grant.



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The proposal must be accompanied by the following compliance documents;

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1. Certified copy of SA ID. 2. Original valid SARS good standing document. 3. Confirmation of banking details from your banking institution. 4. Company profile. 5. Proof of co-financing or part-financing, depending on the amount requested and the total budget of the project. 6. Information on the Board of Directors of the company; 7. Letter from the beneficiary governing structure providing the full name and identity number of the individual empowered to enter into contracts (Letter of Authority). 8. Portfolio of Experience	1. Certified copy of SA ID. 2. Original valid SARS good standing document. 3. Confirmation of banking details from your banking institution. 4. Company profile. 5. Proof of co-financing or part-Financing, depending on the amount requested and the total budget of the project. 6. Information on the Board of Directors of the company; 7. Letter from the beneficiary governing structure providing the full name and the identity number of the individual empowered to enter into contracts (Letter of Authority). 8. Portfolio of Experience

A grant can only be considered awarded once a formal letter addressed to the beneficiary has been received, the necessary documentation has been submitted, and a contract has been signed between the beneficiary and DSAC.

The submitted proposal and supporting documentation will be reviewed by the Department to establish organisational competence as follows:

- Evidence of financial stability, track record of implementation and accountability.
- Evidence of a clear mandate and competent administration and governance.
- Evidence of other sources of support/sponsorship (such as financial support from audiences, donations, gifts, in-kind support from the private sector, and funds from other levels of government).
- Own income sources and fundraising/resourcing strategy.
- Marketing and promotional plans to fully maximise audience potential.



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Step 5: Contracting & Payment

Correspondence in Step 3 and the submission of the detailed project plan in Step 4 will be followed by the drafting of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) based on a standard template, and signing an Agreement that will outline contractual arrangements with the beneficiary.

The MOA outlines the tranche structure of the grant and the obligations of both parties. Note that there are obligations on the beneficiary with regard to DSAC branding, reporting, monitoring and evaluation.

Note that any changes to the contractual agreement that arise during the grant period must be negotiated with the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture. Any tranche structure amendments will require the signing of an addendum.

For **payment** to be effected, it is essential that:

- All contractual obligations relevant to the payment have been fulfilled.

Final tranche payments will only be made once **all contractual obligations** have been met, **including accounting for the full first tranche with invoices and receipts.**

A standardised reporting format will be provided. Failure to adhere to reporting timelines and requirements as per the MOA will result in beneficiaries forfeiting the grant and the Department instituting a process to recover the funds.

For further enquiries related to the MGE open call grant, contact;

MGE call centre: 0800 724 278

Email: mge@dsac.gov.za

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