1. Why we have asked for a strategic plan

A strategic plan is a high-level document that captures the ‘road map’ for your organisation at a point in time – what you are doing, why you are doing it and how you will do it.

Your plan shouldn’t be a static document. You need to build enough flexibility into your planning to be creative and responsive to new developments.

A strategic plan is different from a business plan. A strategic plan summarises your overarching purpose, your direction of travel and the milestones along the way; a business plan provides the operational detail.

A strategic plan covering all or the majority of the 2021 to 2024 Four Year funding contract is an essential part of your stage two application. It is your opportunity to provide more evidence in support of your four year vision.

The peer assessors will review your strategic plan to determine the likelihood of your organisation achieving your proposal. This will inform their scores against the assessment criteria for your organisation.

2. How to develop your strategic plan

If you have an existing strategic plan that covers most of the period 2021 to 2024, you can provide that with your stage two application. We recommend you update this plan to accurately reflect your Four Year Funding Expression of Interest (EOI).

A good planning process will help your organisation to test old assumptions and ways of working in the light of new information about the present. It will help you to anticipate and plan for the environment in which you’ll be working in the future.

Table 1 lists some questions to reflect on as you develop a new plan. It can also be used to strengthen your existing plan. Some of the following activities could also be helpful:

- Seeking and reviewing feedback from those who engage with your work on the impact it has on them.
- Talking to peer organisations or other bodies about the changes and trends in your area of practice.
- Seeking input from your Board, staff and stakeholders on your vision, environment and strategies.
- Reviewing progress against your previous goals and measures of success.
- Reviewing the Australia Council’s new strategic plan (released in late August 2019) to see how you can contribute to it.
Table 1: Strategic planning considerations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Prompts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Why?**  | • Why does your organisation exist?  
                      • What is your purpose?  
                      • Why is your organisation unique or significant, and can you provide supporting evidence?  
                      • Vision – the impact you are trying to have and the outcomes you are working towards over a particular time period. |
| **What?** | • What internal/external factors shaped your previous work?  
                      • What internal/external factors are influencing or informing your four year vision?  
                      • What goals do you have, and what activities will you deliver?  
                      • What resources do you require to deliver these activities?  
                      • What impact will your activities have for people or organisations engaging with them?  
                      • What contribution does your organisation make to your sector? |
| **How?**  | • How will you deliver your activities?  
                      • How will you demonstrate representation, self-determination, cultural competencies and adherence to relevant protocols?  
                      • Do you use a distinct approach or methodology in your work? If so, describe it.  
                      • How will you secure your income and manage your expenditure?  
                      • How will you know if you are successful? |
| **Who?**  | • Who are your key staff and Board, and what skills/experience do they have?  
                      • What are your succession plans for key roles?  
                      • Who are your key creatives, collaborators or partners, and what skills/experience do they have?  
                      • Who are your readers, audiences, participants or communities? Are they represented on your Board or in your staff?  
                      • Who do you target your services to, and why? |
| **When?** | • When are your activities taking place, and over what time period?  
                      • Are your activities linked to other events or activities happening at a particular time?  
                      • When will you need to evaluate and report on your activities? |
| **Where?**| • Where is your organisation based?  
                      • Where are your activities taking place?  
                      • Has your location influenced the way you work? |
The format

There is no set format or template for a strategic plan that will work for every organisation. As a guide, it shouldn't be more than around 20 pages. You may consider including, but are not limited to:

- your mission and/or vision
- a summary of your achievements
- examples of your work and responses to it
- an analysis of your internal and external environment
- your strategies, goals and activities
- measures of success, evaluation framework
- your Board or governance, staff and collaborators
- a financial summary, with explanation of your financial model.

Remember, you will provide more information in the budget spreadsheets and program of activities, so you don’t need to duplicate that level of detail in your plan.

3. Advice from the peers for stage two

Peers assessing the EOI provided some general feedback that may be useful as you refresh or develop your strategic plans:

- Don’t assume all the peers are familiar with your organisation’s track record, recent work, or the context you work in. Introduce your organisation properly.
- Make sure the strategic plan and support material is relevant to the arts practice panel assessing it.
- Write the plan and application in plain English, avoiding jargon and unsubstantiated claims.
- Explain how your organisation works, as well as what your organisation does. For example, describe your artistic process or methodology, your financial or operational model, how you remunerate artists.
- Be up front about your succession plans, particularly for artistic leadership roles. Include the voice of the incoming leader in your application or explain your recruitment and development plans.
- Provide evidence of how you evaluate and demonstrate the impact of your work.
- If you work with diverse artists and communities, or plan to increase the diversity of those you work with, provide evidence of representation, self-determination, engagement and adherence to relevant protocols at all levels of your organisation.

4. Links to other resources on strategic planning

- Resources on strategic planning (by Institute of Community Directors Australia)
  https://www.communitydirectors.com.au/icda/tools/?articleId=5736
- Six Tips for Running a Strategic Planning Workshop (by Spark Strategy)
  https://youtu.be/W5rF5Wll3e0
- Vision Attainable (by Future of CIO) http://futureofcio.blogspot.com/2013/09/is-vision-attainable.html
- Mission Statements: the good and the bad (by NonprofitHub.org)
  http://nonprofithub.org/starting-a-nonprofit/nonprofit-mission-statements-good-and-bad-examples/
• An Overview of Strategic Planning or "VMOSA" (Vision, Mission, Objectives, Strategies, and Action Plans) (by Community Tool Box) https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/strategic-planning/vmosa/main

• The Business Model Canvas (by Strategyzer) https://www.strategyzer.com/canvas/business-model-canvas


• Strategic storytelling (Business Models Inc.) https://www.businessmodelsinc.com/strategic-storytelling/