

2025-2028

STRATEGIC PLAN ADVICE

1. Why we have asked for a strategic plan

A strategic plan covering all or the majority of the 2025 to 2028 investment period is an essential part of your application. It 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.

The strategic plan should articulate the organisation’s vision and ambition for the investment period. The plan should capture the operating environment, your overarching strategy and the key milestones along the way. You are not required to provide a business plan with operational detail. A reader should be able to recognise aspects of an organisation’s artistic program within the content of the plan.

The Australia Council acknowledges that there will be ongoing uncertainty for the sector over the period of this plan and that it will not be a static document. How an organisation delivers on the strategic vision articulated in the plan will likely evolve in response to changes in the sector, the operating environment and future disruption or challenges.

The Industry Advisors will review your strategic plan to determine the likelihood of your organisation achieving your proposal. They will also consider how your strategic vision make a significant contribution to the sector and demonstrates public value. 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 2025 to 2028, you can provide that with your application. We recommend you update this plan to accurately reflect your application.

A good planning process will help your organisation to honestly test old assumptions and ways of working in 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 below lists some questions you could reflect on as you develop a new plan or use 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 and 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 current [Corporate Plan 2022-2026](#) to see how you align with it.

3. The format

There is no set format or template you need to adhere to. The plan should be no more than 20 pages.

You may consider including, but are not limited to:

- your artistic vision or mission
- your current strategic priorities in relation to your mission and/or vision as informed by pandemic impacts
- a summary of your achievements
- examples of your work and responses to it
- an analysis of your internal and external environment
- a risk assessment
- your strategies, goals and activities
- measures of success, evaluation framework
- your Board or governing body, staff and collaborators
- a financial summary, with explanation of your financial model, identifying major shifts due to pandemic impacts

Remember, you will provide further information on your budget and program of activities as part of your regular reporting, so you don't need to duplicate that level of detail in your plan.

Table 1: Strategic planning considerations

Questions	Prompts
Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does your organisation exist, what is your purpose? • Why is your organisation unique or significant, and can you evidence this? • Vision – the impact you are trying to have / outcomes you are working towards over a particular time period.
What?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What internal / external factors shaped your previous work? • What internal / external factors are influencing or informing your four year vision? • What is the anticipated operating environment and how will it impact your work? • What goals do you have, and what activities will you deliver?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What resources do you require to deliver these activities? • What impact will your activities have for people/organisations engaging with them? • What contribution does your organisation make to the sector?
How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where is your organisation based? • Where are your activities taking place? • Has location influenced the way your work?

4. Links to other resources on strategic planning

- You may wish to refer to our guide on Essential Governance Practices [essential-governance-practices-report-1.pdf \(australiacouncil.gov.au\)](https://australiacouncil.gov.au/essential-governance-practices-report-1.pdf)
- The Australian Institute of Company Directors, tools and resources <https://www.aicd.com.au/tools-and-resources.html>
- The Australian Institute of Company Directors, strategic plan development <https://www.aicd.com.au/good-governance/organisational-strategy/long-term-strategic-plan/strategic-plan-development.html>
- The Institute of Community Directors Australia, resources on strategic planning <https://www.communitydirectors.com.au/icda/tools/?articleId=5736>
- Mission Statements: the good and the bad (by NonprofitHub.org) <http://nonprofithub.org/starting-a-nonprofit/nonprofit-mission-statements-good-and-bad-examples/>