

Briefing transcript - National Portfolio Organisations 2023-26: Investment Principles template

10.30am-12.00, 17th March 2022

AMY VAUGHAN: Thanks for joining us today. We're just waiting for everybody to filter into the room and we'll get started in a few minutes.

Hello to everybody just joining us. We're starting shortly. We're just waiting for everyone to filter in.

Good morning everybody. There are still a few people coming in, but let's get started. I think we've slowed down now. Hello everyone. Welcome to this morning's session. Thank you for joining us.

I'm Amy Vaughan, Director Change Programmes at Arts Council. I am a white, middle-aged woman. I have a blue background behind me. I've got dark brown hair and a white pinned back fringe and I'm wearing glasses. This session will go through our investment principles template as part of the application process for our 2023/26 Investment Programme. This session is for anyone interested in applying to the NPO or the IPSO programme as all applicants will need to complete this template. Today's session is live captioned and also has BSL interpretation. For the best experience, we recommend using the desktop version of the Zoom app. The session is also being recorded and will be posted on our website afterwards. We have a maximum of 90 minutes for this session bringing us to 12:00pm. This session will run differently to previous briefings we've hosted. We won't have as many slides on screen. Instead we will be sharing a screen with you and talking through the investment principles template in stages and pausing for questions. You can submit questions to us using the Q and A box at the bottom of your screen. We'll answer as many questions as we can. We ask that you try to keep your questions relevant to the template that we're discussing today.

So before we start, I want to introduce who is taking part in the session today. Doing BSL interpretation we have Harry Wadsworth who is on your screen at the moment and Jacob Bevan. We've got live captions from Marea O'Brien. Our presenters and panel today are myself, Amy Vaughan, Director of Change Programmes. Jane Dawson, Director of Funding Programmes, and Alex Middleton Senior Manager, Funded Organisations and our Q and A host today is Dan Smith who is our Head of Marketing and Internal Communication.

So this is what we will cover with you today. This is a practical session. It is designed to help you understand how to use the investment principles template in order to submit an NPO or an IPSO application to our Investment Programme. We won't be going through any other part of the application process in this session, but we have ran other briefings which will all be posted online by the end of this week and we'll e-mail you when they're live. We're going to talk you through how to navigate the template first before diving into the specific areas of the template that you can complete and those three areas are your ambition, your 12 months priorities and a

list of associated actions and the stage that they are currently at. We also plan to have a ten minute comfort break in the middle of the session. Before you go, we'll share some final information with you that you might find useful. Before we start, we want to say that this is the second time we've run a technical session like this with such a large number of people. So, please bear with us. We're doing our best to make this session as useful as we possibly can but if you have further questions about this template or any other part of the application process, please do look at the resources on our website or get in touch with us. So let's get started. We're going to take the slides down. I'm going to share my screen with you. Just give me a moment while we do the change-over.

Okay. So, on your screen now is the contents page. At the top of the contents page there is a key which explains what the different colours and text mean. So, the key here has the column headings, explanatory notes, links, free cell for text entry so if it is white with black writing, it is free text and if it is grey, it is a select from the drop-down. The template has four tabs. One for each investment principle which you can navigate to using the contents. Using this contents page. So you can navigate to an investment principle by clicking on it and that will take you to the IP tap and then you return back to the content using this button at the top left-hand side. That takes you back. Each tab has three components. I'm just going to zoom out so you can see the whole tab in its full form, but we'll zoom back in when we start looking at detail. Each tab has three components. It has the ambition box up in the left-hand side at the top. It has the priorities box and then it has different lines for the actions.

The actions are categorised in to four areas. So, these are skills development, people and representation, planning, and tools and monitoring. All the investment principle tabs are exactly the same and you can only navigate between them by going back to the contents page. So, let's look at the different sections of one of the tabs. We'll use ambition and quality for this demonstration, but the same applies across all four tabs. I'm going to zoom back in. Okay.

So, let's start with ambition. You have 300 characters for stating your ambition. So, keep it high-level and concise. You use this box to set out your longer-term vision and that will help us get a sense of your direction of travel. We will be looking for success measures in here. So, give that some thought when you're writing this section. It doesn't need to be really descriptive and of course, it may well evolve over your three years. You're not tied to what you put in the box. Note when you type in the box and press return, the character count reduces. If I just put some gobbledegook in, the character count has gone down from 300 to 280. If you want to put it back up again, you delete what's in the box and press return and it will go back to the original amount. So, every time you press return out of the box, any changes you have made will be reflected in the character count.

The priorities box on the right-hand side, as with the ambition box, you have 300 characters, so again, be concise. Try to make it as smart as you can. Focus in on what you can realistically deliver in the next 12 months and make sure it connects to your ambition. As with the ambition box, when you write and press return, the character count will adjust accordingly. So, let's move down to the actions next. We'll talk through each of these categories under the actions. So, let's just read them through first.

So there are four categories. Skills development is the first one and this is the development you want to undertake with your workforce, your leadership and or your governance that's going to help you progress against your priorities in this year. People and representation - this is the groups and expertise that you have or you're going to bring together and who you want to collaborate with on your actions to help you make progress. Under planning, you will tell us about the plans and policies you have or those you want to create that are going to help you deliver your ambitions.

Finally, tools and monitoring. These are the tools and the resources that you'll use to support you in setting and monitoring and achieving your targets and how you will report on progress to your governing body. Be that your board or oversight board or your steering group. I'll just go back up to the top. When you write an action in the box, as with the rest of the template, the count will adjust when you press return. You have up to three actions for each category, but you don't have to fill out all three. Only add an action where you know you will undertake it this year. We will not be judging the volume of actions. We're looking at how appropriate they are in relation to the ambition that you've set out and the size and scale of your organisation.

For each action, you need to indicate what stage you are at and there are three stages, and their definitions are listed in the yellow box at the top here on the right-hand side. These stages are planned, these are the actions you have discussed with your team, but have not yet put in to practise. In progress, these are the things that you're already doing, and you can evidence that actions are taking place and established, these are the actions that are fully embedded and you know you can measure the progress of them. You can use the drop-down to add these stages to your actions. Just on the right-hand side. So, you can stages to illustrate how developed your approach is. We are assessing how likely progression is, not how fully formed the delivery is already. So, for example, if you had a priority in your first year with ambition and quality to understand how your work is perceived by a new set of partners, your actions can illustrate both the new activities you'll undertake using the planned stage, but also the experience you have that will support that work by using the established stage.

So, it might be that you have a planned action under people and representation that is about setting up a new focus group and that would be planned because it would be brand-new to you, but an established action under tools and monitoring, because you're using the same framework you've been using for a really long time and you understand how to do that and it is an established part of the way you work. So that's how you can combine the planned and established and use them in different ways. But again, if the work is very new to you, don't be concerned about using the planned stage. It is absolutely fine. As I said before, we're interested in the likelihood of progress rather than how developed you are. If all actions are marked as established, it would be difficult for us to draw out where the progress is coming from. Remember, you can navigate back to the contents page as you move through the investment principles.

So just to recap on this template. Your three-year ambition goes in the top left-hand corner here. It is high-level. Your priorities in here about the next 12 months and how

that links to that ambition and then you can start to put your actions in under the four different categories. You don't have to put an action in every single box, and you use the stages to indicate how far through that planning you are and how much of that is established or the kind of work you're going to be doing more of over the next year. The actions are all 12 months as are the priorities. So, what's the whole template. We'll take a ten minute break and then we have plenty of time for questions and I can refresh anything if people aren't clear on it. So, let's come back at 10:57 and we'll start to take your questions then.

(Short break)

DAN SMITH: Hello everybody. Welcome back. Okay. Thank you for submitting all of your questions. Before we start, I'll just introduce myself. My name is Dan. I work in the Communications Team at the Arts Council. I'm white man in my mid-30s with dark hair, dark glasses, and I'm wearing a light brown shirt and I have a window and some plants behind me. My pronouns are he/him. We've got a lot of questions from you and they're still coming in. We'll do our best to work through all of them. The first questions I've got are for Amy, if you want to come back on. Hello.

AMY VAUGHAN: Hello.

DAN SMITH: So, the first one here is on environmental responsibility. So there doesn't seem to be a place where we can add things like use public transport instead of our van or write articles about what we're doing to share with the sector. So, do you assume that not all our actions on environmental sustainability will be included here? In particular, is there a strand of this IP specifically about influence, education, and advocacy, it seems a bit odd that we can't include things like writing articles or speaking at conferences.

AMY VAUGHAN: So, the way I would suggest you deal with that because what we're looking for here is your stated ambition, the bit of that ambition you're going to focus on for the next 12 months and then how you're likely to progress that ambition and that means rather than listing, you know, here is a list of things we're going to do, what we're looking for is - here is the actions we're taking in order to achieve what we want to do. So, I would be saying that actually, if your ambition is, we want to green our organisation. We've got an ambition to move towards carbon net zero, you don't have to do that, but that might be something you've chosen. Your priorities for the next 12 months might be looking at our operational - the way we deliver things and making some significant changes which might include transport or if you want to focus on the advocacy bit, you'd say your priority is around advocacy to the sector and sharing our learning. That's our priority this year and then you tell us using your actions how that's going to happen. So, what you're doing is showing us the how rather than the what. So, the 'what' is in the priorities and the ambition. The how is in the actions. I hope that makes it a bit more sense.

DAN SMITH: Yes, thank you. If not, we've got time so if people want to clarify things send more questions in. So, another one for you. This one about, I think, it is an example text that's in the example filled in template. The three-year ambitions in that example do not feel very ambitious. For example, to position ourselves as a leading change does not feel ambitious. To be a leading change is ambitious. So, I think this organisation is in disagreement about this. Some feel it should be an ambitious ambition respond together guidance notes. Others think it needs to be paired down to reflect the example.

AMY VAUGHAN: I think this is a really great question. I'm really glad somebody asked it because in creating those templates, it is a really difficult line to walk because you're going "we don't want to put words into people's mouths about what they should be putting" but we didn't want to put a load of templates - it is about how to use them, not the content. The template needs to reflect your organisation. It needs to be what you want to do, and it does not have to be in any way related to what we put in that example. In fact, I tried to be as bland as possible when we were developing those because we're talking to a huge footprint of organisations of different sizes and different scales and different types so it is really important that you look at this template in the context of your application and when we write across it, it makes sense. If it suddenly sounds like someone else's example, it won't make sense. It needs to feel like it has come from your organisation. Be as ambitious as you can be but within the parameters that there is only a certain amount of resource that you've got to use and there is only a certain amount that you can do with the capacity. The actions are there to show your ambition is great, but your delivery is realistic.

DAN SMITH: Great, thank you, Amy. Alex, do you want to pop on now? And introduce yourself.

ALEX MIDDLETON: Good morning. I'm Alex Middleton, Senior Manager, Funded Organisations and I'm a white woman in my mid-40s with brown hair and glasses sitting in a wooden panelled room in our Manchester office.

DAN SMITH: Thank you. We've had a couple of questions on this. Just a clarification for the purpose of this template, does next 12 months refer to the 12 months from the submission deadline or the first year of funding? I.e., 1st April 2023.

ALEX MIDDLETON: That's for the first year of funding. So, the next 12 months from the start of the funding period.

DAN SMITH: Brilliant. Thank you. A question on consortiums, consortia. As a consortium, how detailed are you expecting us to be about individual areas of action?

ALEX MIDDLETON: Well, in terms of how you complete this as a consortium and just come back in if I'm not answering the question that you're asking here. Generally, this is how this applies across the consortium, activity as a whole so how the consortium is embedding and progressing against the investment principles. So, of course, the level of detail would affect that if you've got multiple partners, but also think about that the lead organisation is, of course, the accountable organisation. So anything that's linked up to accountability and governance, you need to think about that being the lead organisation.

DAN SMITH: Great. Thanks very much. Jane, I think you might be up next if you want to come in and introduce yourself.

JANE DAWSON: Hello. I'm Jane Dawson, Director of Funding Programmes. I'm a white woman in my 60s with grey hair. I'm wearing glasses and a dark blue jumper and I'm in a white walled room with black and white pictures.

DAN SMITH: Thanks. So, we've got a question here that says with regards to the stages, when it says discussed and agreed, does this mean something that is agreed with your board or could it be internally as a team?

JANE DAWSON: I would say that the approach you'd need to take here would be that you've discussed and agreed the actions with your team. But, of course, the board needs to see the plan as part of the application before it gets submitted so it also needs to be comfortable. For instance, you know, that it believes that the actions you're proposing are achievable. So, discussed and agreed with the team,

but endorsed if you like by the board.

DAN SMITH: Great. Thank you, Jane. Amy, do you want to come back in? I've lost the question. Here it is. So, we're a fairly small organisation. So embedding the investment principles can be quite onerous. At the same time, it can be tempting to add as many actions as we can to show ambition. I think you've already spoken about this, but what's the expectation for small organisations in terms of a number of actions and where we're at if it is only one to two actions is it enough?

AMY VAUGHAN: It is about what is deliverable for your organisation. I understand this concern particularly from small organisations about there is a lot here and there is a lot to do and that's why we're saying, set yourself for a three-year ambition. This is only the first 12 months. You don't want to over-stretch yourself and put three actions in every box and then find that you're into delivery and you can't do it, you know. So, I would absolutely be thinking about this. Thinking about this holistically and I think if screens were big enough, it would have been great to be able to have all of this in one so you had your four categories down the side and your four investment principles across the top and you were looking at - you can look at them as an organisation and say "In our first year we've got big ambitions around environmental responsibility and inclusivity and relevance." That's where we're focusing our time and our energy and that's where we're putting our actions. For the other two, they're going to be further down the track and we're just going to put in some sort of holding position actions for those ones. We're not expecting everyone to be fully involved and have the investment principles running through them like a stick of rock on day one. This is about progress and it's about putting in what you can deliver because what you don't want is to over promise. So, I would absolutely be thinking really strategically about the things you can do and don't over-stretch yourself and yes, go for one action. But in some cases your one action might be something you already know you're doing really well because you're going to evolve that next year or the year after. So, you've got that plan. So, yes, be realistic about what you can do, but can I also add? Some of the smaller organisations can also be really fleet of foot and be quite experimental and innovative. So also, don't hold back on your ambition. If you want to try something really different then go for it. If you're all signed up to it and you can all get behind it.

DAN SMITH: Brilliant. Thank you. A question here around, I think, this person has done the background reading. So looked at the investment principles in the strategy which we love to hear! So, each investment principle has three pillars. Would you expect us to address each one in this template? Do those pillars relate to the four categories that we've got in the template?

AMY VAUGHAN: So the pillars are very much about giving people some structure to the investment principles that sort of allow when thinking about them, rather than them being a huge piece of, you know, a huge thing to take on board as one great big blob of information. The point about the pillars was, so taking inclusivity and relevance, I'm going to break this out in to three parts. I'm going to think about my communities. I'm going to think about my team and I'm going to think about our programme. Doing it in that way makes it easier to talk about it and think about the areas you want to focus on. What this template then does is take those areas you want to focus on and give you a structure to talk about them in terms of how you're going to progress them because remember, we're not telling you how to IP. We're not telling you how to do that. We put these out as a set of markers, and we want to know how you are going to adapt to them and embed them in your organisation. So,

yes, absolutely refer to the pillars if you want to if that helps. If that helps in your articulation of what you're going to do, that would be great to see that in applications, but at the same time, don't worry about mentioning everything and cross-referencing everything.

DAN SMITH: Brilliant. Thank you. Jane, would you like to come in now? So, this question is how tied would we be to actions we have stipulated in the template? For example, if things change and we can't go ahead with the specific action, would we be penalised for this in the future?

JANE DAWSON: Okay. So, if we send you an offer of funding, we'll discuss your funding agreement with you and part of the basis for that funding agreement will be what you've said in this investment principles plan. So, we'll absolutely hold you to those aims and ambitions as articulated in the plan. However, we know that things change. We know that life doesn't go according to plan. So, we fully expect there to be shifts during the three-year period. Maybe even, you know, within the first two or three months and that's one of the reasons why we're asking everyone to report to their boards on progress against the actions that they've set in their plans. So that way we will pick up from your board reports whether things are changing. So, no, we won't penalise you if things go a bit wrong. We might want to have a chat with you at some point and ask why you think things are going wrong and what you're doing about that? If you are changing your ambitions. See it an ongoing dialogue, but one that we will be alerted to if there is any change through your board papers.

DAN SMITH: Great. Thank you, Jane. I think Alex is coming back in now.

ALEX MIDDLETON: Yes. Hello.

DAN SMITH: Right, I'm going to come to you with a question on actions that are relevant to multiple investment principles. Can we repeat actions if they are relevant to more than one? For example, audience data collection being relevant to inclusivity and relevance and also dynamism, or do we just pick one place for it and say it once?

ALEX MIDDLETON: It is fine where relevant to reference the same actions across different investment principles and it is really good to see that kind of, I guess, cross-referencing across the plan and that plans and actions are talking to each other.

DAN SMITH: Great. Thank you. And another question for you. Our application is a multi-venue NPO rather than a consortium. Can we submit one investment principle plan or do we need to do one per venue?

ALEX MIDDLETON: It is one per application. You need to think about all the activities across the venues in our organisation.

DAN SMITH: Thank you. Amy, do you want to come back in? It is a clarification here. In the example template, I couldn't see success measures within IP 3 and IP 4 in the three-year box. Can you give examples, please?

AMY VAUGHAN: I'm presuming IP 3 and IP 4, I'm just going to check on my template would be the dynamism and the inclusivity and relevance if they're in the order that they are on the contents tab. I think we're talking about success measures being the ambition. I mean, like I said about examples, you shouldn't be moulding your examples to fit the examples we put out there. They were more this is how you fill in this box rather than this is what you need to say. When you're filling out about your success measures, go back to the reading around inclusivity and relevance which has those three features to it. You're thinking about your communities, who gets access to you, who are you open to. Who are you talking to? Who is part of your world as it were? Think about your workforce and leadership and governance

and how that's reflective of the people you want to reach. And then thinking about the programme that you're delivering. What are your outputs, whose stories are they telling and who is behind the stories? They need you to help you inform your success measures. By reflecting on your own organisation and what you want to do over the next three years and what you're putting in your NPO application, you need to distil that down. We've got a new community that we want to reach. We've done this research. We think we're going to really focus our time on building this audience. So you might have a big ambition around a new audience for example. For dynamism, you might want to do a big piece of earned income. You might want to be looking at your business model and rethinking your earned income strategy or something. That's the kind of thing. Look at the investment principle itself. Look at those three features and then think for our organisation, what would ambitious look like here and put that into that box. I can't give you specific examples because I don't know your organisation, only you know that. You should be thinking about distilling that big investment and its features to make it relevant for your organisation.

DAN SMITH: Great. Thank you. And another one for you. I am a little confused by the explanation of a planned and established action under two of the categories. Can you describe the same action, but mark it as planned under people for example and then established under tools and monitoring.

AMY VAUGHAN: Yes, so the example I was talk about in using the template was that under ambition and quality, for example, you might be thinking well, we use a quality framework. We already use one. We're really happy with it. It works well for our organisation. However, we don't think we are getting enough feedback from this particular group. We want to expand the pool of people that we're hearing from about the work that we do. So, the new action, the new plans would be around people, you're saying you want to reach a new set of people or we're going to pull together a new focus group. Say it was young people, we want to hear more from young people about what they think about their work. You've prioritised that and that's what you're going to do. The plan in this year would be we need to get those young people in and these are the actions we're going to take to do it. It is what we're going to do. In terms of how we're reporting on what we're hearing back from those young people once we've done that, we're using the same framework. We've always used this framework. We know how it works. This is how we report to our board. This is how our management team look at it or our staff or however and that's an established action. You're saying we're using something we already know how to do this. It is part of the same plan, but it's using something that you're already doing. That's the idea. The established one is useful because it allows you to talk about what you're already doing alongside your new ambition. So not everything has to be brand-new. You can say "We're already great, great at this, but we want to grow this bit." That's where you use planned and in progress.

DAN SMITH: Brilliant. Thank you, Amy. Jane, would you like to come in? We've had a couple of questions around where the focus should be with these actions, whether it is about internal activity or public-facing. I'll read out the longer question in the hope it covers the most ground. So, are all investment principle actions expected to be related to the organisation? So, governance, structure, staff training, etcetera rather than what we deliver to the public i.e. activities or can some of our public activity also be cited as meeting investment principles? Could a public activity be an investment principle action?

JANE DAWSON: Yes, that's an interesting question. I think it comes back to what

Amy was just saying about you knowing your organisation and knowing how it works and what your own ambitions are. So, I would never say never, but mostly the actions will be related to your own organisation and how those investment principles are embedded in the way it works. But I certainly wouldn't ever rule out the possibility that public-facing activity might support that and underpin the work that you're doing to develop your own organisation. Do you think that answers the question, Dan?

DAN SMITH: I think so. I think hopefully we'll have time to get to a clarification if they come back in.

JANE DAWSON: I wasn't sure if I missed a bit out.

DAN SMITH: No, I think we're fine. Wonderful. Thank you. Alex, do you want to come in? This question is a straightforward one. If asking or an uplift, that's current NPOs asking for an uplift to their funding, do we include plans for uplift on this template?

ALEX MIDDLETON: No, you don't. It is a straightforward question. I will just elaborate a little bit just to be really, really clear. So, current NPOs asking for an uplift or additional investment. The whole application form, all of the templates, doesn't include the uplift apart from that single question on what you would do for additional investment. So, everything else you fill out. All the templates should reflect your planning figure as a maximum and then there is the separate section where you talk about what you would do for more money.

DAN SMITH: Great. Thank you. And just a clarification just to make sure this one is crystal clear as well. Are the actions that add for the first year or for whole three-year period.

ALEX MIDDLETON: The actions are for the first year. We've got the three-year ambition. Then we've got the priorities for the first year and then the actions that underpin those priorities for the first year and as we've said, this template will then form the basis of the monitoring relationship for successful applicants. So we will be asking for an annual update so we'd see the actions for each year at the beginning of each year.

DAN SMITH: Great. Thank you. A final one for you for now. Can environmental responsibility be about raising the debate with museum users and not just making building improvements. For example, creating new galleries responding to the climate emergency?

ALEX MIDDLETON: We want to hear about ambitious outward facing activity as well as the more technical things that your organisation might be doing. So, if you play a role in terms of sector leadership or anything or even if not, but you're just engaging with peers in the debates here, we really want to hear about that as well in the template.

DAN SMITH: Great. Thank you. Amy, I think I've got a few for you now. So, a question on the planning section. Is the action, the creation of a plan? For example, write and deliver a digital plan. I.e. the plan is the output. Sorry, I may have read that wrong. Or should the outputs reflect the plan?

ALEX MIDDLETON: The plan is the output. So, what we want to know is an environment responsibility is a good one to use here. In order to achieve your ambitions, it is unlikely that you're going to be able to say "Oh, we want to do this, and this" and that's the end of it. Your board or oversight group are going to need to see a plan. You're going to need something to work from that helps you move through that. We want to know that you've written that plan. The actions might be if you don't have a plan now, that by the end of the first year, you will have written the

plan and it will have been signed off by your board. That would be a great action to put in because that allows us to see that there is board oversight on what you're doing. You've got an idea about what you want to produce and then if that doesn't happen, if you enter into a funding agreement and through that first year you say, "We're really struggling writing that plan." We might have a further conversation about how some of the resources out there could help you in writing it. Don't get into the detail that will be in the plan, just talk about the action of actually writing it and having an intention to write it.

DAN SMITH: Okay. Great. The next one, will activities be scored more highly if they are delivered in an artistic way? For example, a creative approach to focus groups?

AMY VAUGHAN: I mean, in the prompts, you know, if you read the prompts in the guidance, there is no prompts that we're looking for, you know, artistic ways of delivering. However, creative ways are always more interesting for everyone to engage in. Your creative organisations and do it in the way that feels right for you. I think that would be the over-riding message here, but there isn't any criteria or scoring in the application that leans more towards that.

DAN SMITH: We've got a clarification question here. I'm a bit confused by the response about the stages. Is this not about whether it is being agreed, discussed, planned, etcetera with external partners as well as internally? As surely everything in the NPO should have been agreed internally with board and staff anyway?

AMY VAUGHAN: Well, that's a very true point and a very good point. I'd reiterate that the investment principles are about embedding them in your own organisation. That's what we're looking for in this plan is how you are taking them on. So what Jane was talking about, you know, you've agreed that between you. And then you know, you're endorsed and that's what you're going to do. However, if there are partners involved in the work that you're doing, of course, we want to feel that you have agreed that with those partners and you're not citing people who haven't been involved in that process, but you might be saying you've got ambitions around new partners and you haven't done that groundwork yet. That may yet to come. Those descriptions of those stages are very much, if you're saying it is being discussed and agreed, it is discussed and agreed in relation to the action that you're talking about. So, if that action is, we're working in partnership with X organisation and you name them, yes, of course, you need to have discussed it and agreed it with them, but we are really focusing on this is - where is this in your development towards this investment principle for your own organisation? Is it something you're just talking about? Is it something that you've absolutely nailed down and you've got it in place and you're going with it or is it something that you've been doing for a long time?

DAN SMITH: Great. Thank you, Amy. Over to Alex now, I think. If you want to come on. So, how would you distinguish between actions which belong in the activity template and those which belong in the investment principles template? Is there overlap?

ALEX MIDDLETON: So, I think there is two answers to this question dependent on whether you are applying as an NPO or an IPSO. So, first of all for NPOs, the clear difference. Obviously, the activity template is very much focused around the outcomes, it is focused around the outcomes and the investment principles plan is about the investment principles. Yes, there may be some overlap. There might be something that you're doing around inclusivity and relevance. That also talks to activities that you're doing around cultural communities for example. But really think about, you know, what the outcomes are about. What the investment principles are about and what sits best where. If you're applying as an IPSO, of course, they'll both

be about the investment principles and that's where the activity plan is really for the activity that you're doing that will support the wider sector. So other organisations or individuals and it is likely to be more focused around one or two of the investment principles, probably, whereas your investment principles plan we're asking you to talk about how you will embed all four of the investment principles within your own organisation.

DAN SMITH: Great. Thank you. A quick one, are we going to ask for a business plan alongside the templates and if so, when?

ALEX MIDDLETON: So, no. We won't be asking for business plans at any point. So, we won't be asking you to submit business plans to the Arts Council.

We would expect to see business plans reflected in board papers. So, in terms of the successful organisations, and during the monitoring relationship we will be relying on board papers or equivalent reports if you have a different kind of governance structure for our monitoring. So, there we'd expect to see business plans being signed off and reviewed by the board and we'd expect to see alignment between what's in your investment principles plan and what's going through the board in terms of the business plan.

DAN SMITH: Great. Thanks, one more on the application form. Is there a part of the application form where we can talk a bit more about your three-year ambition for the investment principles in the same way that there is space to do this for the outcomes?

ALEX MIDDLETON: No, there isn't. So, we've really looked at where we can streamline the information that we're asking for and focus on what we really need at the point of application. So, in terms of investment principles for NPO applicants anyway, we're just asking for the investment principles plan.

DAN SMITH: Great. Thank you very much. Amy, would you like to come back on? So, this question is we want to instigate a well-being programme because we have a large proportion of disabled and those with mental health issues among both staff and are participants. Am I right that those plans belong under dynamism?

AMY VAUGHAN: Yes, put them under dynamism. That would fit really well. You could also talk about that in some extent in inclusivity and relevance in terms of that workforce leadership and governance stuff, but yes, absolutely, dynamism.

DAN SMITH: Great. The next question, we are a disabled-led organisation. The approach that works best for us is a step by step one. That way we can tackle barriers in access as we go. So, each step reflects on the previous one. How can we best reflect this step-by-step model within the template?

AMY VAUGHAN: This is a really great template. In designing this template, there is a sense that you can go step by step through these investment principles by using the four categories which would help you focus your thinking. So, in terms of how would that be reflected? I mean, you could quite simply use the actions, use the lines of each action to say in your own language, we're starting with this. When we've done that, we're moving to this and then we're moving to this. That would allow you to open up a conversation with your Relationship Manager to say, "we're progressing well against this action, but we don't think we'll get to this one. We want to take this out." This a live conversation and I think particularly for those organisations that think, we want to put this in. We're not sure we'll be able to move through it. Other things might come in that means we can't move through this as fast as we hoped. It is a conversation. You're just putting your initial plans in there. I think that point is very well made one. Do try and use the template to talk about a step-by-step approach and don't be worried about doing that. It would be really good to see that.

DAN SMITH: Great. We've had a couple of questions around targets and actions around targets. I'll read the longer one. Should you be adding in specific targets in the templates so there is a clear idea of what success looks like? For example, if you plan to reduce your carbon footprint, should there be a specific target set against this?

AMY VAUGHAN: I like this question because it allows us to bring to life this shift in monitoring. So, under previous funding agreements and the current NPO structure, we asked to see those targets. You send them to us and we see them. Usually in a business plan. In this next Investment Programme, we want you and your board or your oversight group, steering group, to own your progress. So, the targets need to go to your board. That's what you put in your plan. So, you tell us you're going to write a plan and you put the targets in your plan and your board see that and I'm use board as a very general - this is where the oversight comes in. We're going to see those papers. So, we could have a look at that plan if they're in your board papers and they're going to your board, we can see it then, but we're seeing it alongside the oversight of your organisation and so it becomes a discussion. If for example, a plan went to your board that didn't have targets in it, we might say, "your board signed that off, but there weren't any targets in it. It is not clear how they're going to hear about how well you're doing." That's the set-up. That's the relationship. So, think about yes, you're going to have targets around these things, but you're putting it in your plans and it is your oversight function that will see those plans and agree those plans.

DAN SMITH: Great. Thanks. Alex, do you want to come back on? We've got a clarification here for you. Going back to your answer about uplift for current NPOs only being included in the additional investment section of the application, how does this work for consortium if you are bringing in a new partner related to Levelling Up for Culture Place where this partner will be an integrated part of the consortium's work and therefore, investment principles priorities and actions?

ALEX MIDDLETON: Well, I think that depends on whether the organisation will only be bringing in the new consortium partner if they get an uplift or additional investment. It might be that they have decided to change how their organisations works and bring in a new consortium partner and they're doing that within their planning figure. The work of the consortium partner would be reflected in the investment principles plan. If however they're only going to bring in the new consortium partner if they get additional money, they should only talk about it in the separate section. I know that might be difficult, but we need to separate that out so that we can see what would be done for the planning figure or within the planning figure and then what would be done if they get additional investment.

DAN SMITH: Great. Thank you. Jane, if you want to come in. I've got a clarification for you as well. Going back to your answer about including public-facing work in investment principle actions, would a focus group be considered public-facing?

JANE DAWSON: Yes, potentially. If the members invited to focus group are talking about ways that you as an organisation can develop and grow, potentially that sits within the investment principles.

DAN SMITH: Great. Another one for you. There is an understanding that business plans are an outdated need. Are there other format options that would be acceptable?

JANE DAWSON: Having a sense of shock, horror here. We're not - well, it may be a view that business plans are outdated, but we actually do believe that it is really good practise for an organisation to have a business plan and within that business

plan, we would expect to see the activity plan, the investment principles plan and all of the ambitions that you've set out in your application reflected in the business plan and that business plan to be owned and monitored by the board or oversight group. But there are other formats absolutely that are acceptable. Sorry, I didn't really finish my train of thought there which is that we're not requiring organisations to produce business plans. That's the difference. We think it is best practice that organisations have them, but we're not requiring them as a condition of funding. So, yes, just on the other format. Yes, there are other formats that could be used rather than a traditional executive summary on governance kind of approach. Some people might prefer a visual representation with a series of flow charts say or even something more akin to Easy Read guide that's more digestible and can be shared easily with a wider community. So, there are any number of different ways of producing a business plan and we would recommend that organisations do have them, but you don't need to send them to us other than through your board papers.

DAN SMITH: Great. Thank you very much, Jane. Amy, I'll come to you next. We've got a couple of questions left and then we might be done. This question is in relation to environmental responsibility. If during year one we will be making changes to our activity, to reducing environmental impact. For example, touring less internationally, how should this be shown in the template?

AMY VAUGHAN: You'd expect something like touring less internationally. You'd expect that to be reflected to see that in the ambition and the priorities. An ambition around this to reduce it by however much. Where you would put that is in planning. When you're doing your tour planning, what do you use? What are the documents that you have as an organisation for planning and I'd introduce an action around reducing your international touring.

DAN SMITH: Thank you. If Jane wants to come on for the final question. This one reads, "We are an organisation that's privately held and does not have a board as such. Can setting up implementing a board advisory council be one of our plans?"

JANE DAWSON: Yes. The only thing I would add to that is that it would need to be in place by 1st April 2023 if we were to offer you funding. So, yes, absolutely it's a required action if you like because we will need to see that happening.

DAN SMITH: Great. Thank you very much. If anyone on the panel has spotted anything else that they want to jump in on right now, I'll wait for a second. But if not, can we pop the final slide back up on the screen, please?

Thank you. So, we've come to the end of the session. And just before we go, we wanted to remind you of the steps that you can take now as you prepare your applications before submitting. The deadline for applications is 12pm, midday, Wednesday, 18th May. We strongly advise don't leave submitting your application to the very last minute. Try to get it submitted at least a week before the deadline if you can. So, a summary of the support that's available to you on our website includes the following: There are the steps that you can take first. So let us know if you have any access requirements, if you haven't already done so. Take a look at the background reading. So our strategy, our delivery plan. Get set-up on our portal, Grantium or make sure that your profile is up-to-date if you already have one. For introductory conversations, if you haven't booked one, you can do so. These are mandatory for all new applicants and these are optional for current NPOs. Then when it comes to making your application, of course, please take a look at that essential documentation including the Guidance for Applicants and the Addendum that was

published in February. There are supporting documents including information sheets, blank templates that you can use in your planning that are also there if you need them. Remember, if you have any questions, please do visit our FAQs page. We update this after every series of briefings that we host. So, next week, we're going to get in touch with everybody that's come to a briefing over the last week-and-a-half with a link to an update to our FAQs so everything that we've heard from everyone that we've spoken to over the last week-and-a-half, we're going to be factoring that in and making sure we are giving you the most up-to-date information. If you still need support, you can get in touch with us. We're really happy to help. Our Customer Services Team are there and they are available through different methods and you can find that on our website. We will be in touch with everyone who joined us today with a link to a survey asking you about your experience today. We would be really grateful if you took a few minutes to complete it so we can continue to improve on the service that we're delivering to you. That is it. 15 minutes early which is great. I hope you have a good rest of week. Enjoy your weekends when they come. Thank you very much for joining us. Bye-bye.