



SNAPSHOT – 01

THE NEWBRIDGE PROJECT



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The NewBridge Project is a vibrant organisation supporting the creation of new and pioneering contemporary art through an ambitious programme of exhibitions, commissions, events and artist development.

We create platforms for audiences to engage with the creative process, while nurturing artistic and curatorial practice in an engaged and discursive community. Our programme places collaboration and learning at its heart and seeks to be a genuine community resource.

WHAT WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF MGETR?

We claimed MGETR for the first time in 2019. We claimed just under 15% of our total expenditure on Exhibitions in the previous financial year, and our claim was successful. We received tax relief of £14,449, 1 month after submitting the claim (we submitted the claim on 18 October, and received the tax relief on 20 November 2019).

WHAT WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF FINANCIAL REPORTING OR CORPORATION TAX BEFORE THIS?

We had not submitted a tax return before. We were originally a CIC and became a registered charity in 2018—this made us eligible to claim MGETR (but was not the reason we became a charity). When we became a charity we also appointed a new accountant who has extensive experience in working with charities and art organisations.

HOW DID YOU MANAGE GATHERING THE FINANCIAL INFORMATION IN-HOUSE?

Our Director led on the claim alongside our accountant, gathering information on eligible expenditure into an Excel spreadsheet.

We broke the expenditure down into:

- artist fees (r&d/production)
- allocated staff time (r&d/production/install/deinstall)
- travel & accommodation (r&d/production/deinstall)
- programme committee time (r&d/production)
- materials (production)
- invigilation (not applicable costs)
- marketing (not applicable costs)
- install materials (install/production)
- technician (install/production/deinstall).

Some costs were not applicable (running costs/marketing costs) but our accountant advised that these still needed to be included on the form submitted to HMRC.

We manage our finances using Xero accounting software, which enables us to keep track of Income & Expenditure, with all spend assigned to budget codes.

Our accountant already had experience of submitting claims for MGETR, so he was able to provide extensive guidance on what should be included whilst we were gathering the financial information in house. He then completed the HMRC form and submitted our MGETR claim for us. This process is part of our Annual Fee which includes producing our Year End Accounts.

WHAT WERE THE MAIN CHALLENGES?

It was a new process for us which is always a challenge, however we found collating the information relatively straightforward, if time consuming.

Whilst the YVAN training day was incredibly helpful, we came away with a sense that we could claim for more costs / projects than we actually claimed for—particularly around projects that took place off-site, which our accountant advised us not to include.

As with lots of organisations—a lot of our projects take place off-site—it would be good to have some clearer guidance on what can and can't be claimed in this area. Eg. If we have a regular gallery space but have a project that is taking place off-site—can it be included.

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT OF MGETR ON YOUR WORK?

The MGETR gave us unrestricted funds which were unexpected, and we certainly found that the process of gathering the financial information and submitting a claim took less energy and time than writing a funding application for a comparable amount.

The money enabled us to grow our small staff team, and we employed an Admin & Marketing Assistant to work with us for 2 days a week. This salary will be supported annually by our MGETR claim, and the amount received in the 2018–19 year would actually have covered the salary for the role for a 3 year period.

We used some of the money to provide 4 x Research & Development Bursaries for participants of our Programme Committee (a hands-on professional development programme for artists and emerging curators)—so we could offer 9 Bursaries in total (5 supported by Arts Council NPO). This bursary led to us receiving 10 times the number of applications we had had for the previous Programme Committee, increasing accessibility and ensuring that our programme represents a diverse range of voices and is led by artists from all backgrounds.

WHAT WE WOULD TELL OTHER SMALL ARTS ORGANISATIONS ABOUT MGETR NOW?

We would tell them that it is definitely worth doing if you are eligible. However, we have been reluctant to recommend that other small arts organisations who aren't charities apply for this until we have further clarity on their eligibility. In particular it seems that CICs are not eligible to apply, which would discount many small arts organisations.

However, as an organisation it has enabled us to grow our:

- investment in talent development and training
- investment in educational activities
- employment
- marketing & audience development strategy
- digital presence
- stronger brand identity
- greater numbers of audiences
- inbound tourism.

It supported members of the Programme Committee to generate further activity across our programme. It supported greater diversity and inclusion within our Programme Committee, leading to more diverse audiences and improvement in the accessibility of our artistic programme.

TO JOIN OUR MGETR
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