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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs) ON THE CULTURAL MATCHING FUND (CMF)¹

Key Facts and Figures

- CMF was established in 2014 with \$200m. It was topped up in 2017 (\$150m) and 2022 (\$150m). With the 2025 top-up (\$100m), total investment is \$600m. The scheme has been extended until end-FY29.
- Since 2014, over \$400m in matching grants has been disbursed to arts and heritage (A&H) charities.
- As of 2024, 127 unique A&H charities have applied to CMF at least once, comprising around 80% of all A&H charities.
- The total number of donors whose donations were matched by CMF increased from ~2,000 in FY24 to ~8,200 in FY23.

1. What has been the impact of the CMF since its launch in 2014?

- The CMF is a strong signal of the shared responsibility between Government and the private and people sectors in driving Singapore's cultural development.
- Since 2014, over \$420m in matching grants has been disbursed to arts and heritage charities and IPCs.
- We have also crowded in an equivalent amount of private donations to the arts and heritage sector.
- The number of donors whose donations are matched by the CMF has quadrupled, from 2,000 in FY14 to over 8,000 in FY23.
- Over the years, we have noticed several arts and heritage groups conducting fundraising to diversify their income streams for the first time due to the CMF.

2. Can the Government consider a larger top-up of the CMF, or a higher matching ratio to better support our arts and heritage groups?

- MOF has been very supportive of the CMF over the years.
- From CMF Secretariat's perspective, we want to avoid a 'feast and famine' situation, which is why we are managing the run rate carefully.

¹ These are adapted from the earlier cleared FAQs for the Ministerial Townhall on 21 Feb 2025.

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- The CMF is part of a broader suite of Government schemes that support our arts and heritage sector. It serves to increase raised income. Other Government schemes include NAC's Presentation and Participation Grant and NHB's Major and Minor Project Grants.
- We have also announced the SG Culture Pass recently, which aims to help arts and heritage groups further diversify your sources of income via earned income.
- Collectively, these schemes provide diverse and holistic support for the arts and heritage sector.

3. Can CMF consider raising the quantum for the first \$300K to better support arts and heritage groups, especially in consideration of inflation, etc?

[Note: The following suggested pointers can be used for Questions 2 and 3.]

- The vast majority of CMF applicants do not apply for matching above \$300k. So, this question applies to a very small group of applicants.
- To clarify, the \$300k is not a "cap" per se.
 - It is just that applicants have flexibility to use up to \$300k of matching funds for **operational overheads**.
 - For amounts above \$300k, the funds must be put towards uses that are in line with culture sector priorities.
 - This avoids a situation where we inadvertently encourage the unsustainable growth of overheads at the sectoral level, solely through the support of CMF.
- We regularly review the CMF to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

4. CMF is supposed to provide dollar-for-dollar matching. However, not all of our applied amounts have been matched. Why can CMF choose to match donations selectively?

- All applications will be assessed against prevailing criteria and other applications received in the same application cycle.
 - First, the donation has to be a qualifying donation, and not a sponsorship. IRAS has recently published updated guidelines on this.

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- CMF has also matched in full the vast majority of our applications, which are below \$300k per application.
- Matching funds are limited and there is a need to prioritise the appropriate allocation of these funds.
- CMF Trustees will prioritise applications to ensure adequate support for smaller arts and heritage charities; ensure prudent use of public monies; and drive a more strategic use of CMF overall for the overall sector.
- In particular, the CMF will be used to support culture sector priorities, which include driving artistic and cultural excellence, contributing to stronger and more cohesive communities in Singapore, and developing the local arts and culture sector.

5. Can the scope of CMF be expanded to support and match the earned income of registered charities and IPCs, rather than just donations?

- CMF is one of the many schemes our arts and heritage groups can tap on.
 - The CMF aims to encourage philanthropic giving to Singapore's arts and heritage sector, as well as increase arts and heritage charities' raised income.
 - The new SG Culture Pass, for example, focuses on helping arts and culture groups increase their earned income. These various schemes serve different purposes and support the sector in different ways.
- Examples of other schemes include National Arts Council's Presentation and Participation Grant, Creation Grant, Production Grant; and the National Heritage Board's Organisation Transformation Grant, and Major and Minor Project Grants.
- Together, these measures will help build a diverse and sustainable arts and heritage ecosystem.

6. Why doesn't the CMF fund staff bonuses, welfare benefits, and legal expenses for arts and heritage charities?

- We want to avoid a situation where we inadvertently encourage the unsustainable growth of overheads at the sectoral level, solely through the support of CMF.
 - The first \$300k of matching grants can be used to cover the cost of overheads like salaries and rent.

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- For legal fees, staff bonuses and welfare benefits, arts and heritage groups would need to consider other sustainable ways of funding these expenses.
- The restriction applies only to the matching grants, not the donations raised by the charities and IPCs.

7. How will the \$100m top-up impact the CMF disbursement? Does this mean that the yearly CMF disbursement will be larger, more arts groups will be supported, and CMF will last for a longer period?

- MOF has been very supportive of the CMF over the years.
- From CMF Secretariat's perspective, we want to avoid a 'feast and famine' situation, which is why we are managing the run rate carefully.
- By our projections, the latest \$100m top-up for the CMF will allow CMF to last until FY29.
- This is also against the backdrop of increasing demand for CMF matching grants.
- We will therefore prioritise support for programmes that are aligned with our broader culture sector priorities, as well as for smaller arts and heritage groups that need more support to level up their capabilities.

8. Is IMDA rating part of the assessment criteria for CMF applications?

- CMF Secretariat will assess an application holistically based on, amongst other criteria, its eligibility, completeness, and the proposed uses of the matching grant.
- In particular, CMF Secretariat will prioritise applications that support culture sector priorities, which include but are not limited to driving artistic and cultural excellence; contributing to stronger and more cohesive communities in Singapore; and developing the local arts and culture sector.
 - IMDA rating is one of the factors that the Secretariat takes into consideration, to ensure that the application is aligned with the CMF objectives.
 - We will prioritise funding for activities that are accessible to as broad a group as possible, in other words, productions that are rated General.
- CMF Secretariat has been quite facilitative over the years, and has worked with applicants to advise on the applications.