

Restructuring of arts councils – what will change, what will remain the same?

Info briefing on restructuring of Taite's arts councils, 18 August 2025



Taiteen edistämiskeskus
Centret för konstfrämjande
Arts Promotion Centre Finland

Background to restructuring

- Education and Culture Administration 2030 reform project, part of the Government Programme
 - Arts Promotion Centre Finland (Taike) and National Audiovisual Institute (KAVI) will merge as of 1 January 2026 to form the new Finnish Arts and Culture Agency
- The need to restructure the arts councils was raised in the external evaluation of Taike (*Agency Taking Shape*) published in 2021
- Preparations for the restructuring began within the Ministry of Education and Culture in autumn 2023
- "Single arts council" model outlined in spring 2024
- Legislation approved by Parliament in June 2025
- **Current arts council structure will remain in place until 30 June 2026**



Principles upheld in the restructuring

- Maintain the autonomy of the arts
- Ensure the continuation of peer reviews
- Regional balance in reviewing applications and decision-making
- Strengthen diversity
- Rotation of experts
- Transparency of decision-making and trust in decision-making
- Monitoring of change and evaluation of impacts

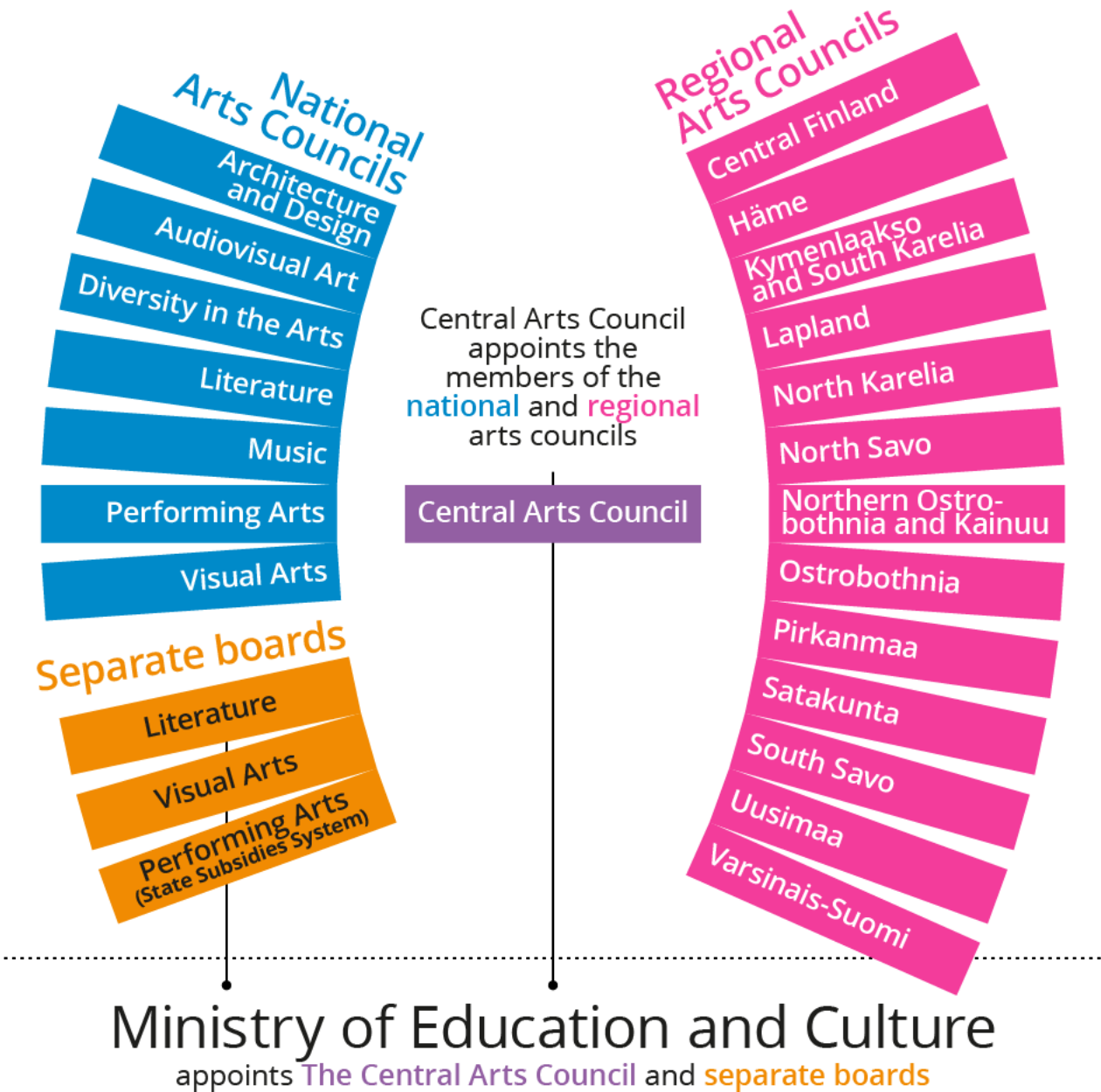
Why the need for change?

- Based on proposals of an external evaluation of Taike
- Finland has had a different model compared to sister organisations in other countries
- In the new system, the work of reviewing applications will be distributed more evenly among available experts
- Reviewing applications will be more flexible, as the Grant Assessment Panels can be assembled according to the number of applications
- Allows the unique characteristics of different fields of the arts and the changing arts sector to be taken into account better
- Situations related to disqualifications (conflicts of interest) can be managed better
- Restructuring also provides more flexibility for peer reviewers, who can influence when and how many applications they review
- Experts can also apply for grants, as long as they do not participate in the review process for that particular call for applications

Taike's expert bodies



Taiteen edistämiskeskus
Centret för konstfrämjande
Arts Promotion Centre Finland



Pool of Experts

Council of Arts and Culture
appoints the members

Council of Arts and Culture

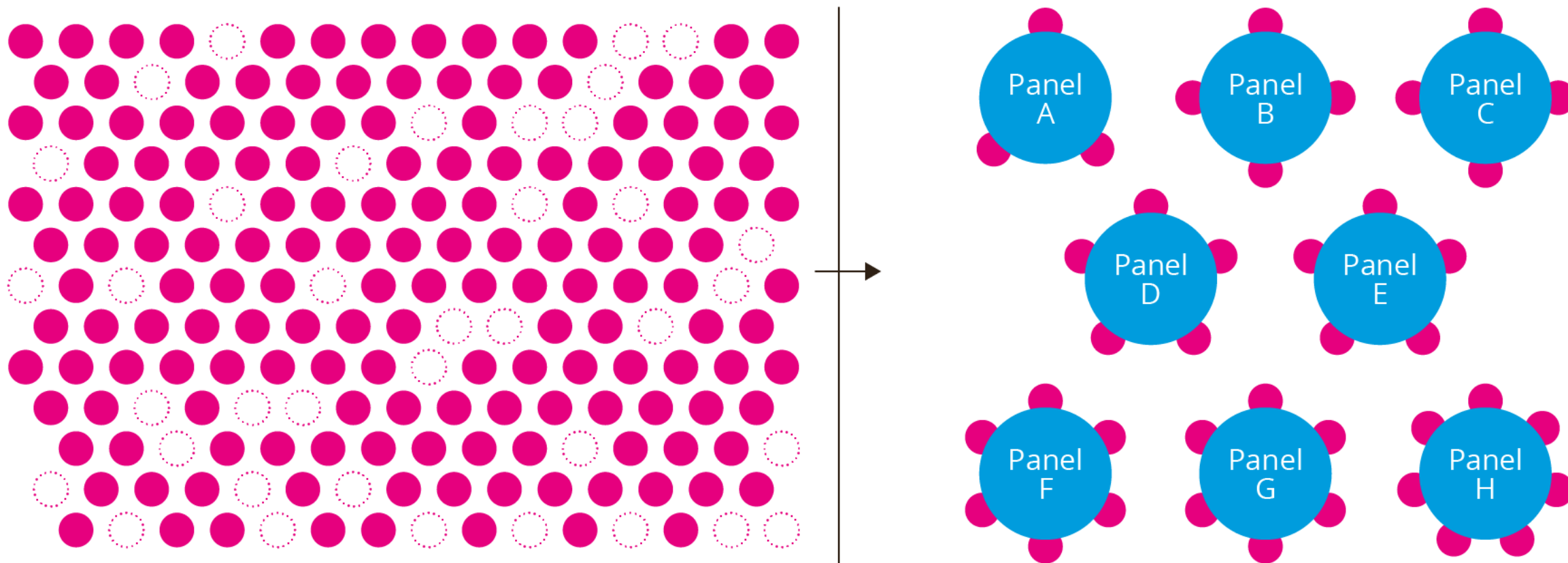
Appointed by the Government

- *Makes grant decisions*

Grant Assessment Panels

Applications are evaluated by
Grant Assessment Panels

- *Prepare grant decisions*



Taite

• *Assembles Review Panels*



Taiteen edistämiskeskus
Centret för konstfrämjande
Arts Promotion Centre Finland

New structure

- The Government appoints the Council of Arts and Culture after consulting key parties in terms of the arts and culture.
- The Council of Arts and Culture appoints the members of the Pool of Experts based on preparations made by the Agency.
- The preparation of decisions based on peer reviews is carried out within Grant Assessment Panels that comprise members of the Pool of Experts. The Panels are appointed by the Agency.
- The Council of Arts and Culture makes all grant decisions based on peer reviews as prepared by the Grant Assessment Panels.

What is the Council of Arts and Culture?

- On the basis of peer reviews, decides on government grants for artists and other grants awarded to artists and artist groups, as well as art prizes, and proposes the honorary title of academician.
- Each term is three years.
- A chairperson, 8-12 members and up to seven deputy members are appointed to the council.
- A member may serve two consecutive terms and again after a period of at least three years.
- Members and deputy members should represent a broad range of arts and culture policy expertise from different perspectives.
- Convenes for the first time as of 1 July 2026.

Legal foundations

- The Council of Arts and Culture decides on acquiring the necessary expertise and implementing peer reviews.
- The Council appoints the Pool of Experts from which Grant Assessment Panels are formed separately for each call for applications in order to provide an opinion on the applications to support decision-making within the Council.
- The aim of this procedure is to ensure the autonomy of the arts, key elements of which are peer reviews and decision-making that is sufficiently removed from political decision-making and civil servants (arm's length principle).
- Members of the Council may represent expertise in, for example, the making, production and mediation of art, the strategic development of the arts and culture sector, arts and culture research, production structures and business models in the arts and culture sector, and sustainability issues in arts and culture.
- The Council shall have sufficient peer-based expertise related to the arts and the work of artists. It is also important to consider the regional and linguistic representativeness of the Council's composition.

Taike's internal preparations

- Schedule for 2025
 - August: first external info briefing
 - August-September: interviews with members of current arts councils and the Central Arts Council
 - October: stakeholder consultations
 - December: key processes ready by the end of the year
- Schedule for 2026
 - January: new Agency, administrative procedures defined in the rules of procedure
 - January-February: second external info briefing
 - March: appointments for the Pool of Experts begin
 - July: Finnish Arts and Culture Agency begins operations, strengthens peer review procedures and appoints members of the Pool of Experts

Key questions in preparing for the changes

- How many members will be appointed to Pool of Experts?
- What is the appropriate rotation among the members of the Pool of Experts?
- What are the procedures for assembling the Pool of Experts?
- How to ensure the representativeness, diversity and regional expertise of the Pool of Experts?
- What is the appropriate number, size and rotation of the Grant Assessment Panels?
- What processes should be used when appointing the Grant Assessment Panels?

Key questions in preparing for the changes

- What kind of issues should the Council of Arts and Culture outline regarding peer review procedures?
- How should the proposals of the Grant Assessment Panels be presented to the Council and in what context should decisions be made?
- How should the possible disqualification of peer reviewers and decision-makers be managed?
- How to enable the opportunity for members of the Pool of Experts to also apply for grants themselves?
- How will the changes possibly affect the forms of support?
- How will the changes possibly affect application periods and processing times?
- What are the cost impacts of the changes?

How will the changes be visible to customers?

- The Agency's new name will appear already in autumn 2025, when calls for applications for 2026 will be published in the Finnish Arts and Culture Agency's name on the Applyforgrants.fi service.
- Changes related to assessments and decision-making will not be otherwise directly visible to customers.
- In the new structure, applicants will not necessarily know the names of all the experts reviewing their applications.
- There may be changes to the forms of support, budgets, application deadlines and processing times in the future, but they are not directly based on the restructuring of the arts council structure.



Thank you!

Henri Terho, Head of Unit, Arts and Culture
Funding

Hanna Susitaival, Senior Expert