

## MusiQuE's external review / Feedback session 20 February 2025

The review panel started by thanking the Board and the Office for the high quality of the preparations and expressed in particular warm thanks to all the interviewees (institutions, reviewers, stakeholders) for their engagement and their very clear answers. The panel was impressed by the spirit in which all interviewees contributed and the passion expressed by everyone they met. They highlighted that MusiQuE has "a multitude of strengths" and shares the following commendations and recommendations.

### Commendations:

MusiQuE has established itself very well with a fairly steady number of yearly reviews and a pool of recurrent "clients". It is also a small agency in a niche market, which certainly presents ample opportunities for establishment as leader in the niche, but also raises a series of constraints for its financial stability which require a continuous juggling between stability and manageability.

MusiQuE proves to have gracefully walked on the sinuous road from starting up to scaling up, keeping true to its aim for growth which stays at the core of its Strategic Plan. To achieve this, MusiQuE can rely on a breadth of strengths:

- A passionate Board and Office
- Strong values
- A clear mission
- A wealth of connections and experience in the field
- A broad stakeholders' model that brings in a variety of perspectives
- A strong reputation
- An enhancement-led approach that values the active involvement of its stakeholders
- A knowledgeable and independent Complaints and Appeals Committee

### Areas for further enhancement:

- **Strategy:** the time is ripe for setting clear priorities that balance institutional needs with institutional capacity. Difficult choices need to be made in order to achieve the steady growth objective at the core of MusiQuE's Strategic Plan. As such, rethinking the operational model might be needed.
- **Follow-up process:** while a certain improvement has been achieved after introducing the pre-paid fee for the follow-up procedure in the service contract for the initial procedure, there are still many loopholes that require further intervention. It is recommended that systematizing the follow-up and making it compulsory be considered among top priorities.
- **The Critical Friend Review procedure:** the status of this procedure remains opaque and it can be easily confused with what is offered in the framework of a consultancy. There is an acute need for disentangling the two concepts and clearly communicating the distinction between these services to institutions interested in becoming clients.

- **Language challenges:** while acknowledged, their existence seems to be treated rather lightly. It is worth being reminded that the limitations subscribed to language barriers in review procedures are not all matters that can be surpassed with the help of AI.
- **Thematic analyses:** it was noted by the panel that the frequency of Trends Reports is pacing down while they are an important tool for maintaining a relevant voice in the sector.