

Culture Counts

DCMS – Creative Europe Meeting Notes

5th August 2020

Zoom

On 5th August 2020 Culture Counts hosted a Scotland and Wales Zoom meeting with the Department for Culture Media and Sport to feed into UK Government thinking around a domestic replacement for Creative Europe Funding. The following report outlines the discussion that took place recorded by our note-taker, it incorporates information that attendees placed in the chat-box throughout the discussion.

We hope that UK Government consult further on the core values of a domestic fund to replace Creative Europe as we feel that the new fund should be value led and a discussion should take place with the sector to determine what the values are; for example we value diversity; we value the environment.

Q1/

What support are you looking for in order to support your international working through 2021 and beyond?

- A multilateral approach that values outputs and outcomes that offer indirect as well as direct impact in the UK;
- A fund that allows the applicant to decide a bilateral or multilateral approach;
- The same level of support we get now;
- An annual fund;
- Dedicated regional officers.

Q1b

How important is long-term sustainable commitment to funding i.e. how do partnerships happen?

Long term funding commitments are vital for

- being able to evolve practice and challenge status quo;
- establishing trust with partners;
- setting up cultural exchanges;
- smaller organisations being enabled to manage risk and see benefits;
- running alongside shorter-term funding for organisations that have not worked internationally and would like to run smaller-scale exchanges like scoping trips or peer-to-peer visits;
- sustained investment of time for visibility in various markets;
- providing local support for administering funding applications;
- providing free access to activities and events;
- innovative projects which require security for collaboration and robustness;
- seeding new networking and collaboration, with a commitment to support the next stage of project delivery, and longer term widening and scaling up.

- needs to be a continuation of the joined up thinking between WAI (in Wales' context) and any CE replacement.

Q2

For you/your organisation, what are the key benefits of international working, particularly in light of COVID-19 and EU exit?

- knowledge transfer, pooling of skills, expertise, and resources;
- collaborative problem solving in relation to digital engagement but not losing ground in terms of inclusion, and finding a balance between digital and face to face;
- digital showcasing which allows connections to smaller markets where costs/benefits would not have worked previously;
- accessing international networks and marketplaces;
- creating new work that has been influenced by international perspectives;
- learning from different parts of the world about how others are coping with Covid;

Q3

Which countries are you most likely to operate in? Has this changed post EU Exit / as a result of COVID-19?

- maintaining momentum of the relationships we have built up over years is important;
- we need to take a more global perspective- it's important we don't see everything in the prism of Europe;
- Covid has presented opportunities to work with partners in areas that had been too challenging in the past to travel to and from;
- digital engagement will be necessary for the foreseeable future- funding programmes have to recognise that;
- it isn't just about choosing to operate in geographical locations but choosing partners based on shared values and goals or because they have very different backgrounds, which expands our practices;
- existing relationships in North America and in Asia that we are keen to develop, and more strategic working in Korea and in Taiwan that has been evolving over the last 3 years;
- Europe remains a priority for some as new collaborations are more likely to emerge there, however, appetite for exchanges is coming from outside Europe;
- environmental considerations about travel feature for some in decision making about partnerships;
- ways of working, connecting, and learning with and from artists and researchers based in the South Mediterranean
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Q3b

What shape would Scottish and Welsh stakeholders like to see the fund take? World-wide; EU?

- having flexibility for support beyond Europe as well as within Europe;
- collaboration models based on
 - 5 nations projects - Wales, Scotland, Irish Republic, Northern Ireland, England
 - Celtic nations projects - Wales, Ireland, Cornwall, Brittany etc
 - European partnerships
 - worldwide partnerships
 - specific pairings - British Council already do this eg Wales/India etc

- expansion of the fund worldwide, accounting for the increasing difficulty of working across borders
- funding to partner on projects as a Third Country contributor- long term European relationships might be under threat if we can't take part in European projects;
- seeing the fund support worldwide collaborations while applying environmental criteria to the assessment of funding applications received;
- a fund that is responsible and accountable for attracting underrepresented sectors and communities;
- a fund that recognises multilingual communities in all of the UK, specifically lived experience of Welsh language and expression;
- retain equal footing for partners, like the Creative Europe programme has now.

Q4

Do you have existing international partnerships that are threatened by COVID-19 and / or EU Exit? What would help to mitigate these?

- lack of participation in Creative Europe means we can still be peripherally involved in partnerships, but not as full partners;
- international residency programmes are under threat;
- import and export work is under threat;
- spin out projects from collaborations would potentially lose momentum and opportunities without a clearly defined next step for funding;
- tech savvy partners and funding for digital exhibitions, etc are needed;
- support for the costs of touring;
- support for residencies, especially navigating future visa programmes, etc;
- Artists from elsewhere sometimes look down on living and working in the UK - our international relationships make it more appealing for people to come.

Q4b

What is the added value of a UK wide approach?

- Is there an opportunity to lobby governments in Scotland and Wales to engage with the replacement programme as a third party because culture is a devolved matter?
- to be global we need to be present in Europe- strong relationships are built on the back of us going to them and we can't just cut that off;
- it is more carbon neutral and environmentally friendly.

Technical Discussion

Q5

How would you like to see an alternative fund in the UK and across the nations managed, in terms of setting priorities, etc?

- transparent assessment criteria for applications, and allowing for the intersection of the arts sector with other parts of society, not wholly focused on producing artworks;
- attention paid to environmental criteria – travel and subsistence thresholds should be predicated on rail rather than air travel;
- supporting projects consciously seeking to trial new ways of international collaboration;
- 5 nations approach and having a unified approach to how the UK interacts with Europe;
- a federal approach to recognise different expertise in different areas and work together collaboratively across the UK as well as in devolved nations
- consider having flexibility that allows the sector to set priorities.

Q6

Do you have any comments or remarks on how you would like an alternative fund to be administered in the UK and across the nations?

- don't lose international multilingual cultural management expertise in sector-wide succession planning;
- assessors need to be from Scotland, Wales and also a wide range of countries in order to keep everyone linked up;
- ACE, Creative Scotland, Arts Council of Wales should work together;
- priorities should be set based on values connected to policy;
- how it is currently administered, with a pool of experts selected from across Europe who assess with 28 states having to agree how the funds are allocated;
- minimise London-centric assessment;
- a more federal approach to ensure local impact and ensuring efficiency and effectiveness;
- Creative Europe application process was cumbersome- we need to find ways to make applications easier, and more accessible otherwise it will always be the same folk that apply and the same folk who are awarded funding.
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Q7

Do you have any comments or remarks on how you would like the fund to be promoted and applications encouraged / supported in the UK and in Scotland and Wales specifically?

- active support in building new partnerships specifically for projects for which applications will be made;
- active support in clarifying application guidance and funding rules in aid of accessibility;
- support during project delivery especially in circumstances outwith the partners' control that affect the project plan (eg COVID-19);
- clarity about the relationship of a new fund to the work of the British Council;
- 'tiers' of support that enable different levels of international connecting- visits, meetings, initial chats, all the way through to long-term international partnerships lasting;
- funders and administrators to have open days and nurture engagement to widen access.

Q8

What existing partnerships are being immediately threatened due to EU Exit or Covid 19?

- to have someone close to hand to connect to has been so important (reference to Kate)
- role of British Council within this- someone coming to the table with a kind of colonial value set is uncomfortable;
- We had hoped to continue relationships with current partners, but this is unlikely now as well as early discussions to further develop nascent partnerships with are all threatened due particularly to EU Exit;
- some of us are active in networks that are funded through Creative Europe- being able to keep active and visible within feels really important;

Informal chat (after meeting end)

What might some of the values of the alternative be?

- not trying to promote a nationalist perspective but a collective approach- spending time creating the shared values of the fund together is important;
- this is a real opportunity to make some of the current situation better- it's exciting to think we could influence future values;
- the way of 'selling' funding to the government will be on the basis of being a soft diplomacy and selling the UK to the world;
- whatever your agenda, you can't ignore the environment, social justice and technology for social benefit as crucial issues- there are other departments who look after the financial side, this is about more of a social justice opportunity;
- we are creative here- we should be able to come up with something that politicians will like;
- there are lenses through which to articulate things- it's about which lens we use;
- we should avoid binary distinctions between what we need for trade and environment, etc. - there is a danger we fall into myopic UK trade and investment view of the world;
- recognising the colonial mindset and barriers of what is ingrained in our country- we need to unpick as we look at international relationships. In wanting to keep international relationships going we need to also be reflective on the values that go with that. It is complex, not a clean slate;
- the danger with any UK strategy is it is going to be an anti-EU strategy. They will work with anyone in the world but perhaps our applications to work abroad might be looked down on. Could be a specific fund for third party engagement in Europe.
- third country applications mean you have less power and leverage;
- it's difficult to do international collaborations when you can't bring anything to the table;
- there is a lot of energy around this, and values. Is there a space to flesh this out before it's packaged up?