Arts Council England’s response to Sir Adam Smith’s review: Future Frameworks for international collaboration on research and innovation
May 2019

About Arts Council England
Arts Council England is the national development agency for the arts, museums and libraries in England. Our mission is 'great art and culture for everyone' and we work to achieve this by championing, developing and investing in arts and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives.

Response

Introductory questions

1. What is your name?
Andrew Mowlah. Director, Research, Arts Council England.

2. What is your email address?
Andrew.Mowlah@artscouncil.org.uk

3. Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?
On behalf of an organisation.

4. If responding on behalf of an organisation, a. What is your organisation?
Arts Council England

b. What type of organisation are you?
Non-departmental public body.

5. What region of the UK are you predominantly based in?
We work on a national level across England.

6. We have obligations under freedom of information laws and there is more information on this below. For the purposes of these laws, would you like your response to be confidential? (Required) No.
Consultation response - Areas of interest:

Overview
Arts Council England is the national development body for arts, museums, and libraries across England. The Arts Council supports and champions a wide variety of arts and cultural organisations, practitioners and initiatives through open grants, targeted investment, and sector development work. As part of our role, we also undertake and fund research, and work in partnership with our sectors and beyond (businesses, think-tanks, higher education institutions, among others) on joint research and evaluation initiatives. A core aim of this is to produce robust evidence that supports arts and cultural organisations to innovate, improve their practice, and demonstrate the impact they are having. Our research also helps to inform cultural policy and the Arts Council’s investment activity.

Art Council England’s work to enable international activity in the sector is key to achieving these goals. We approach our international work with the following objectives:

- to promote exchange and collaboration that enriches the cultural landscape and delivers artistic excellence and talent development;
- to work in partnership with key internationally-focused organisations such as the British Council, UKTI and others;
- and to strengthen the economic resilience of the arts and culture sector whilst aiding the diversification of income sources.

This work is also reflected in the organisations that we fund, such as our National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs). In 2014-15 our research evidenced that 65% of NPOs had undertaken international activity at some stage in the previous three years. These activities were wide-ranging and included: UK artists undertaking residencies abroad (28%); hosting foreign artists (46%); touring (47%); undertaking co-productions (59%) or taking UK artists abroad (61%).

It is crucial that the importance that research has within the arts and cultural sector, and in the development of museums and libraries, is recognised. As a contributing funder of research and development activities, we recognise the need for strategic support for arts and humanities research both on a national and international level, and strongly encourage the incorporation of the arts and cultural sectors’ needs in future funding schemes. As we will highlight throughout our response, research in this area has provided both the Arts Council and the sectors we serve with evidence and opportunities to better deliver against social outcomes; strengthen the resilience and adaptability of the sector around priorities such as digital technologies and income diversification; and to create exciting and compelling cultural and artistic experiences.
These activities can drive further innovation and growth in the sector, and therefore enhance and support the economic and social contribution of the arts, culture and the creative industries in the UK. Government figures show that in 2017 the creative industries were worth £101.5bn to the UK economy (up from £94.8bn in 2016), making it one of the fastest growing sectors, with growth at twice the average UK rate since 2010. The dynamism exemplified by this, alongside the sector’s creativity, can serve as a strong substrate for collaboration, innovation and further growth.

**The optimum balance of emphasis on any new funding arrangements in each of the following dimensions:**

- Support for: outstanding individuals; blue-skies research; business innovation and research impact; and research facilities and infrastructure; and
- Research and innovation domains (research disciplines, business sectors etc).

Arts Council England currently helps to foster research and innovation in the arts and cultural sector through a variety of programmes and partnerships, including with the UK research councils. As outlined below, multiple strands of European funding have also made a vital contribution to the research and innovation ecology of the UK’s creative and cultural industries, and we strongly recommend that UK-led successor funding schemes to such EU programmes also include the arts and cultural sectors within their scope.

Continuity of opportunity and investment is vitally important to foster future growth; to support the development of stakeholders at all levels (from practitioners to institutions); and to continue to build a robust evidence base for the impact and benefits of the arts and culture to society, whilst also feeding back into our sector to improve practice and further strengthen the delivery of arts and cultural experiences that enrich people’s lives.

As the national development body for the arts, museums and libraries, we aim to stimulate and encourage innovation by arts and cultural organisations. We deliver this through different forms of investment and support for research, development, and innovation projects. These initiatives provide the sector with support for risk-taking, and the development of new ideas and business models; and create new ways to connect audiences and participants with cultural and artistic content.

Arts Council England currently provides funding for research and development via several different strands of activity. Between 2015-18 we invested £2.4m in a dedicated research grants programme that benefited 14 projects, bringing together arts and cultural organisations, universities, and both voluntary and private-sector partners. These research projects sought
to deepen knowledge and understanding of the impact of art and culture in society, addressing issues such as social inclusion, mental health, wellbeing, skills development, education, the youth justice sector, and community engagement, amongst others.

Through our Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants, an open-access programme for arts, museums, and libraries, we awarded nearly £7.5m between 2018-19 for 583 projects that had research and development as a significant focus.

In Summer 2019 we will announce the successful partners for a new UK-wide Centre for Cultural Value, intended to advance understanding of the value of arts and culture in the UK and abroad. It will present how this value is being captured and encourage organisations to act on that knowledge. As such, the Centre will function as a custodian and communicator of cultural value in all its guises; it will synthesise existing research and bring together organisations and sectors with an interest in using evidence about cultural value in their work. The Centre will be funded jointly by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF) and Arts Council England, with a major investment of around £2.5 million over five years.

Additionally, we have developed two programmes that support projects which incorporate the use of digital technologies to develop new artistic practices, engage audiences with art in new ways, and explore new business models for arts organisations. In 2012-15 we partnered with the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and NESTA to create a £7m Digital R&D Fund for the Arts. Through this programme we funded 52 research projects supporting arts and cultural organisations to explore new ways use technologies, producing ‘open-source’ outcomes for whole sector-development. Additionally, in 2018 we partnered with Digital Catapult to create a prototype funding programme Creative XR. This programme enables creative teams to develop concepts and prototypes of immersive digital content (particularly virtual and augmented reality) in an arts and cultural context, and encourages new partnerships to bridge the gap with the technology sector.

Collaboration with European partners has made a substantial, consistent contribution to such work. For example, the Creative Spillovers research partnership shared the need to build an evidence base for the value of culture and public investment into the arts, culture, and creative industries across Europe. This project provided detailed evidence on the value chains linking the arts, cultural, and creative sectors to the wider economy and society in Europe (‘spillovers’). The report examined how to better map these value chains. It also emphasised the need to enhance the collaboration between partner countries, and the coordination of national research agendas to strengthen the research of causality in the culture sector and its social and economic benefits. This initiative was a collaboration between Arts Council
England, Arts Council of Ireland, Creative England, the European Centre for Creative Economy, the European Cultural Foundation, and the European Creative Business Network. This initiative exemplifies how partnerships with international stakeholders with common cultural, political, and economic issues can jointly enable the implementation of high-quality and large-scale research initiatives.

Methods and timescales for introducing any new funding arrangements of international collaboration; and The roles of government, UKRI, National Academies and other organisations in defining the agenda for European and international collaboration, and administering any new funding arrangements for such activities.

As contributors and partners to international collaboration in research, development, and innovation, we believe it would be productive to involve the Arts Council and the broader arts and culture sector in discussions and planning to define the agenda for future such initiatives.

It is important that the national bodies who administer future funding schemes reach out to creative and cultural organisations, communicating new funding and networking opportunities in a language which is accessible and relevant to them. Currently, many of these organisations are missing out on BEIS and UKRI funding, and are not fully utilising existing opportunities such as Newton and Rutherford Fellowships, due to lack of visibility and awareness of such opportunities across the arts and culture. This often relates to the language in which such opportunities are described, and the way in which they are targeted towards academic audiences. This risks missing the opportunity to engage and support our brightest creative minds, and to expand this promising area of research to achieve its full potential.

The timescales for the introduction of any new funding arrangements for international collaboration should be planned to avoid a vacuum between previous funding programmes (such as Horizon 2020) and the commencement of successor initiatives. Given the length of administrative and consulting processes of any new funding schemes, it is crucial to conduct the design work of any new fund as early as possible so that it can be ready to launch in the event of our EU exit. A long time-lag between current programmes and suitable alternatives is likely to significantly affect the development of research across not only the arts and culture but all sectors – risking the loss of momentum, knowledge, skills and investment, and also potentially the international relocation of expert researchers and other key professionals.
Existing evidence on the efficiency and effectiveness of funding for international collaborations.

The UK arts and cultural sectors currently contribute to, and benefit from, strong access to and participation in a range of EU-supported programmes across research, development and innovation, both directly and in partnership with Higher Education Institutions.

European funding constitutes a significant contribution. A 2017 EUCLID study evidenced that between 2007-16, £345m came into the UK arts and culture sector from EU funding - nearly £40m per annum. In this time-period, the Horizon 2020 programme accounted for €39m in funding. Combined with its predecessor programme, this strand of research funding provided a total of €85m which benefited the UK arts, museums, and creative industries sectors, and/or research institutions with a focus in these areas. Additionally, during this time the UK’s participation in the Creative Europe programme for international collaboration provided nearly €29m for the sector.

International collaboration in the sector with European partners provides arts and cultural organisations with additional benefits that stimulate innovation and development in the sector beyond direct research funding. In 2017 Arts Council England commissioned ICM Unlimited to research the potential impact of Brexit on the arts and culture sector. The report surveyed 992 stakeholders in arts and cultural organisations on the possible implications of Brexit, and mapped their European and international working relationships. The report evidenced that the vast majority of the sector sees artistic development (89%) and knowledge exchange and collaboration (85%) as the most important reasons for working across borders. These figures reinforce our determination to continue to encourage and enable international cultural exchange and collaboration.

Meanwhile, our 2016 and 2018 surveys of our sectors show that artists’ mobility and access to networks are two of the key priorities for the future. Support for this to happen is currently provided by a variety of EU funding mechanisms, including Creative Europe and Erasmus Plus (the latter of which accounts for almost €20m). Meaningful replacement for these multilateral funds is vital to maintaining a world class cultural offer. In the 2017 ICM Brexit report, replacing funding from EU sources was considered the second most-important priority for arts and cultural organisations post-Brexit.

The benefits of this international support also include ‘power of attraction’ (or Soft Power); the UK is currently the top-ranking nation world-wide by this measure, but this standing may suffer in the event of exiting the EU. This could be compounded by risks to creative collaboration and development, to
the profile of and market opportunities for UK arts and culture, and to the facilitation of innovation and risk-taking in the sector. Cumulatively, these and other factors could impact the UK’s international cultural and diplomatic influence, as well as the long-term resilience and sustainability of the cultural sector.

Finally, the development of research and innovation in our sector has greatly benefited by the development of partnerships between arts and culture organisations and Higher Education Institutions (HEI), bringing additional positive instances of international collaboration. In 2018 we published a report on ‘International collaboration between English cultural and Higher Education institutions’. This report showed evidence of strong collaborations that provide vital knowledge development and sharing within the sector, ranging from support for civic agendas associated with place-making and sustainability, to provision of opportunities for students studying at HEIs, through to longer-term research partnerships. In terms of partner countries, this showed a truly global outlook with partnerships highlighted in the majority of EU countries and strong links to East Asia, South America and the USA.

It is important to note that the Arts Council’s relationship with the HE sector is a close one that extends beyond research partnerships. We currently award regular funding through our National Portfolio to 20 arts venues across 17 universities in England (total grant value of £7.13m per year);

Between April 2013 and June 2018, we invested £5.98m in 185 projects across 78 English HEIs through our open programme of National Lottery-supported project grants;

And – over the same time-period - £29.44m in 86 projects across 37 English HEIs through our targeted strategic grants programmes.

Meanwhile, there are around 100 university museums in the UK regularly accessible to the public, with a further 300 or more that are used mainly for academic research and teaching. University museums in England comprise 4% of the UK museum sector, yet they are custodians of 30% of all the collections ‘Designated’ by DCMS as being of national or international importance. A significant proportion of universities also have theatres, cinemas and other types of performance space beyond the Arts Council’s funding footprint, but very much within our sphere of sector development interest.
Any other issues relating to this work that you wish to bring to our attention.

Case studies: research, development, and innovation in the arts and culture sector:

**New Vic Theatre and Keele University**

A collaboration between the Management School at Keele University and the New Vic Theatre in Stoke-on-Trent has created such international interest that groups of international visitors regularly visit to learn from and work with these UK partners to apply the approaches they have developed to a wide range of different settings.

The partnership, first established in 2000, is rooted in the idea that there should be no division between academic knowledge and practical experience; and explores the New Vic’s work on documentary theatre and the impact that it can have on marginalised communities. In 2015 the collaboration was further formalised through the establishment of the Community Animation and Social Innovation Centre (CASIC) at the University. Over this time, they have secured over 20 grants in partnership, from funders including the AHRC, ESRC, MRC and EPSRC, each ranging between £10k to £125k. These have also involved multiple international partners, such as Audencia Business School in France, Western University in Canada, Osaka City University and Seinan Gakuin University in Japan.

Some of the partnership’s strongest collaborations have taken place in Japan. An AHRC Bridging the Gap grant received in 2013 allowed Keele University and the New Vic to transfer the methodology used with marginalised communities in Stoke to a community in Minamisanriku, a town in Miyagi Prefecture where people who were affected by the 2011 Tsunami were still living in temporary accommodation. The research used ‘cultural animation’ techniques to understand how the community was regenerating itself from within. Tsunami survivors created a ‘living tree’ out of physical objects and their own stories, which allowed them to surpass language barriers and express similar stories of survival and resilience to economically deprived communities in Stoke. The tree and its stories have travelled widely in the UK, Italy, Canada, France, Greece, Sweden and the Philippines.

Through the work, the New Vic now has diversified its income sources, and attracted new visitors through its work with marginalised communities, encouraging local residents to attend productions. The New Vic has also increased its international standing, evidenced by a visiting delegation of MBA students from Japan and a visit by the outreach directors from the Alley Theatre in Houston. Future work will see them exploring mental health through cultural animation with both Japan and the USA.
Manchester Institute for Research and innovation in Art and Design

The Manchester Institute for Research and Innovation in Art and Design (MIRIAD) is hosted by the Manchester School of Art, part of Manchester Metropolitan University. The Centre brings together researchers and practitioners from a variety of disciplines such as visual culture, design, media, crafts, and architecture, among others. Their work has focused in areas such as arts and health, Asian cultures, digital arts and contemporary ceramics and textile arts practice. The Centre is comprised of four research hubs (architecture, art, design, and media) and 11 research groups that explore specific areas of these disciplines. These instances support project development and encourage cross-sector collaboration between disciplines and with national and international partners such as universities, artists’ associations, and local authorities. Institute staff exhibit at major galleries worldwide, and work with local communities to improve engagement. Art and Design research at MMU was ranked 6th in the UK for research power by the REF.

Manchester Metropolitan University also hosts the Arts for Health unit, which focuses specifically on understanding the effects of arts and culture on health and wellbeing, and undertakes research and advocacy work in the UK and internationally. They have partnered with institutions in countries such as Lithuania, Italy, Turkey, Finland, Estonia, and Spain on multiple research initiatives linking arts and health, including research and practice development, supporting addiction recovery in communities, and developing a model for a user-focused arts and social workers programme on a European level.