



European Commission Green Paper:
'Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries

**Response from Arts Council England
July 2010**

Arts Council England works to get great art to everyone by championing, developing and investing in artistic experiences that enrich people's lives. As the national development agency for the arts, we support a range of artistic activities from theatre to music, literature to dance, photography to digital art, carnival to crafts. Great art inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us.

We agree with the main arguments in the paper, and that better provision of support for the development of cultural and creative industries (CCIs) is essential to the future growth of the European economy. We are keen to feed into this response as we believe that the contribution of CCIs should inform and influence overarching European policies, particularly in terms of informing approaches to pan European strategies on enterprise and industry.

The impact of the CCI sector is already considerable in its economic footprint and is set to grow over the next 10 years in terms of jobs and wealth creation. Critically, underperforming economic regions (areas of multiple deprivation) across Europe would benefit from investments which are geared around CCI approaches to local and regional development.

We support a stronger focus on investment in research and development in the CCI sector to create a stronger base from which to develop the sector. This could involve pan European programmes or work with member states to enable this investment

Putting in place the right enablers

New Spaces for experimentation, innovation and entrepreneurship in the cultural and creative sector

Discussions with a range of stakeholders in England have indicated both a willingness, and a real need, to collaborate around the research and development support for innovation, to share and transfer knowledge and experience, and to manage better the degree of risk that accompanies supporting new, and experimental practice.

The creative cluster is a model many UK CCIs have adopted and there are good examples of how these act as a catalyst for creativity, innovation and growth. Examples include Pervasive Media in Bristol who host workshops and provide lab spaces for CCI businesses, and work with those businesses to join up new projects and research and development with arts projects.

The Combined Artform Venues (CAV) network has also recognised the potential of its venues as hubs for innovation development within the city ecology. The network is developing its business model to upgrade their existing offer to align with audience expectation and to provide innovation facilities throughout the country.

Although the provision of physical shared space which helps to instigate and inspire ideas and allows individuals and businesses to flourish is important, it is also the cross-cluster engagement, joint procurement and sharing of research and knowledge which is key to increasing innovation. Where CCIs are dispersed (such as in rural areas) or working on a smaller scale (SMEs), virtual networks are vital for creating virtual clusters and enabling more isolated CCIs to reach new markets.

European investment should therefore prioritise both the provision of physical space but the creation of virtual space by increasing access to ICT and investing in digital developments

Better matching of the skills needed in the CCIs

The relationship between large scale institutions (such as universities broadcasters, broadband services and distributors) and cluster based innovators and the arts sector, is important. Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in particular provide a natural environment for research and experimentation and offer access to new platforms and development opportunities, in exchange for new markets or audiences that the arts can reach.

Umbrella organisations such as The Community Media Association have the opportunity to galvanise membership bases to work with both larger institutions and smaller organisations, developing new content in partnership with larger institutions, and new skills amongst CCI organisations.

However, arts and CCI networks across Europe have often developed in an ad hoc way (dependent on personalities) rather than in any strategic way. **Peer coaching and knowledge sharing could therefore be improved by European wide research which examines how CCIs work differently across the EU and exploring how those different approaches affect (or not) the end product.**

We recognise that creative and artistic leaders have the ability to play a stronger role in job creation and the development of new skills across the CCIs. The UK's New Deal of the Mind (<http://www.newdealofthemind.com/>), especially its innovative Digital Domesday project, shows how locally based digital projects using archives can open up new media opportunities for young people. **This is a role which could be expanded across the cultural sector with the assistance of European investment.**

In the UK, Creative and Cultural Skills are responsible for mapping the skills required by CCIs, and 'Skills Blueprints' have been published for Cultural Heritage, Design, Visual Arts and Performing Arts. These blueprints have highlighted the need for improved sector-specific business support and digital skills for CCIs. HEIs should therefore be encouraged to incorporate professional and business skills into creative courses.

Access to funding

We would argue that CCIs should have greater access to finance, and that work with European programmes on venture capital and other finance mechanisms should consider the needs of the CCI sector, especially in relation to micro-financing approaches. CCIs are typically too small (as much in terms of the scale of the 'content' they are developing, as in the size of the organisation involved) to get on the venture capital radar, or cope with the demands of the expenditure programmes this paper refers to. **There is a need for more collaborative working with the investment community across Europe to look at how CCIs can be most effectively financed in order to provide social and commercial returns.**

UK investment mechanisms have included Innovation Vouchers (www.innovationvouchers-wm.com), which has seen wide-spread take-up by the arts and other CCIs, and has facilitated match giving from the public sector to encourage private investment. **Schemes like this could operate across the EU partner regions.**

Low interest public sector loans have tended to see crisis support rather than innovation investment but business support for CCIs which encourages businesses to develop the monetisation of their peripheral products has in some instances led to innovation.

Aside from direct investment, the European Commission could encourage member states to consider what fiscal measures can be used to support the sector to become more successful.

Local and regional Development as a launchpad for global success

Local and regional dimension

Although SMEs and micro businesses are seen as being important drivers in the creative economy, they are sometimes ignored by regional development agencies who tend to focus on 'big figure businesses' in order to hit their own quantitative targets. This is particularly the case for rural organisations, which have felt excluded from the creative economy work both due to their size and location.

A greater emphasis on the importance of CCIs and their unique abilities to provide socio-economic growth across Europe would facilitate greater investment on a local and regional level.

The digital revolution provides opportunities for CCIs to play a role in local development. A great example is the British Library's 'Turning the Page' version of the Lindisfarne Gospels that was installed on Lindisfarne Island. Major broadcasting archives in the UK have also developed sound and moving image collections drawn from every locality in their national territories. Initiatives like these enable communities to have enhanced access to material and content generated in their local areas. The result could be a considerable stimulus to local creativity.

Mobility and the circulation of cultural and creative works

We would argue that pan European mobility of people, ideas and content is critical to the development of talent and business growth. At the moment, the mobility of art/artists happens on a very ad hoc, individual-basis. There are lots of one-off visits and un-ecological tour schedules, which see work criss-crossing across the world in a way that wastes ecological and financial resources. There is also a lack of accurate data on artists' mobility and Arts Council England, the British Council, IETM and other partners are trying to improve the data on artists' mobility and better understand the nature and extent of the mobility of creative works and arts practitioners.

We need more collaborative working at an EU level, and on a global basis to support the mobility of art in a way that benefits both the artists and the greatest number of audiences. At the moment, the system is balanced more towards promoters and those that programme work – they often want 'exclusive' access to art travelling into their country, and are against its wider movement. **Europe should look at balancing the system more in favour of artists and audiences**, with promoters asked to share the benefits of an international artist's visit to their particular organisation.

We would welcome a co-ordinated approach to investment in showcasing and developing opportunities for work to find its European market as well as a fairer immigration system to facilitate the presentation of work across the EU. European promotional networks and international audience communities enable different markets and audiences to link up and share interests across national boundaries. Investment in international exhibition opportunities, residencies and festivals all contribute to opportunities for knowledge sharing and peer-coaching.

We should also be mindful that we cannot be too 'euro-centric' when we consider cultural diversity. Europe is also the resting place and cultural crossroads for many different kinds of cultures – this isn't just about preserving our historic culture, but being at the forefront of future developments of world culture.

Towards a creative economy: the spillovers of CCIs

Arts Council England works to ensure that all Children and Young People have the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts. We recognise that initial experiences provide the first taste and some will progress on into the creative sector as professionals. Early creative and artistic engagement builds future audiences who will go on to be the customers for the commercial product of CCIs.

A better understanding of the link between nurturing creative talent and driving business growth needs to be fully developed. European endorsed research which supports this link would promote more partnerships between CCIs and education institutes.

To accelerate the spillover effects of CCIs on other industries and society at large, Europe should focus on providing a consistent way to capture data and statistics on the positive impact of CCIs. Current national statistical measures of industries are too blunt to effectively pick up CCIs who, due to their scale, often become 'invisible'. **A European standard of measurement would be a useful tool to inform European, national and regional interventions and investment in CCIs.** Without this, regions commission their own mapping and research with slightly different, non comparable parameters.

Synergies between culture and education could be facilitated by opening up access to public collections and archives to people across Europe. This is currently limited if our cultural artifacts, and their digital reproductions, are restricted to 'look but don't touch' rights regulations.

A true educational experience requires immersion in content, including the ability to copy, amend and build upon the original. In the short term, major cultural collections should consider establishing 'sandpits' - where sub-collections have been 'rights cleared' in order to enable ICT services and media companies to innovate with new public services. The existing rights regimes inhibit the application of creative thinking but a 'sandpit' service for web entrepreneurs and cultural organisations would create opportunities for cutting edge thinking. This is potentially a low investment project with high, long term rewards and would promote "public-private initiatives to support artist-led experimentation".

In the long term it would be helpful to **agree a pan European approach to Intellectual Property and copyright through an appropriate transnational legal framework.**

