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# BRITISH COUNCIL ARTS FAQS

## GENERAL TOPICS

### **What does the British Council do?**

*The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries. We do this by making a positive contribution to the UK and the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust.*

*Our work in arts creates new relationships between artists, organisations and audiences to develop stronger creative sectors around the world. We help artists to break new ground, support creativity and innovation, increase capacity by building skills to support livelihoods and cultural enterprise, extend safe spaces for creative exchange and contribute to research and policy.*

Explore our work in the Arts: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts>

Discover our five-year aims and ambitions in our Arts Strategy:  
[https://www.dropbox.com/s/cjl87t9ryh2xjhy/BC013\\_Arts%20Strategy.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/cjl87t9ryh2xjhy/BC013_Arts%20Strategy.pdf?dl=0)

### **1. How do you support the UK arts and creative industries?**

*The British Council acts as an informed conduit and catalyst for real engagement between UK and overseas arts and artists through innovative collaboration and co-production – helping UK creatives and organisations to realise and raise their international ambitions. Our teams on the ground in over 110 countries provide deep local insight to help artists and organisations deliver cultural programmes that are relevant, compelling and mutually beneficial.*

*By 2021 it is our aim to have increased the number of cultural connections between the UK and the world, doubling the scale of international activity of the UK culture sector by increasing awareness of opportunities, supporting artists and organisations to emerge onto the world stage, and partnering more closely with major international players to open doors.*

*This will include partnering, lending support or providing opportunities to more than 100,000 artists and organisations worldwide each year (including at least 5000 from the UK) to build lasting affinity and connections.*

You can view our full list of current global Arts opportunities here:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts/opportunities>

*As well as on the ground programmes and collaborations, we help UK arts organisations to expand their audience reach globally. Our digital showcasing programme grows international access to UK arts and familiarity with UK creative organisations by curating and presenting cultural content to online audiences around the world. Through this programme we have introduced millions of people around the world to the best of UK creativity and we are currently looking to expand this portfolio.*

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If you would like to get in touch with us to discuss our Digital Showcasing programme, please email Anne Siegel, Digital Programme Manager on [anne.siegel@britishcouncil.org](mailto:anne.siegel@britishcouncil.org).

## 2. How do you support overseas arts and creative industries?

We work with creative sectors around the world, creating cultural programmes and exchange, which lead to new opportunities and lasting connections with the UK.

The diverse context we work in across all of our seven global regions require specific, country-by-country responses. Our teams on the ground provide deep local insight helping to deliver programmes that are culturally relevant and mutually beneficial.

You can read about our programme priorities in each of the seven intertional regions that we work across in our 5-year Arts Strategy: [https://www.dropbox.com/s/cjl87t9ryh2xjhy/BC013\\_Arts%20Strategy.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/cjl87t9ryh2xjhy/BC013_Arts%20Strategy.pdf?dl=0)

You can read more about the individual country priorities for three of our regions in the publications:

[Read the East Asia Arts and the UK publication.](#)

[Read the South Asia Arts and the UK publication.](#)

[Read the Wider Europe Arts and the UK publication.](#)

Further editions to be released in 2018.

You can view our full list of current global Arts opportunities here:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts/opportunities>

## 3. Where do you work?

We work in over 110 countries, divided into 7 global regions:

**Americas:** Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela

**East Asia:** Australia, Burma, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam

**European Union:** Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland

**Middle East and North Africa:** Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

**South Asia:** Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Iran, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

**Sub-Saharan Africa:** Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

**Wider Europe:** Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

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To ensure that the breadth and diversity of the UK is represented across our programme, we have three **UK** teams based in national offices in Cardiff, Wales; Edinburgh, Scotland; and Belfast, Northern Ireland.

More information available here: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/our-global-network>

#### 4. What sectors / art forms does your work cover?

Our Arts department consists of nine cross-disciplinary and art form teams, covering the full breadth of the UK creative industries:

**Architecture Design Fashion** – creating links between designers and cultural institutions around the world: <http://design.britishcouncil.org/>

**Creative Economy** – developing new collaborations, innovation and enterprise with the rapidly-changing creative and cultural industries worldwide: <http://creativeeconomy.britishcouncil.org/>

**Cultural Skills** – providing knowledge and trust to support a programme of capacity building initiatives: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/cultural-skills-unit>

**Culture and Development** – providing creative responses to international development challenges: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts/culture-development>

**Film** – connecting UK Film with international audiences: <http://film.britishcouncil.org/>

**Literature** – working with writers and literature partners to develop innovative projects and collaborations: <https://literature.britishcouncil.org/>

**Music** – strengthening the international profile of UK music and creativity: <http://music.britishcouncil.org/>

**Theatre and Dance** – promoting the best of contemporary UK performance: <https://theatreanddance.britishcouncil.org/>

**Visual Arts** – promoting the achievements of the UK's best artists abroad: <http://visualarts.britishcouncil.org/>

##### a. If my work/my organisation's work doesn't fit into your sector definitions can I still work with you?

Our three cross-disciplinary teams (Creative Economy, Cultural Skills and Culture and Development) work beyond the confines of 'traditional' art forms and provide a research and development space for our Arts programme to breed new and exciting innovations.

Read more here:

**Creative Economy:** <http://creativeeconomy.britishcouncil.org/>

**Cultural Skills:** <https://www.britishcouncil.org/cultural-skills-unit>

**Culture and Development:** <https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts/culture-development>

We also offer a range of global opportunities based upon project/programme ideas as well as opportunities to apply for funding to develop your creative practice. View our latest opportunities here:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts/opportunities>

**b. Do you focus on specific sectors/art forms/programme themes in certain countries? If so, how do I find out what these themes are?**

The diverse context we work in across all of our seven global regions require specific, country-by-country responses. Our teams on the ground provide deep local insight helping to deliver programmes that are culturally relevant and mutually beneficial.

You can read about our programme priorities in each of our seven international regions in our 5-year Arts Strategy: [https://www.dropbox.com/s/cjl87t9ryh2xjhy/BC013\\_Arts%20Strategy.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/cjl87t9ryh2xjhy/BC013_Arts%20Strategy.pdf?dl=0)

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[Read the Wider Europe Arts and the UK publication.](#)

Further editions to be released in 2017/18.

**How can I get involved? / What opportunities can the British Council offer me?**

A comprehensive list of our current global Arts opportunities can be found here:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts/opportunities>

**5. How are programmes commissioned? How do you choose who you work with? How do you ensure this is a fair process?**

The British Council's Arts department consists of two main parts: UK and international. Our team in the UK is responsible for developing an expert understanding of the UK and the potential partners the British Council might work with in their sector. Our expert Arts staff within each of our seven global regions work with their colleagues in the UK to co-create our programmes based on their expert knowledge of the local context in which they operate.

Overall decision making across Arts is made by a senior leadership team, which consists of a director in each region and 11 directors in the UK.

**6. How far in advance do you plan your programme? Are there specific deadlines that you work to throughout the year?**

We aim to plan our programme as far in advance as possible to allow us to be creative and proactive in our programmatic responses – we are currently working on a five-year programming plan. However, as the UK's international organisation for cultural relations, it is also important that we are able to be reactive to key global events as they happen.

A selection of our ongoing funding opportunities have specific deadlines throughout the year including:

**Cultural Protection Fund**

*In partnership with the Department for Culture Media and Sport, the British Council have launched the Cultural Protection Fund. Our objective for the new £30 million fund is to help to create opportunities for economic and social development through building capacity to foster, safeguard and promote cultural heritage in conflict-affected regions overseas.*

**Deadline:**

*Small grants (£500 - £100,000) are decided on a rolling quarterly basis*

*Large grants (over £100k): next submission deadline is 31 January 2018*

**Further information:** <https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts/culture-development/cultural-protection-fund>

**Creative Europe**

*Creative Europe is the European Union's programme to support the cultural, creative and audiovisual sectors. From 2014-2020, €1.46 billion is available to support European projects with the potential to travel, reach new audiences and encourage skill sharing and development. Creative Europe brings together a Culture sub-programme, which provides funding for the cultural and creative sectors, and a MEDIA sub-programme, which invests in film, television, new media and games.*

**Deadline:** *rolling (next submission deadline for Cooperation Projects is 18 January 2018)*

**Further information:** <http://www.creativeeuropeuk.eu/funding-opportunities>

**Artists International Development Fund**

*In partnership with the Arts Council England, we are investing in talented individuals to develop skills, expand horizons and introduce an international perspective to their work.*

**Deadline:** *rolling (Round 17 of the Artists' International Development Fund deadline will open on Thursday 12 October 2017 with a deadline for submission of applications of 5pm Wednesday 13 December 2017)*

**Further information:** <https://www.britishcouncil.org/study-work-create/opportunity/funding-creativity/artists-international-development-fund>

You can view our full list of current global Arts opportunities here:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts/opportunities>

**7. How do I get in touch with you regarding ideas?**

Art form contact emails:

**Literature** - [uk-literature@britishcouncil.org](mailto:uk-literature@britishcouncil.org)

**Film** - [films@britishcouncil.org](mailto:films@britishcouncil.org)

**Creative Economy** - [creativeeconomy@britishcouncil.org](mailto:creativeeconomy@britishcouncil.org)

**Cultural Skills** - [culturalskills@britishcouncil.org](mailto:culturalskills@britishcouncil.org)

**Visual Arts** - [visual.arts@britishcouncil.org](mailto:visual.arts@britishcouncil.org)

**Music** [bcmusicenquiries@britishcouncil.org](mailto:bcmusicenquiries@britishcouncil.org)

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**Theatre and Dance** - [theatreanddance@britishcouncil.org](mailto:theatreanddance@britishcouncil.org)

Or if you have a general enquiry please contact [arts@britishcouncil.org](mailto:arts@britishcouncil.org)

**8. Are there risks involved in working internationally? How do you communicate risks to your partners?**

*We have offices all over the world, including in countries that may be going through civil unrest, military action or natural disasters. It is in these countries that our work can make a significant difference by extending safe spaces for culture, creative exploration and exchange; building trust, enabling dialogue and presenting marginalised voices; and supporting the protection of cultural heritage and expression of cultural identities.*

*This work contributes to security and stability by creating alternative pathways, and through building understanding, tolerance and cooperation. It creates opportunities for artists by ensuring the reflection of a diverse society in our and other countries' cultural output.*

*We follow the foreign travel advice provided by the Foreign Office (<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>) on health, money, documents, visas, local advice, and security requirements.*

*Our specialist Global Network Team responds to emergency situations across our regions and lead the incident control team, a small HQ team responsible for leading on security incidents overseas.*

*You can read more about the British Council's global policies (including security and risk management) here: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/transparency/policies>*

**How do I apply for funding?**

**Are you a funder? / Do you provide funding?**

*Although we create opportunities for creative sectors around the world to better connect with the UK – some of which we provide financial support for – we are not a funding body. We provide a range of support beyond sole financial contribution for projects/programmes/creative ideas that speak to the objectives set out in our five year Arts strategy, including:*

- *Creating new opportunities for artists and organisations to work internationally through brokering new contentions and introductions*
- *Introducing global audiences to the work of the UK Arts sector through new digital cultural relations programmes*
- *Sharing research with the cultural sectors in the UK and overseas*

**a. What kinds of projects do you fund/support?**

*The projects that we support must be culturally relevant and mutually beneficial for the countries in which we work and the UK.*

You can read about our overall aims and objectives, and programme priorities in each of our seven international regions in our five-year Arts Strategy:

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/cjl87t9ryh2xjhy/BC013\\_Arts%20Strategy.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/cjl87t9ryh2xjhy/BC013_Arts%20Strategy.pdf?dl=0)

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#### **b. Will you provide funding for my work to tour internationally?**

Although we don't tend to directly fund UK work to tour internationally, we help to broker touring opportunities through a programme of international delegations to the UK. Examples of these delegations include:

- **The Edinburgh Showcase** – the single biggest opportunity for UK theatre companies to introduce their work to international promoters: <https://edinburghshowcase.britishcouncil.org/>
- **Design Connections** – an annual industry networking programme for directors and curators from design museums, centres and festivals around the world taking place during the London Design Festival. The programme aims to broker new collaborations and partnerships as well as providing the opportunity for networking, learning and sharing with international counterparts: <http://design.britishcouncil.org/projects/design-connections/>

We also create new opportunities for artists and organisations to work internationally through our programme of international Festivals and Seasons. These high-profile events help to create a modern, vibrant and creative image of the UK by introducing millions of people around the world to the best of UK culture and innovation.

If you would like more information on how to get involved with British Council Festivals and Seasons, please email the team: [UKSeasons@britishcouncil.org](mailto:UKSeasons@britishcouncil.org)

To find out more about our current and upcoming festivals and seasons visits our website:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts/seasons>

#### **c. Will you pay for my flights/visas to work overseas?**

It is our policy to cover the visa/flight costs of the artists/organisations that we work with, permitting exceptional circumstances. However, we do not offer travel grants to artists/organisations to work internationally beyond our direct programme.

Although our expert teams are able to advise artists and organisations that we are working with on visa applications, visas are issued by the High Commissions of the country that you are planning to visit. Therefore, we are unable to 100% guarantee the granting of visas.

#### **d. Will you pay for flights/visas for us to bring international talent to the UK?**

As with our international work, it is our policy to cover the UK visa/flight costs of the artists/organisations that we work with, permitting exceptional circumstances. However, we do not offer travel grants to artists/organisations to work in the UK beyond our direct programme.

## **BROKERING**

How can you help me/my organisation to meet/connect with appropriate counterparts overseas?

## **BREIFING**

1. Do you provide guidance, updates and market intelligence on where I should/could be working internationally?

*As part of the process of producing our new five-year Arts Strategy, we consulted the UK Arts sector to ask what more it collectively wanted from us. One answer that came through loud and clear was a desire for more briefing on global opportunities and where to work internationally.*

*In response, we have started to produce a series of publications that provide focused insights into the countries in which we work including the socio-political background of the selected country, an overview of the country's creative sector and the challenges and opportunities it presents, and the British Council's programme priorities in the country.*

You can view the first three publications in the series here:

[Read the East Asia Arts and the UK publication.](#)

[Read the South Asia Arts and the UK publication.](#)

[Read the Wider Europe Arts and the UK publication.](#)

Further editions to be released in 2017/18.

2. **If I want to work internationally but I don't know which country/region would be the best fit for my work, can you help to advise me?**

*Our work is embedded in research.*

*As well as the regional briefing documents listed above, we commission research into key overseas markets and share our learning with cultural sectors around the world.*

*Our Cultural Skill team also carry out research into the current skills gaps and shortages across our seven international regions, which they make publically available via their website:*

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/cultural-skills-unit/research>

## **EVALUATION / VALUE FOR MONEY**

1. **Why does the British Council receive public funding? / How much public funding do you receive?**

*Over 75 per cent of the British Council's turnover is earned through teaching and exams, tendered contracts and partnerships. The British Council also receives grant-in-aid funding from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office. This makes up less than 20 per cent of our total income, but enables us to represent the UK's long term interest in countries where we cannot rely on earned income alone.*

*Much of our work in Arts is supported by Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding. ODA is UK tax payers' money that supports aid and development in low- to middle-income countries. Using this, we deliver*

*arts programmes that promote economic development and welfare in these countries, which contribute to building trust and opportunity with the UK.*

## **2. How do you evaluate your projects/prove their value for money and return on investment?**

*Through our corporate Results and Evidence Framework we have developed a global Arts Evidence Strategy and Arts Evaluation toolkit to help us measure a range of social and cultural impacts across our global arts programmes.*

*Our value for money approach is based on the Department for International Development's approach to measuring value for money. We also look at our arts programmes in terms of what their value is to the UK. For example, how do our arts programmes support the sharing of knowledge, supporting UK Cultural Exports, UK skills development, UK artistic practice, developing new connections / relationships for the UK with the wider world and what are the economic benefits to the UK sector from our work?*

## **3. How do you measure what works and what doesn't?**

*We have developed a global Results and Evidence framework which takes a thematic approach to our global arts programmes. The framework looks at the numbers of people we reach as audiences, artists and the number of arts organisations we work with. The framework also looks at the outcomes or the impact of our arts programmes have through using evaluation and research. This is mainly done through external evaluations of our arts programmes against outcomes or via a Theory of Change we set at the start of the programme, which we can evaluate against as the programme develops and delivers. We use a range of evaluation methods and evaluation tools depending on what outcomes and programme delivery we are looking to evaluate against.*