national museum directors' conference

Consultation on the European Commission's proposals for a Creative Europe Programme

This response is provided by the National Museum Directors' Conference (NMDC). NMDC represents the leaders of the UK's national collections and major regional museums. A full list of the members of the NMDC can be found here: www.nationalmuseums.org.uk.

The NMDC welcomes the proposals to simplify the European Commission's Culture and Media programmes, the instigation of programmes to aid capacity and audience building within the creative sector, and to execute responsibilities for the maintenance of cultural heritage. UK museums are developing their international programmes (some for the first time), and instigating and maintaining European programmes is an important part of institutions' international engagement. The UK museums sector would like to be able to play as full a part as possible in the Creative Europe programme, and simplifying some of the administrative elements of the programme would certainly remove one of the obstacles which may have been in place previously.

However, it is important that, once the Creative Europe programme has been agreed, that it is much better communicated to the sector. UK museums may utilise EU funding opportunities more regularly if DCMS provided more and timely information about the programmes.

General

Q1   What benefit has the current Culture/MEDIA/MEDIA Mundus programme brought to your organisation/sector?
The current Culture programme has been of benefit to those involved, such as the British Library which has used Culture programme funding to help develop its work with Chinese partners. Working with colleagues and audiences in Europe is fundamental to most National and major UK museums' operation, and the Culture programme provides a way of doing this.

Museums have been less able to participate in the MEDIA and MEDIA Mundus programmes even though they hold significant collections of audiovisual material, participate in broadcast projects with major broadcasters (i.e. the BBC with the V&A for *Handmade in* Britain, and the British Museum for *A History of the World in 100 Objects*), use digital technology, or commission work which is then relayed on their own commissioning platforms (such as Tate Channel).

Q2   Is there a need for EU action in the cultural and creative sectors? If so, why?
There is a role for EU action within the cultural and creative sectors. International work is no longer the preserve of the very largest cultural organisations, and technological change now means that audiences are larger than ever before. Overseas visits to the UK museums has risen since the introduction of free admission, and analysis of visitors to institutions in major museums suggests that a significant proportion are from Europe. 25% of all overseas visitors to London visited the British Museum in 2010/11 and the National Museum of Scotland is the most visited attraction in the UK outside of London.

Forming partnerships with like institutions across Europe is a way of being able to produce more ambitious public programming, more useful and complete research projects and of sharing expertise and skills (both around management of collections and the operation of the institution). Frequently, the like institution for a major UK museum is a European one – it is the

way in which museums can work with those who are of a similar scale and who hold similar collections.

The way people consume cultural activity has changed markedly, and so has the exposure to different forms of cultural exchange. Audiences are no longer passive recipients of museum activity, and experiencing the cultural output of another country or culture is no longer the preserve of those who can afford to travel to see it. Fuelled by social media, the internet, smartphone technology, global news, more accessible international travel and globalisation, cultural exchange is now more democratic and immediate than ever before. A museum's audience is therefore larger than ever before, but not all of the visitors will experience the museum by physically coming to the museum. Consequently, promoting cultural and linguistic diversity is now very important.

Q3   What would be the impact of there were no EU programmes for the cultural and creative industries sector?

There would be a significant impact on the cultural sector if there were no EU programmes. For the reasons outlined in Question 2, working internationally is particularly relevant to the socio-economic environment in which major cultural institutions' operate in the early 21st century. Without the impetus and funding from the EU cultural programmes, then there would be demonstrably less activity. As core funding to UK museums has been reduced, it is the availability of other streams of funding and potential for synergies with EU partner organisations that will increasingly determine what additional activity a museum can do. Removal of EU programmes would not only impact on the organisations already taking advantage of them, but on those who are considering doing so in future given tightening of other funding and simplification of the process. It is important to remember that publicly-funded cultural institutions are themselves part of the creative industries, as they all have a commercial operation. Furthermore, there is very much a place for public funding of the creative industry sector because of participants mixed-funding models which can shape how they generate income.

Q4   Do you agree that the three current programmes should be replaced by a single programme with separate Cross-sectoral, Culture and Media strands? What do you see as the benefits and/or disadvantages of this approach?

A perennial difficulty for an institution which could access EU funding is the complicated nature of the process for applying for, and then reporting against, EU funding. The administrative impact, particularly for the lead institution in a project, can sometimes outweigh the benefits of the programme and put an institution off from applying. Therefore any measure which the European Commission feels will simplify the application and management processes will be welcomed by UK major museums. It should also reduce duplication and ensure that resources are used most efficiently and strategically.

However, within this single programme, it is important to maintain a clear role for publicly-funded cultural institutions as an important aspect of the wider European cultural and creative sector. Whilst it is important to support and foster the creative industries and encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration, it must not put the publicly-funded cultural sector at a disadvantage. Similarly, there needs to be sufficient scope within the cultural programme for activities where the purpose is cultural exchange, and the detail of the single programme would need to demonstrate how that would not be eclipsed by the focus on growth and capacity building.

Q5   Does the proposed programme provide an appropriate framework for the kind of actions which would most benefit your organisation/sector and add value? If not, how should the framework be changed in order to maximise the benefits and added value?

The proposals within the framework would encourage greater inter-disciplinary activity with regards to professional development and public programme, and this is welcome. The variety of materials within UK museum collections means that they forge partnerships with a wide range of organisations across the cultural and creative sectors for these purposes. The framework now provides the opportunity for UK museums to forge those partnerships across

Europe and apply for European funding for activity which may previously have been considered Media.

However, as stated in Question 4, it is important that cultural exchange and linguistic diversity is maintained as a clear priority, and that some elements of the programme strive to achieve that (as opposed to just economic benefits).

The cultural strand does not however, cover care for and research of the collections. Research is one of the main ways in which major museums work with European partners. As collections-based institutions, almost all work is in some way derived from the core function of caring for and displaying the collection and the digital work, professional development and public programming activity which the Creative Europe proposal wishes to foster are usually the result of a project which has a research element.

Similarly, whilst NMDC members would very much welcome support for the "circulation of works" there does need to be provision within that for the whole spectrum of activities which take place to enable an object to tour. This includes the conservation of that object, insurance and preparing it for travel.

It is not clear where or how science fits into the EU definition of culture. Its inclusion is particularly important for science-based cultural institutions, such as the Natural History Museum.

European added value (Article 3)

Q6   Does the proposal identify the right means of ensuring added value? Are there any other that should be added?

It is understandable that the programme has to deliver against the Europe 2020 Strategy and that it should strive to make the sector more robust and economically viable. Whilst there is mention of job creation and growing the sector as a proportion of GDP, there is no reference to culture's (or media's) role in driving economic growth via tourism. As 29% of visits (in 2010/11) to the Natural History Museum were made by those living in Europe – representing 1.396 million visitors – the contribution major cultural institutions make to the tourism economy is significant.

However, a further effect of international cultural co-operation is one of good diplomacy. Cultural activity is a means of illuminating another country or culture's history, society and culture to an audience who may otherwise only be familiar with stereotypes. It is unclear whether this is adequately covered by "the transnational character of its activities and their impact".

The inclusion of this illustrates that cultural institutions' motivation for engaging in international work is not merely about operational development. In fact, museums' motivation is almost always "cultural" – there is an intellectual or public programme reason for forging a partnership. It is therefore odd that "added values" should not include something about cultural exchange and the social impact of it.

Programme objectives (Articles 4 – 5)

Q7   Does the proposal identify the right general objectives for the programme? Are there any others that should be added?

The objectives seem to adequately and clearly set out the aim of the project and would be welcomed by museums if they were weighted equally.

Q8   Does the proposal identify the right specific objectives for the programme? Are there any others that should be added?

The specific objectives are clear and each would set up a programme which would aid museums' international ambitions and is an appropriate use of EU funds.

Cross-sectoral strand (Articles 7 – 8)

Q9   Do you agree with the proposal for a new financial facility for small and medium-sized enterprises and organisations in the cultural and creative sectors?

Although the majority of members of the NMDC are unlikely to be eligible for this financial facility, it would be sensible to assume that such a function could benefit our members' UK partners as many of those are smaller organisations. These include Local Authority-funded museums and galleries who have had to accommodate some considerable cuts in revenue funding. Building capacity in those organisations would help larger museums maintain their UK partnerships, many of which also have an international dimension. However, the details are very sparse in the proposal and it is difficult to make further comments.

Q13   What level/proportion of the financial allocation for the programme should be allocated to such a financial facility?

As this form of debt-financing using European Cultural funds is new, it would need to be piloted in different markets before a fuller programme was rolled out. A more detailed consultation with small and medium-sized organisations is required and that must include publicly-funded institutions in the UK (and/or those who represent them).

Q14   Do you agree with the proposed support measures for transnational co-operation? Are there any other measures which should be included?

Measures for transnational co-operation are welcome. As mentioned, the scale and focus of larger museums or those with a more narrowly focused yet high profile collection means that they look to work with like institutions in Europe and these measures provide a supportive environment in which to continue this activity.

Q15   Do you agree with the proposed tasks of the Creative Europe Desks' network? Are there any other tasks which should be included?

These tasks seem appropriate. The Creative Europe Desks must be visible to the cultural and creative sector.

Q16   Does the proposal identify the right priorities for the culture strand? Are there any others that should be added?

The priorities outlined will be helpful to the museums sector. The priorities for "promoting transnational circulation" reflects how museums engage with European partners, and indeed will provide the means by which the priorities identified to reinforce the sector's capacity will be met. However, as previously stated, the programme must allow for the widest scale of activity when considering "promotion of transnational circulation" and that should include research and conservation where appropriate.

Q17   Does proposal identify the right support measures for the culture strand? Are there any others that should be added?

The measures would adequately support the stated objectives.

Media Strand (Articles 11 – 12)

Q18   Does the proposal identify the right priorities for the media strand? Are there any others that should be added?

Many major UK museums have significant collections of audiovisual works and are eager to ensure that these are viewed by as large an audience as possible. They are also keen to form partnerships with non-museum media organisations. Museums support audience building for audiovisual works by holding film screenings of work in the collections (such as the V&A's weekly screening of recordings of plays from the National Video Archive Performance) or by hosting major events, such as the annual International Film Festival at the National Media Museum in Bradford. Similarly, museums are involved in ambitious digital projects and are part of the creative industries. Therefore, a number of museums have developed mobile phone apps (many working with SMEs to create them). The Imperial War Museums has produced an app which includes 30 posters. Users can view the posters, and learn more about their creation and the context in which they were produced. There is also a function to purchase

a copy. The Museum of London has produced an app for visitors to the museum and surrounding area. *Londinium* uses their GPS position to tell a user more about the local area and show historic photographs and items from the museum's collection. The National Maritime Museum has developed a schools focused app using location tracking and optical search technology that allows students to direct their own gallery learning through researching objects that interest them. They are able to go beyond what the gallery can provide and make their own links with the collections. Given cultural organisations are already embracing digital media, they must be able to participate in the media strand.

Monitoring and evaluation

Q20   Will the proposed monitoring and evaluation measures be sufficient to measure the overall impact of the programme and the European added value? If not, how could they be improved?

The indicators listed, and then detailed in Annex II, are purely quantitive measures and do not measure the quality of the cultural experience or its impact. Whilst NMDC is sympathetic to the difficulty of finding appropriate measures, those suggested are purely about driving increased coverage rather than quality of experience – and on provision rather than use. It is unclear how any of these measures would deem a programme successful at encouraging cultural and linguistic diversity. Similarly, the measure for the Culture Strand – number of people directly and indirectly reached through projects supported by the programme (target 100 million) – is vague. It is unclear what "reached" means, and gives no indication of actual use and meaningful engagement.

The proposal is to make a 5% increase in the sectors' <u>share</u> of employment and GDP, though it is unclear whether this would accurately measure actual growth in employment or contribution to GDP. There is no numerical measure.

Similarly, the current measures would not give any indication of geographic spread within the Culture and Media strands, or whether a project has been managed effectively and helped build capacity for the institutions involved.

Q21   Are the proposed indicators appropriate for monitoring and evaluating the programme? Are they sufficiently SMART? Are there others which should be used?

As explained above, although the indicators are measurable and time-bound, they do not assess impact or quality of experience. In some cases, they do not accurately measure engagement.

Third countries (Article 16)

Q22   Is it appropriate to allow access to the programme to non-EU countries on the terms set out in the Article?

Yes, providing there is a mutual benefit to the institutions in the member states.

Financial provisions

Q23   How should the financial allocation for the programme be divided between the strands? Should there be fixed or indicative allocations for each strand and if so, what should they be?

The proposal does not adequately explain why the Media strand receives 55% of the budget and the Culture strand just 30%. If economic modeling indicates that 15% of the budget is the appropriate proportion to devote to the financial facility, then it may be more sensible to more equitably distribute the funds between the two strands, or at least ensure that some aspects of the Media strand are specifically made available for the development of audiovisual works and the use of digital technologies by cultural institutions.