

Terms of Reference

Request for Proposals

Mapping and analysis of creative hubs in Northern Ireland

1. Background

Since 2014, the British Council has worked with over 1000 creative hubs globally. We see hubs as playing a vital role in the growth of the creative economy, by gathering and representing growing creative communities. Hubs have often been at the heart of our regional and local programming - as partners, collaborators, producers and researchers.

Definition: A creative hub is a physical or virtual place that brings enterprising people together who work in the creative and cultural industries.

Creative hubs are made up of many shapes and sizes, from temporary to permanent, digital to physical and local to global. They might be permanent buildings that house creative practitioners and businesses; temporary labs and incubation spaces which ignite innovations; or online networks that bring people together through an annual programme of events. While some spaces specialise in a specific sector, others welcome a wide range of sectors together (i.e. a space where a variety of sectors gather -from artists, animators and designers to architects, writers and illustrators); and can be as small as a handful of people or as large as a couple of thousand people.

The British Council has been working with together with Creative Hubs in the UK and globally in a variety of ways. In this ever-changing global landscape, we believe hubs are integral to the sustainability and growth of the creative economy, as well as to balanced societies. A mapping of creative hubs is a greatly useful exercise in assessing the value of the ecosystem and the impact creative hubs bring. It helps understand who and where the hubs are, what are their needs and challenges, and learn more about their wider ecosystem.

We are aiming to publish an overview of creative hubs across the UK. In 2019 we commissioned a mapping of creative hubs in Scotland, and in 2020 one from England. **We would now like to start the exercise in Northern Ireland.**

2. Assignment Objectives and Scope

The British Council is looking for a researcher (creative professional, hub leader, part of a university or independent) to conduct a situation analysis of creative hubs across Northern Ireland (rural and urban-based), to conduct surveys and interviews/conversations with hub leaders/managers and some members of the hubs to get an understanding of the following:

- The hubs' profiles
 - o goals (short, mid and long-term)
 - o challenges / needs
 - o sustainability aspects
- The hubs' roles

- Within local economy
- Within local communities
- Social impact (if any, what kind, explicit/implicit)
- Hubs alignment/contribution to the SDGs (with anecdotal evidence, if no data available)
- Areas where hubs think they've succeeded or innovated

The **objective** of this exercise is to:

- Gain an up-to-date view of the hubs operating in Northern Ireland, their profiles, sustainability, impact and challenges.
- To facilitate an understanding of hubs' progress and change in the nation over the years.
- To provide a resource of information that would facilitate tailored international opportunities for UK hubs (by looking at their profiles, thematic expertise, focus and challenges)

The **output** of this mapping exercise would be a **report** containing:

- an executive summary
- contextualisation and methodology
- presentation of data and analysis
- a visual representation of hubs locations
- a synthesis list of hubs with their location
- an analysis of their challenges, needs and sustainability patterns
- high resolution visuals and images.

This report will be used by various audiences, among which:

- Creative professionals and entrepreneurs globally
- Local and international organisations interested in creative hubs
- Local authorities and policy makers
- Other researchers

Timeline:

RFP launch	12 January 2022
Deadline proposals / confirmation of interest	2 February 2022
Proposals review	3-4 February 2022
Contract signing	w/c 7 February 2022
Kick-off conversation	w/c 7 February 2022
Draft report	w/c 28 March 2022
Final report	w/c 25 April 2022

The delivery timeline can be further discussed with the selected supplier during the kick-off meeting.

The role of the researcher:

- Define research methodology and questions based on the project objectives
- Manage the project and undertake the following types of data collection:
 - Desk-based research
 - Interviews with stakeholders (digital)
 - Surveys
 - Documentation via high-resolution photos
 - Report writing and editing (incorporating British Council comments).

The British Council will:

- Provide an initial (non-exhaustive) short list of creative hubs contacts across Northern Ireland (for the researcher to use as starting point and to expand).
- Support the supplier with introductions to the hubs where possible.
- Take on the task of design and branding of the report.

Budget and scope

The total budget for this project is up to 7000 GBP (inclusive of VAT) and should include:

- All professional fees, including researching, writing, editing
- Related expenses such as communication and travel (to be arranged by the researchers)
- Other incidental expenses
- High resolution photos (to be used in report publication or as a complement to the report)

Travel is not a mandatory requirement for this assignment.

The budget does not include cost related to design and publishing of report. This will be led by the British Council.

3. Requirements

Eligible applicants can be a creative hub staff member (founder, CEO, community manager, programmes lead, etc.), or a creative professional working in the UK, or an academic (either associated with a HE institution or independent), with the following profile:

- In-depth knowledge of the creative sector in Northern Ireland and knowledge of creative hubs landscape.
- Established connections with hubs and key stakeholders across the country.
- Experience in conducting mappings, research in the creative field and drafting reports.

Experience working with international organisations is not mandatory.

4. Contract

The British Council will sign a contract with the Supplier detailing the assignment, responsibilities and budget. Payment shall be made in 2 instalments, part upon signature of contract and part upon delivery of report.

5. Submission of applications

The official language for the application and for the meetings and any other documents in relation to the assignment is English.

The application should be maximum 4 pages and should cover the following:

- An outline of the applicant's experience and skills relevant to this project
- An outline of proposed methodology
- A suggested timeline
- A budget breakdown

The Deadline for submitting your application is **2 February 2022**. Applications shall be sent to Roxana.Apostol@britishcouncil.org with the subject line **Proposal: Creative Hubs Mapping Northern Ireland**.

In case of further questions or requests for clarification please contact Roxana.Apostol@britishcouncil.org with the email subject line **Request for additional information: Creative Hubs Mapping Northern Ireland**.

The British Council complies with data protection law in the UK and laws in other countries that meet internationally accepted standards. You have the right to ask for a copy of the information we hold on you and the right to ask us to correct any inaccurate information, all under UK data protection law.

If you want more information about this, please contact Roxana.Apostol@britishcouncil.org or the British Council's Data Protection Team dataprotection@britishcouncil.org or see our website <https://www.britishcouncil.org/privacy-cookies/data-protection> .