

Project Grant Open Call

UK-Southeast Asia Collaboration on Creative Hubs Networking Platform

1. INTRODUCTION

About the British Council

We build connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education, and the English language. We work on the ground in more than 100 countries. In 2019-20 we connected with 80 million people directly and with 791 million overalls, including online and through our broadcasts and publications

The British Council has worked with over 1000 creative hubs globally since 2014. We see hubs as playing an integral role in the growth of the creative economy, gathering, supporting, and representing creative communities. Hubs have also featured greatly in our programming — as partners, collaborators, producers, and researchers. The British Council is strategically placed in South East Asia to be the connector between the hubs and cities in the region and the UK and wants to develop more creative connections and exchanges between the dynamic hubs sector in South East Asia and the UK.

Creative Hubs For Good in SEA - Programme and Context

From 2017 to December 2021, Malaysia along with 5 Southeast Asian countries ran the Creative Hubs for Good programme. In Malaysia, the programme aimed to provide support for the development of creative hubs to be key drivers and catalysts for good across Malaysia. We wanted to increase and enhance the capacity of hubs to function more efficiently, and increase the positive impact towards their community, contributing to the well-being of these cities.

Advancing the professional development of creative hub managers allowed them to better support hundreds of creative entrepreneurs and artists in Malaysia, contributing to inclusive growth and development in cities and communities.

We aimed to connect hubs and hub managers together, to other regional hubs and to local stakeholders who, in Malaysia remain largely unaware of the positive impact hubs create on communities. We also wanted to create advocacy pathways for the development and support of creative hubs, which we hoped will result in the adoption of new national policies.

Launched in August 2020, the Creative Hubs Malaysia website, <https://www.creativehubs.my/>, is a digital platform developed through the Hubs for Good programme and was created with the core aim of connecting Malaysian creative hubs, as well as to increase their visibility to policymakers and the public. The website is a platform for:

- Capacity building: it hosts a tool kit and other online tools
- Learning: it provides research and resources for the sector
- Connections: it features a **directory of Malaysia's creative hubs**

The global COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically affected the ability of creative hubs to connect face to face or host physical events. Their ability to sustain themselves has been greatly compromised yet, more than ever, they need to support each other and gain the skills that will allow them to adapt and pivot to new ways of working and interacting with their audiences and the communities they support. Going forward, under Strategy 25, The British Council's strategy for Creative Economy (Enterprise, Policy, Leadership) aims to further **develop the capacity of creative entrepreneurs and policymakers to support sustainable creative economies in their countries.**

In response to the increasing need for international online networks and collaborations opportunities, we will offer a grant to further expand and activate the existing Malaysian hubs network platform **to become a Malaysia-SEA-UK networking platform for creative hubs and arts communities.**

2. WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

SEA-UK Creative Hubs Networking Platform is a grant project that will expand the Malaysian creative hubs' platform, www.creativehubs.my developed under the Hubs for Good programme, to become a networking platform between SEA hubs and UK hubs (and their communities).

We are looking for a UK partner, whose values and goals are aligned with British Council's Hubs for Good programme and who can collaborate on this project with a Malaysian *lead* partner (Me.reka) over a period of 9 months (15 Dec 21 to 15 Aug 22)

Me.reka (<https://www.mereka.my/>) is a creative hub, makerspace and an alternative education space and maker space, that **aims to take a leading role in connecting Malaysia and SEA hubs and creative communities with the UK.**

They combine the principles of sustainability with STEAM Education (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) through engaging, alternative and skills-based approach. All Me.reka's projects are developed in line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

What they do: 1. Product Design: Wood & Metal Fabrication, Creative Textiles, Digital Manufacturing, Rapid Prototyping 2. Engineering Technology: Arduino & Raspberry Pi, Coding & Programming, Ultracapacitor, Renewable Energy Systems 3. Machine Technology: Augmented Reality, Big Data, MarTech, IOT

Me.reka Makerspace is designed and built by the team at Biji-biji Initiative www.biji-biji.com, a leading Social Enterprise in Malaysia. After 4 years (since 2013) in sustainable design, production and education, they established the first Me.reka Makerspace -the first fully integrated education centre in Malaysia.

Under this grant, the two partners will collaborate to develop and implement a strategy to **expand, curate, activate, socialise, and sustain** the existing platform and transform it into a networking and collaboration platform between UK, Malaysia and other SEA hubs and practitioners from all creative sectors and arts forms. The networking platform will connect hubs and artists from the UK to hubs and artists from Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, The Philippines, and Vietnam.

Grantees' roles:

The Malaysian grantee – project lead:

- Lead and manage the grant project
- Adapt the existing www.creativehubs.my platform to fit the new tech and content development requirements for the networking platform.
- Co-curate content with UK partner's input and support
- Activate events and networking activities
- Socialize and communicate around the platform in SEA

The UK grantee – project partner:

- Co-curate content with input from the UK sector
- Coordinate events and networking activities with UK networks
- Socialize and communicate the platform in the UK

The goal is to provide a networking platform where UK, Malaysia and SEA arts practitioners, creative entrepreneurs and organisations can network to learn, build capacity, find communities, collaborate, and exchange knowledge and opportunities. The content of the website must be curated in a way that provides users the ability to:

- Promote various capacity building opportunities such as: online courses, forums, publications, research, listing of training organisations and training events, workshops and training organisations and events, webinars, toolkits
- Find communities and enable exchanges: find a community, increase audiences, share profiles and events, showcase works, mappings and directories of hubs, networks and communities
- Collaborate: Via an interactive matchmaking space or networking events
- Network: make new connections within country, within SEA region and with the UK
- Other features as determined by the platform needs assessment

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE GRANT

You are asked to submit a project proposal for a collaboration duration of 9 months (between **15 December 2021 – 15 August 2022**) explaining your approach to respond to the below objectives:

- Provide a networking platform to connect Malaysian, SEA and UK hubs to each other

- Enable new collaborations and exchanges between hubs in the region and with the UK
- Exchange and share insights, capacity building resources

4. DELIVERABLES

The project will consist of the following deliverables:

1. **UK Content Curation plans and implementation**
2. **UK Networking and Activation plans and implementation**
3. **Communication plans and implementation in the UK**

5. ELIGIBILITY

The UK applicant for this project is an experienced creative hub or creative organisation with, preferably the following profile:

UK co-applicant must
Have at least 5 years leading role/experience in the creative economy sector in the UK and a strong network in all 4 UK Nations
Have experience in managing projects, budgets, and timelines, and organising networking and digital events
Have the manpower, resources, and skills to deliver the project
Have the motivation and is committed to collaborate with a Malaysian partner
Have experience in working internationally
Be able to embed British Council’s Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, Safeguarding, IGRM standards and policies
Be able to manage reporting and embed Monitoring and Evaluation of the project

6. GRANT

The total grant amount is **£15,000** inclusive of all applicable taxes.

The Grant can be used for expenses related to the project, including expert/staff time, event management and engagement.

The Grant **cannot** be used for:

1. Space rental costs
2. Utility bills
3. Travel claims
4. The purchase of assets that are not required for digital platform development
5. Other consultants/ suppliers/ vendors that are not directly working on the project i.e. accountant, legal, communications/ public relations etc.

7. TIMELINE

Request for proposals: 12 November 2021
Proposal deadline: 3 December 2021
Proposal review: 4-5 December 2021
Grant award notification: 6 December 2021
Contracting period: 7 December 2021 onwards
Delivery period: December 2021 – August 2022
Final project &M&E reporting: September 2022

8. PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Please submit a proposal using the template in Annex 1, including an overall project plan, activity details, M&E plan, timetable, budget, outputs, outcomes, and the project team's profile. Applicants should clearly explain how the project team will be structured and managed with details of responsibilities.

The proposal should not exceed 10 A4 pages (excluding organisation profile and project team's CVs) and should provide:

- Clear project plans and implementation strategies of the deliverables (either online and/or face-to-face), activity details, Monitoring & Evaluation plan, timetable, and project outputs & outcomes (to be further refined in discussion with the British Council)
- A grant budget breakdown, including a break-down of cost per phase/ deliverables
- Details of the project team, demonstrating strong knowledge, expertise, and interest in creative hubs communities' development; knowledge of the UK creative hubs sector and an understanding of international exchange, learning and collaboration; track record of producing and managing high quality regional/international programmes of activities; and proven ability to engage and work with a wide range of different stakeholders from different cultures
- A risk management plan including potential issues relating to COVID-19.

Proposals will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Track record and team expertise: 20 %
- Creativity and quality of approach and plans: 30%
- Budget and timeline management and effectiveness: 30%
- Sustainability and legacy plans: 20%

Please submit your proposal by sending in **Annex 1 and any other relevant documents** (CVs, portfolio, etc.) to Florence.Lambert@britishcouncil.org by **3 December 2021, 12pm** Malaysia time.