

## Partner search

### Culture sub-Program

Strand/category	Small Cooperation projects
Deadline	27 <sup>th</sup> September 2019

### Cultural operator(s)

Name	British Council Wales
Short description	<p>By working with the best of Welsh creative talent we develop innovative and high-quality events and projects and collaborate with cultural institutions from around the world to bring artists closer to Wales. We do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• developing new partnerships and relationships with key organisations</li><li>• ensuring the projects, we work on have ambition, scale and longevity</li><li>• focusing on work that demonstrates excellence, innovation and value for money</li><li>• discovering new and emerging talent in Wales.</li></ul>
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### Project

Field(s)	Cross Art Form, New Cultural Practices
Description	<p>Using an Action Research method, we'd like to explore: <b>How Small Nations Can Efficiently and Effectively Share their Cultural and Artistic work within Europe to the Equal Benefit of Both the Nation and the Sector?</b></p> <p>We seek transformative change in the way Wales and other partner countries think and talk about presenting its arts, cultural and creative industries to the world. We hope to achieve this through the simultaneous process of taking action and doing research. This process of Action Research will be linked together in Wales, and with our partners, by critical reflection.</p>

We seek mutual likeminded partner countries which are as similarly sized and placed as Wales. Together, we aim to reflect upon the consequences of our own questions, beliefs, assumptions, and practices around the action, and responsibility, that the arts have for showcasing their own host nations, versus the responsibility to develop themselves and their practice, which is often first and foremost. We are not suggesting that these two things are mutually exclusive rather **our goal is to better understand, develop, and improve the mechanisms, infrastructure and policies for doing both equally well.**

[A recent study](#), commissioned by British Council in Wales has identified significant challenges that the sector faces when working internationally and has identified a number of key things that Wales needs:

- More skilled artists and curators who can effectively market themselves and their work.
- More export-ready work; greater collaboration, integration and shared strategies between agencies.
- More flexible and longer-term funding models
- More international promoters coming to Wales, drawn by cross-sector showcasing platforms; a more sustained and visible presence at international events; and a bold, appealing offer that shares Wales' unique strengths and distinctive voice with the rest of the world.

In order for public bodies to invest in this vital showcasing, by which, I mean bringing Welsh work to the attention of those people who are in the business of promoting, participating in, or purchasing it, the public bodies need to understand through robust evidence, the benefits of showcasing, not just the short-term financial return on investment (ROI) but for the artistic, social and professional stimulus, with many of these outcomes being cumulative and long term.

Culture plays a vital role in cultural diplomacy and in highlighting shared cultures, histories and points of contact. In Wales this is understood by the arts sector and public bodies differently. that the arts sector and the public bodies understand this differently, and We are interested in, collaboratively building a bridge between the two understandings.

This project follows on from the recent research and is seeking a European partnership in order to work collaboratively and explore and understand the barriers and challenges that arts and cultural organisations in smaller nations are faced with when creating opportunities to display their work to an international market alongside work from larger neighbors.

For example, organisations in Wales are generally smaller and less funded than their English counterparts so competition in applications to funding bodies for international collaboration, means they can be overlooked. The result of this is a broad smattering of Welsh presence at individual platforms and showcasing events that often fail to create significant interest or momentum. Additionally, what is perceived as innovative in a geographically smaller or more remote nation may often be already practiced by organisations from larger neighboring nations.

We believe this work is crucially important because the world after the Brexit referendum will be fundamentally different. It will take decades before we will see the full consequences for Wales, Great Britain and the European Union. Therefore, it is important that through a process of mutuality, connection and negotiation, we find a way to describe the cultural offer from Wales and the United Kingdom and place it alongside and in the context of the cultural offer from other small European nations. This is for the benefit of artists and the artistic offer of a small country and secure a way forward for them to co-exist in the United Kingdom and the European Union.

British Council Wales want to work collaboratively with at least three creative organisations, from at least three other small nations in a two-year transnational programme to explore business models that will improve access to European culture and creative events for artists and arts organisations from small nations. We want to cooperate with European partners in order to advance our mutual interests. This will include sharing ideas, dialogues and artistic practice, which we hope, will result in the increased capacity of each partner nation to work internationally and develop the promotion of their work across Europe.

This project will respond directly to following three objectives:

**1) Promote the transnational mobility of artists and professionals with a view to enabling them to cooperate internationally and to internationalise their careers;**

We want to produce a visiting delegate package to each nation to see examples of best practice and excellence in art and culture from that nation and to meet with representatives of the nation's art sector to explore potential partnerships and promote and circulate opportunities for work to be presented transnationally. Delegates from each nation will join a network of European artists and arts organisations who want to collaborate and co-deliver arts and culture projects.

We want to encourage/ promote the presence of partner nations at

other international platforms and a strategy around marketing to other nations and building an audience to stimulate international interest in the cultural work of small nations.

**2) Foster capacity building through innovative approaches to creation, developing and testing new and innovative models of revenue, management and marketing for the cultural sectors, in particular in regard to the digital shift, and developing new skills for cultural professionals;**

Delegates within each nation will exchange information and share skills in structured sessions. Best practice in models of revenue and management of cultural organisations with international aspirations or existing partnerships will help to inform new approaches.

**3) Enhance intercultural dialogue, promote shared EU values and mutual understanding and respect for other cultures;**

Through conversations and exchanges between partner nations to determine suitable art and cultural events, as well as delegate selection and attendance on the delegate programme, each nation will build knowledge, understanding and curiosity around other nations' work. New networks will be created and fostered.

We want to establish a conference involving partner nations where the dialogue will centre around nations' responses to the proposal, *'Exploring how small nations can efficiently and effectively share their cultural and artistic work with Europe to the equal benefit of both the nation and the sector'* Each nation will share existing skills and knowledge, looking at access to the European market.

Each nation will develop and present a business model to their sector in with routes highlighted, network information, examples of best practice, and suggested models of international working.

As well as working with artists and arts organisations who represent theatre and dance, film and music, activity will also centre around areas of expertise for each nation. For example, Wales will look at mental health, safeguarding and development of bilingual work and creative learning.

A draft work plan could include project-wide conference days in the UK or in participating countries, remote meeting days, project reports due dates and a project evaluation as well as project activity goals – for example – each participating country meet twice a quarter with all stakeholders etc.

**Partners searched**

Countries	<i>Countries of a similar population size to Wales who are facing similar challenges</i>
Profile	<p>We are interested in hearing from arts/creative industries organisations, universities or research institutions or collaborative networks active in or actively exploring the how small nations can efficiently and effectively share their cultural and artistic work within Europe to the equal benefit of both the nation and the sector.</p> <p>This project will have a sector-led approach, focusing on the needs of the artists and creative organisations in each of the participating nations. Partner organisations will be embedded within each of the nation’s creative networks.</p>

**Other**

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