



Arts & Humanities  
Research Council

## Common Strategic Framework for future EU Research and Innovation Funding Consultation

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) of the UK welcomes the opportunity to respond to the EU green paper on the Common Strategic Research Framework for Research and Innovation (CSFRI). We are signed up to the full response to the Green Paper questions submitted by Research Councils UK (RCUK), of which we are a part. However we would like to provide supplementary points specifically related to arts and humanities research. The excellence, impact and innovation of arts and humanities research has a crucial role in the future of European culture, prosperity, wellbeing and intellectual life.

### Excellence

Europe is known throughout the world for its intellectual traditions, heritage, art and culture—all of which are underpinned by arts and humanities research of enormous quality and significance. In the UK alone, 1/3 of the world's arts and humanities<sup>1</sup> research is produced for less than 8% of the national science budget<sup>2 3</sup>. The UK is second only to the United States in terms of citations, and other measures of research excellence (such as periodic rigorous Research Assessment Exercises since 1986) reaffirm the quality of the research base. This quality is shared with many other European countries, and partnership working among researchers across the EU has been accelerated in recent years, not least through multi-national projects on 'Creativity and Innovation' and 'Cultural Dynamics' within the Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) programme. The high quality of arts and humanities research is complemented by its significance to the cultural and intellectual life of Europe.

### The Economic Impact of Arts and Humanities Research

The AHRC recognises the importance and added value of European societal challenges. The quality and significance of arts and humanities research in Europe is reinforced by its impact not only within the academy but in all spheres of life. In particular arts and humanities research enhances Europe's ability to capitalise on our global position in the creative and cultural industries to stimulate the economy and aid regeneration, and our cultural heritage provides many opportunities to understand cultural identity and has a major impact on tourism.

Arts and humanities researchers are involved in many partnerships across academia, industry, media, museums, galleries and the third sector. These produce economic benefits, transform service delivery and have an important impact on cultural and creative innovation.

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<sup>1</sup> *Leading the World*, AHRC, June 2009 <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/About/Policy/Documents/leadingtheworld.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> *Written ministerial statement on the allocation of science and research funding 2011/12 to 2014/15*, Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, 20 December 2010 <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/corporate/docs/m/ministerial-statement-on-the-allocation-of-the-science-and-research-budget-201112-to-201415.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> *2011-2012 QR Funding*, Higher Education Funding Council for England, (data as of 11 Feb 2011) <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/funding/QRfunding/>

For example In the UK alone:

- The UK creative industries contribute about 7% of GDP<sup>4</sup>
- In 2010 UK creative industries employed 1.3 million people in 182,000 creative businesses, with a further 1 million undertaking creative jobs in other industries. The sector was responsible for generating £59 billion in gross value added in the UK<sup>5</sup>.

Research underpins these economic benefits in a variety of ways. For example:

- Of the top-10 UK visitor attractions in 2010, 8 are museums or galleries<sup>6</sup>; of these, 6 are Independent Research Organisations with AHRC: arts and humanities research thus feeds directly into the exhibitions and interpretations that attract large numbers of visitors and enrich our cultural life.
- The AHRC trains researchers of the future to work collaboratively with (currently) 268 businesses and other agencies; including awards in strategically significant areas, such as Language-based Area Studies, Design, Heritage Science, and Religion and Society. One in three employees in the UK creative industries holds a postgraduate qualification.
- 45% of AHRC grant holders work in collaboration with private, public and third sector partners

Similar evidence applies to other EU member states. For example, research is crucial to the preservation and reinterpretation of major heritage sites throughout Europe, and cultural heritage is of exceptional economic importance for tourism, generating an estimated annual revenue of EUR 335 billion. The tourism sector itself employs roughly 9 million people, many of whom work directly or indirectly in the cultural heritage domain. The market for conservation of this heritage is estimated at some EUR 5 billion per year<sup>7</sup>. Moreover, this heritage is an important component of individual and collective identity. Cultural heritage contributes to the cohesion of the European Union and plays a fundamental role in European integration. It is a strong binding force for a more integrated Europe.

## Grand challenges

No European or global challenge can be addressed without exploring the human dimension. Arts and humanities researchers understand the complexity and idiosyncrasy of human beings, and the historic evolution of values, opinions, beliefs and practices. Many European challenges have arts and humanities research at their core. These include the challenges of multiculturalism, social inclusion, economic innovation and development, active citizenship, personal and communal well-being, political enfranchisement, social capital, and the fostering of creativity and tolerance. They bear on issues of European enlargement and European relations with the rest of the world and on global issues such as the behavioural consequences of climate change.

It is essential that arts and humanities researchers have a prominent role in shaping future European challenges.

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<sup>4</sup> *Staying Ahead: The economic performance of the UK's creative industries*, The Works Foundation, July 2007

<sup>5</sup> *Creative Industries Economic Estimates (Experimental Statistics)*, Department of Culture Media and Sport, December 2010.

<sup>6</sup> *Visits made in 2010 to Visitor Attractions in membership with ALVA*, ALVA, [http://www.alva.org.uk/visitor\\_statistics/](http://www.alva.org.uk/visitor_statistics/)

<sup>7</sup> *The Economy of Culture in Europe*, a study carried out by KEA European Affairs for the European Commission, 2006, pp. 147-155 and pp. 303-306.

In terms of specific challenges for Europe which are normally cast in scientific and technological terms, arts and humanities research also has a highly significant role to play. For example:

- **Digital challenges** - Arts and humanities research offers engagement with the ways in which the digital economy is transforming how knowledge is collected, transmitted and used and how digital technology is transforming the creative sector and the business models it uses.
- **Climate change** - Europe's cultural heritage is exposed to many threats such as climate change and pollution. It is a fragile and non-renewable resource, much of which has been irretrievably lost over the last century. Protection of cultural heritage in respect to global change is thus becoming a major concern for decision-makers, stakeholders and citizens in Europe. Research into strategies, methodologies and tools is needed to safeguard cultural heritage against continuous decay before irreversible damage is done. Understanding the historic dimensions and learning from the past are also vital in engaging with current environmental challenges and economic needs
- **Wellbeing - Arts** and humanities research provides greater understanding of the contribution of culture to health and well being. This includes the role of 'dominant' and minority cultures in health and healthcare communication, the role of qualitative research in understanding health issues; how literature, film and other cultural products shape attitudes to healthy living and enable mental well-being
- **All scientific challenges** - Arts and humanities research offers engagement with the philosophical, ethical and historical dimensions of scientific discovery across the disciplines.

Grand challenges in research tackle complex problems requiring interdisciplinary solutions. But interdisciplinary solutions depend upon strong and mature expertise in relevant disciplines. European research in arts and humanities is of world-leading excellence. It has much to contribute to the future of a European approach to major social, cultural and economic problems and will help sponsor creative responses to the opportunities offered by, for example, the revolution in digital technologies in the creative and cultural industries and the possibilities offered in an enriched multi-cultural Europe confident of its own heritage and proud of diversity.

### **Relevance of arts and humanities research**

Arts and humanities research in Europe has a unique contribution to innovation, wellbeing, social capital and democratic decision-making including:

- Arts and humanities researchers are able to question, challenge and problematise— intellectual skills essential in a functioning democracy
- Arts and humanities research preserves, interprets and refreshes artefacts, cultural heritage and history that would otherwise be lost
- Arts and humanities research fosters creative thinking that contributes to innovation across all sectors in the knowledge economy, not just the creative sectors
- Arts and humanities research provides a deeper understanding of the values, beliefs and dynamics of communities, vital to both migration across Europe and to our

engagement with other nations, in terms business, defence and cultural understanding

- Arts and humanities research provides a nuanced engagement with civic values, such as trust, responsibility, civility, ethics, especially in an international context of diverse and complex traditions and histories
- Arts and humanities research enables policy makers to have a grasp religious and ethnic diversity; understand the beliefs and practices of different groups past and present; and have a global perspective on language, communication and cultural difference
- Arts and humanities research provides capacity for innovation and creativity at a time of enormous change – social, cultural and economic.

These are only a few examples of the significance of arts and humanities research to the future of Europe. We look forward to the final shape of the CSFRI taking full account of these crucial research contributions.