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Assembly

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European Culture Programme: Background paper on 2010 consultation exercise

1 The current EU Culture Programme

The Culture Programme is now well-established as one of the European Union's (EU) flagship initiatives. In its present form it runs from 2007 to 2013, replacing the Culture 2000 programme which ran until 2006. The current Culture Programme has a total budget for the period of approximately €400 million, providing around €43 million to €58 million each year¹.

It covers all non-audiovisual cultural activities. A breakdown of the areas of culture currently supported by the programme, and an indication of their relative levels of participation, is as follows²:

¹ European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture. 6.5.10. *Culture Programme 2007–2013: Programme Guide*: p14.

² Based on figures from 2008: European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture. *Culture Programme Activity Report 2008*. <http://bit.ly/e29kH1> Accessed 1.12.10: p9.

Theme	Total projects
Literature	116
Performing arts	100
Cultural heritage	52
Visual arts	46
Multimedia/design	18
Architecture	16
Interdisciplinary approach	63
Innovation	6
TOTAL	417

Audiovisual cultural activities are excluded from the Culture Programme; they are covered instead by the EU Media Programme, which is also due for renewal from 2014 onwards and has been the subject of a recent consultation exercise.

The Culture Programme itself has four objectives:

- To promote **cross-border mobility** of those working in the cultural sector
- To encourage the **transnational circulation** of cultural and artistic output
- To foster **intercultural dialogue**.

The programme seeks to achieve these objectives by providing funding through a series of grants programmes, and fostering collaborative links between member states. The programme is structured around three strands. These are as follows:

- **Strand 1:** Support for cultural actions – this includes cooperation projects (which must include participants from at least three eligible countries, cultural festivals (including the European Capitals of Culture and the award of prizes to celebrate artistic talent among young Europeans), and the translation of cultural works into one of 25 eligible languages.
- **Strand 2:** Support for cultural bodies – this strand supports cultural bodies working at the European level, such as networks, cultural ambassadors and policy support structures.
- **Strand 3:** Support for analysis and dissemination activities – this strand derives just 5% of the programme’s budget and aims to support analysis and dissemination activities in order to raise awareness of the Culture programme and its activities. It also supports a series of ‘Cultural Contact Points’ aimed at ensuring ‘effective grassroots dissemination of practical and targeted information on the programme in all participating countries’³.

³ EU Cultural Contact Point: UK. ‘Strands of the programme’ <http://www.culturefund.eu/about-the-programme/strands-of-the-programme> Accessed 3.12.10.

Culture Programme funding is ‘open to the participation of all categories of cultural operators, insofar as the organisations are acting in a non-profit-making capacity’⁴. This includes government and other public bodies, charities, community groups and any other kind of organisation, as long as no profit is sought through the use of the project funding.

For most strands of funding, projects will only be funded if there is collaboration between organisations from at least three different eligible European countries. The only exception is the strand which funds literary translation into one of 23 eligible languages, plus Latin and Ancient Greek⁵.

The Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) is responsible for the Culture Programme and directly manages some of its activities. Responsibility for most activities, however, is delegated to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, based in Brussels. The official EU Cultural Contact Point (CCP) for the UK is the organisation ‘Visiting Arts’, based at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London. There is also a CCP for the Republic of Ireland, based at the Arts Council in Dublin. The CCPs provide advice, guidance, and a breakdown of projects supported by the Culture Programme within their relevant jurisdiction.

2 Funding for UK bodies

The following is a list of bodies based in Northern Ireland which have received funding from the current Culture Programme, either as organisers or co-organisers:

Organisation	Project name
Beat Initiative	BelBoBru (Laboratoire de Parades Urbaines)
Interface / University of Ulster	Art-Based Research / Research-Based Art
Prison Arts Foundation	Arts and Culture in Prison
Paragon Studios/PS ²	Rhizom

As is noted below, it can be seen that none of these applications have come from DCAL or its arms-length bodies, even though such bodies are eligible to apply for Culture Programme funding.

⁴ European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture. 6.5.10. *Culture Programme 2007–2013: Programme Guide*: p19.

⁵ EU Cultural Contact Point: UK. ‘Strands of the programme’ <http://www.culturefund.eu/about-the-programme/strands-of-the-programme> Accessed 3.12.10.

This compares with at least 44 projects which have either coordinators or co-organisers from across the UK as a whole⁶. Participation is higher in other areas of the European Union. For example, 57 projects have been funded in France⁷, and 84 in Germany⁸.

In the first two years of the current Culture Programme, relatively few funding awards were made to UK bodies, with just 15 for 2008 from 26 applications. Indeed the 2008 Activity Report from the European Commission stated that,

‘...it can be noted that fewer applications were submitted from some countries than one might expect on the basis of their size or cultural infrastructure, for example the UK and Ireland.’⁹

In 2009 there was increased participation from the UK, with 44 applications and 20 funding awards made¹⁰.

3 Consultation on a new Culture Programme

A consultation is currently open until 15 December 2010 on the new Culture Programme, to run from 2014 onwards. The European Commission states that the context for conducting the consultation is that there is a need to see how the future programme's ‘objectives and action lines’ should be revised in the light of current developments so that they:

- ‘Respond to current European and global developments and exploit the cultural sector's potential to contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth
- Ensure the greatest possible structuring and multiplier effects through its funding, which should have a real European added value
- Prioritise spending on project content rather than administration – by having as streamlined and cost-effective a programme design as possible.’¹¹

⁶ Information derives from CCP UK: ‘Successful projects with UK partners’: <http://www.culturefund.eu/funded-projects>. Accessed 3.12.10, and information provided by CCP UK via email, 2.12.10.

⁷ Relais Culture Europe. ‘Tous les programmes’: [http://www.relais-culture-europe.org/index.php?id=453&tx_oxcsgeprojeto_pi1\[backPID\]=101&L=0](http://www.relais-culture-europe.org/index.php?id=453&tx_oxcsgeprojeto_pi1[backPID]=101&L=0) Accessed 3.12.10.

⁸ Die Nationale Kontaktstelle für die Kulturförderung der EU. ‘Projektbeispiele in Deutschland’: <http://www.ccp-deutschland.de/328.html> Accessed 13.12.10.

⁹ Based on figures from 2008: European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture. *Culture Programme Activity Report 2008*. <http://bit.ly/e29kH1> Accessed 1.12.10: p6.

¹⁰ <http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc/activityreport2009.pdf>

¹¹ European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture. ‘Consultation on a future European Union Culture Programme’: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc2805_en.htm Accessed 1.12.10.

Further context is provided by the European Commission's 'Agenda for Culture', created in 2007, of which the Culture Programme is one element. The agenda has three broad objectives¹²:

- The promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue as one of its strategic objectives
- The promotion of culture as a catalyst for creativity, growth and jobs
- The promotion of culture as a vital element of international relations

Also of relevance here are the EU Treaty, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and the European Union's obligations as a party to the UNESCO Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions. All of these agreements stress the importance of protecting and promoting Europe's cultural and linguistic diversity.

The consultation exercise is open to individuals, public and private bodies, local and regional authorities, ministries and relevant stakeholders in the field of culture both inside and outside the EU. Views are sought on the objectives, activities, and types of support within the new programme. Consultation responses are divided into three categories: individuals, public bodies and organisations. For public bodies, the consultation seeks input on the following themes:

(a) Objectives

- Protection and promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity
- Promotion of transnational circulation of cultural works and products
- Widening access to European heritage and cultural works
- Development and capacity-building of artists
- Promote cultural cooperation with third countries
- Should cooperation with third countries be limited to a certain list?
- Promotion of urban and regional development through culture
- Widening access to culture for disadvantaged groups

(b) Activities

- Development of the professional skills of artists in an international context
- International networking for the exchange of experience
- Interdisciplinary partnerships between arts institutions and business

¹² European Commission. 2010. Information Note on the Public Consultation on a Future European Union Culture Programme: p1.

- Creation of new works by artists from different countries
- Development of experimentation, innovation and risk-taking
- Development of innovative digital content
- Activities promoting an understanding of common European heritage
- Incentives for artists performing outside their own country
- Transnational exchange of artefacts and cultural works
- Funding for cultural and creative companies that promote the development of artists in different countries
- Support to enable artists to overcome barriers to transnational mobility
- Translation of fiction into different languages
- Festivals with a strong European dimension
- European prizes in the field of culture
- Media initiatives giving visibility to European cultural projects

(c) Types of support

- Level of support to be offered for cooperation partnerships
- Level of support for European-level organisations (cultural ambassadors, advocacy networks etc)
- The appropriateness of subjecting grants to degressivity (ie they are reduced each year)
- Suggestions for simplifying the application process and management of the programme
- Suggestions for the dissemination of results of activities funded by the programme

In terms of the process from here, During the second semester of 2011, the Commission intends to adopt a draft decision of the European Parliament and Council establishing a new culture programme after 2013.

4 Relevance for government priorities in Northern Ireland

Government departments are eligible to apply to the Culture Programme, as long as they form a partnership with organisations or bodies from at least two other European Union member states (the exception being literary translation). Similarly, local authorities and not-for-profit organisations are also eligible. A number of the activities for which DCAL is responsible are likely to be eligible for Culture Programme funding, including language/cultural diversity, arts, creativity and architecture, and museums.

The following PSAs within the current Programme for Government could be linked to projects funded (or part-funded) by the Culture Programme, including¹³:

PSA	Summary
9 (all)	Contribute to Northern Ireland's economic, health and educational goals by increasing participation and access to culture, arts and leisure activities.
10.2	Reduce the gap in educational outcomes by addressing the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people; specifically, to attract at least 98,000 visitors per annum to organised educational visits at National Museums by 2009.
12.3	Promote viable and vital towns and city centres, helping to create shared spaces that are accessible to all and where people can live, work and socialise; specifically by implementing the policy on Architecture and the Built Environment for Northern Ireland and undertaking a design review of major public sector infrastructure projects.

Assuming that the new programme will be broadly similar, there are a number of opportunities for funding and projects to contribute to the aims of the *Cohesion, Sharing and Integration*¹⁴ agenda. For example, 'Section 5: Respecting Cultures' contains a number of aspirations which may link with projects and initiatives potentially funded by the Culture Programme. In particular, reference is made to proposals under DCAL's cultural diversity policy (5.22), and the Community Festivals Fund (5.23). The key aims at the end of section 5 all have a potential relevance to the Culture Programme in that the programme could provide funding and partnerships to enable the aims to be met. In particular, the following aims suggest opportunities for use of the programme:

- Promoting greater understanding of cultural diversity and expressions of cultural identity
- Encouraging greater engagement with, and understanding of, cultural diversity and intercultural relations
- Promoting cultural exchanges, joint events and tourism initiatives

The forthcoming 'Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland'¹⁵ may also have a relevance to the Culture Programme, though no reference is made to the opportunities offered by the programme, even where reference is made to partnerships (page 4) and an events

¹³ Northern Ireland Executive. 'Programme for Government 2008–2011': <http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/pfgfinal.pdf> Accessed 1.12.10.

¹⁴ Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. 26.7.10. *Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration – Consultation Document*.

¹⁵ Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment. *A Draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020*: http://www.detini.gov.uk/ni_tourism_20100308-4.pdf Accessed 1.12.10.

strategy (page 8). No reference is made to partnering with other countries to create cultural events and initiatives which may attract tourists.

On the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport website, links are provided to the Culture Programme and supporting documentation, along with a range of other funding options¹⁶. However, the DCAL website does not mention, or provide a link to, the Culture Programme. Indeed, the Department of Tourism, Arts and Sport in the Republic of Ireland also does not mention, or provide a link to, the Culture Programme. It also does not mention the Culture Programme in the 2010 Business Plan for the department¹⁷.

¹⁶ UK Government Department for Culture, Media and Sport. 'What we do: international': http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/international/default.aspx Accessed 1.12.10.

¹⁷ Irish Government Department of Art, Sport and Tourism. *Business Plan 2010*: <http://www.dast.gov.ie/pdfs/BusinessPlan2010.pdf> Accessed 1.12.10.