UNESCO’s Creative Cities Network

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Tim Curtis
Chief of the Culture Unit
UNESCO Bangkok Office
What is the Creative Cities Network?

• The Creative Cities Network was launched by UNESCO in October 2004 following the decision taken by the 170th Executive Board.

• The Creative Cities Network is a UNESCO programme designed to promote social, economic and cultural development at city level through creative industries. The cities which apply to the network seek to promote their local creative scene; they share interest in UNESCO’s mission towards the promotion and protection of cultural diversity.
Network Principles

- “Cities as creative hubs and centres of excellence”: Recognizing cities for their creativeness and innovative approach to creative industry development in different fields
- “Diversity of creative communities and urban practices”: Gathering cities so that they can share and exchange local resources and practices for global impact
- “Platform of international cooperation for culture and development”: Encouraging cities to work together in partnership, particularly with those in developing countries, to drive joint development results for the creative economy and cultural development.
UNESCO Creative Cities Network

• There are currently **27 Creative Cities** in the Network. The network has grown rapidly and tripled since 2008 from 9 members to 27.

• The members represent 7 different creative fields.
City of Literature

Melbourne

Dublin

Edinburgh

Iowa City
City of Crafts and Folk arts
City of Media Arts
“Cities as Creative Hubs & Clusters” - Why cities?

Great potential to harness creativity as an essential element of socio-economic and cultural development

Creativity and culture integrated into urban planning and regeneration

Appropriate scale to bridge local and international opportunities for creative industries
“Network of Urban Communities and Practises”

Each city is unique! CCN membership = Ongoing engagement

Stakeholders (public / private sectors)

Creative Communities

Local practices & know-how

Networking experiences

DIVERSITY becomes the rich ground of cooperation
Why the different fields?

- Important to acknowledge the unique “diversity” in the creative fields, at the same time encourage cross-disciplinary cooperation
- More accessible to cities that might not have the means to develop an established and comprehensive cultural image
- Strengthens the identity and place-branding of the city and brings more effective and sustainable promotion
Choosing a category

- Choice is up to the applicant city
- Not necessarily the field that the city is most famous/known for
- UNESCO Creative City in a given category does not mean it is the best city in that field
- Recognizes the city’s potential, its current engagement and future commitment
Criteria to becoming a “UNESCO Creative City”

- Overall urban environment and cultural landscape fuelled by creativity
- Basic creative industry infrastructure with contemporary production and distribution capacity
- Strong presence of practicing groups and professional communities
- Nurturing of public appreciation through spaces and platforms suited for wider outreach to different audiences
- Experience in hosting events and activities in the creative fields
- Structure (formal and informal) for education and research in the creative fields
- Respect for local materials and urban/natural conditions
Building the application

Part 1 – Introduction

1. Executive summary
   → Application goals and objectives
   → Management team
   → Mission and visions towards membership

2. Overview of the city / General information
   → Geographical area
   → City layout
   → Infrastructure
   → Multicultural profile of the city
   → Lifestyle aspects
   → Municipal/governmental structure
   → Urban planning policy and strategy

3. Facts and figures
   → Population
   → Economy
   → Other
Building the application

Part 2 – Direct resources related to the applied field

1. Historical facts

2. Cultural Infrastructures
   → Museums, galleries, theatres, cultural centres, libraries, concert venues, etc.

3. Finances
   → Projected budget
   → Major funding parties

4. Cultural promotion and dissemination

5. Creative industry
   → Professional organizations
   → Key industries with significant impact on social, cultural and economic development

6. Public awareness
   → Award programmes and other types of recognition
   → Local media (newspaper, magazines, television)
   → Publications
   → Trade fairs, conferences, high profile events
Building the application
Part 2 – Direct resources related to the applied field

7. Contemporary creation
→ Names of local creators
→ Number of creative professionals
→ Number of jobs created in the last 5 years
→ Areas/neighbourhoods dedicated to creativity (e.g. regeneration plans)
→ Creative clusters and professional associations

8. Education / Research / Capacity building
→ Number of educational programmes related to the creative sector
→ List of educational institutions in the creative sector
→ Level of qualifications
→ Annual number of graduates in the creative sector
→ Awarded/prominent professors in the creative sector
→ International reputation
→ Informal educational opportunities

9. Statistics (if existing)
Building the application

Part 3 – Creative partnerships and initiatives

1. Programme of activities

2. Public-Private partnerships

3. International cooperation
   - Projects
   - Partnerships

4. Prospects for intercultural collaboration with Member cities
Building the application

• The content should be as clear and concise as possible, while the presentation of the city’s cultural assets (such as infrastructure, education, public initiatives, etc.) should reflect both breadth and depth in research.

• The recommended size for the application is 50-80 pages including images.

• There no specific deadlines for a submission.

• Candidates are highly advised to send a preliminary version of their application to UNESCO at an early stage: this could consist of an executive summary emphasizing the city’s cultural assets and goals for the Creative Cities Network; a draft table of contents; and a list of the people on the management committee.

• UNESCO usually assists the city in finalizing its application.

• The final application document has to be submitted in English and/or French, in both print and PDF versions.
Application Process

• Submission of an application:

→ The city submits a finalized application bid to UNESCO accompanied by an official letter of endorsement of the mayor of the city.

→ Immediately, UNESCO will request support from the relevant National Commission for UNESCO. If the National Commission does not approve the bid, then the candidature may be rejected.
Application Process

• Application’s Evaluation:

→ A thorough evaluation of the application will be undertaken by a panel of external experts from international NGOs specialized in the specific domain.

→ Recommendations made by the experts will be presented to the UNESCO Director-General who will take the final decision.

It could take from 6 to 9 months, from the official submission of the application the to final decision.
Benefits of becoming a “UNESCO Creative City”

• International recognition and branding:
  ➔ Promotion of local cultural assets on a global platform
  ➔ International recognition as a “creative city”
  ➔ Opportunity for sustainable place-branding of the city

• Engagement as a network member:
  ➔ Exchange of experiences and practices among cities
  ➔ Raising the synergy effect - participation in joint activities, optimizing existing local resources and feeding into new resources
  ➔ Strengthened sense of community within an inter-cultural environment and common mission towards cultural diversity
Monitoring

• Annual Progress report on policy implementation and organization of activities, both locally and internationally, in line with their membership to the Network.

• UNESCO is reviewing the monitoring process so as to incorporate quantitative and qualitative indicators to measure the impact and progress of the city’s creative industry development as well as its contribution to the Network.
The Challenge

Sustaining the Network

• Responding to the needs of growing members and balanced participation
• Finding concrete linkages and common basis for cooperation
• Continuously feeding networking activities and joint initiatives
• Launching different collaborative platforms: sub networks, cross-disciplinary, etc
You can find more information on our website at:

www.unesco.org/culture/en/creativecities

Thank you!