

AHRC Knowledge Exchange Hubs for the Creative Economy

Call for Expressions of Interest

Closing date: 27 April 2011

AHRC are delighted to announce call details of our new knowledge exchange initiative which is a key priority in our Delivery Plan 2011-2015

<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/About/Policy/Documents/DeliveryPlan2011.pdf> This call represents the first of two stages in the application process.

We invite Expressions of Interest for **Knowledge Exchange (KE) Hubs** to facilitate innovative collaborative research and to develop entrepreneurial capacity **in the Creative Economy**. The KE Hubs for the Creative Economy replace AHRC's current knowledge exchange provision (Knowledge Transfer Fellowships, Knowledge Catalyst).

AHRC KE Hubs present a unique opportunity for Research Organisations already working in strategic partnerships with creative businesses and cultural organisations to strengthen and diversify their collaborative research activities, build new partnerships in the Creative Economy and increase the number of arts and humanities researchers actively engaged in research-based knowledge exchange.

A total of £19.2M Full Economic Cost (FEC) value is available to support up to four AHRC KE Hubs over four years. Institutions may therefore apply to the AHRC for up to £4.8M FEC. Successful applicants will be funded at 80% of FEC. We have an expectation that each will leverage significant additional income from partners and other sources. After the four-year period of AHRC funding, each Hub will be expected to have made arrangements to develop the legacy of its work, including sustaining partnerships, delivering economic impact and continuing other major benefits. In short, the Hub will be expected to be sustainable in an appropriate (but not necessarily identical) form. There will be no continuation funding.

An AHRC panel, including external expertise, will review the Expression of Interest submissions against key criteria as set out in this document. If appropriate, we may subsequently discuss bids with applicants developmentally and/or encourage applicants to discuss potential synergies between proposals. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal and business plan to a competitive final stage.

This briefing document contains the following information:

- Introduction
- Scope of the Call
- Key Aims of AHRC KE Hubs in the Creative Economy
- Hub Structure

- Lead Research Organisation infrastructure requirements
- Governance
- Eligibility
- Funding
- How to apply
- Expression of Interest assessment criteria
- Application and assessment process
- Call Timetable

You are advised to read all the information in this document thoroughly before submitting your Expression of Interest. Please see Annex 1 for required information and word limits. Annex 2 offers, without obligation, a stimulus to thinking about the Creative Economy as a whole.

The AHRC will be holding two **Town Meetings** for prospective applicants, their potential private, public and/or third sector partners, other funding agencies and stakeholders interested in learning more about this initiative. This will be an opportunity to hear further about AHRC's Creative Economy strategy, our ambitions for KE Hubs and to ask related questions before submitting an Expression of Interest.

15 March 2011 at the Business Design Centre, London
<http://www.businessdesigncentre.co.uk/>

21 March 2011 at Our Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh
<http://www.dynamicearth.co.uk/>

If you wish to attend one of these meetings please contact Ellie Ricketts-Jones (KEHubs@ahrc.ac.uk) to register your attendance so that we can estimate numbers.

1. Introduction

The Creative Economy is the major focus of AHRC's new knowledge exchange and impact strategy for 2011-2015.

The UK's Creative Economy – embracing the multiple sub-sectors of the creative industries (designing, gaming, music, publishing, etc.) and the public infrastructure of museums, galleries, libraries, orchestras, theatres and the like – is an exceptionally dynamic and increasingly strong and forward looking part of our economy. Relative to GDP, the UK has probably the largest creative sector in the world. The creative business sector is complex, rich in its diversity and characterised by great differences of scale. These range from major corporations to small and micro enterprises (see Annex 2). The size of the latter has historically created barriers to engaging with the research base. This is one of the issues we would expect Hubs to address through this initiative.

Recent studies indicate that research plays a crucial role in informing the development of new ideas, practices and business models and in building entrepreneurial capacity in the Creative Economy. Evidence suggests that developments in the relationship between Research Organisations and the Creative Economy occur when there are sectorally-based and/or geographical co-located clusters of activity to build ready synergy; when there is a high level of cross-disciplinary interaction (for example, between designers, artists and computer engineers); and when there is well targeted brokerage and investment by local bodies, Research Councils and Research Organisations.

Taking this evidence as our rationale, AHRC is committed to concentrating the majority of our knowledge exchange funding over the next four years into centres of excellence - KE Hubs – to facilitate interaction between research and the Creative Economy and to translate and create significant benefit.

2. Scope of the Call

This call is for Expressions of Interest from Research Organisations for AHRC KE Hubs for the Creative Economy. We expect each KE Hub to develop in partnership with private and public sector organisations. Consortium models are very much encouraged.

Once the individual Hubs are established, the AHRC will institute an overall co-ordinating function with a national remit. AHRC KE Hubs will be expected to work together to achieve the greatest overall impact for the Creative Economy.

3. Key aims of AHRC KE Hubs for the Creative Economy

The AHRC's KE Hubs will facilitate new collaborative research for the Creative Economy. We expect the Hubs to provide flexible means for supporting innovative research-based knowledge exchange tailored to the research and skills needs of the Creative Economy. (Skills here is understood to include both skills for employment and skills relating to the development of essential research capability, especially in new or emerging areas.) AHRC would expect KE Hubs to engage with small, medium and micro enterprises, though not necessarily exclusively so.

Specifically AHRC KE Hubs will be expected to:

- respond directly to business needs in research and development and skills training
- identify and connect with leading businesses and facilitate connections with creative SMEs
- develop KE best practice within the arts and humanities research community and act as a strategic intermediary to provide support and

advice to AHRC-funded researchers seeking to enhance their engagement with the Creative Economy

- cultivate entrepreneurial capacity and facilitate new routes to market opportunities in the Creative Economy
- facilitate cross disciplinary interactions appropriate to the ambitions of the Hub
- leverage additional funding from other sources, chiefly the private sector
- act as a focus for integrating KE activity with other AHRC and RCUK programmes, for example the Digital Economy Programme and the proposed Centre for Copyright and New Business Models (see AHRC Delivery Plan)
- develop a distinctive and innovative offer which draws value from and leverages key partnerships alongside existing provision in this arena and that complements rather than duplicates other funding streams (for example HEIF)
- aim to have a significant sustainable legacy after four years.

4. Hub Structure

A hub can be described as the core or focal point of an activity to perform the functions described above. The AHRC does not wish to prescribe structure. We are open to a range of partnership and collaborative models that best suit the vision and delivery plans of a particular hub. However, the KE Hubs should engage with private as well as public sector bodies. Engagement with the private sector will be a criterion in assessing applications.

5. Lead Research Organisation infrastructure requirements

A Research Organisation intending to lead an AHRC KE Hub should have in place or be able to develop quickly mechanisms or practices which:

- demonstrate well-established intellectual leadership and research excellence in the arts and humanities including capacity to engage across disciplines in ways relevant to the purposes of the KE Hub
- demonstrate strong institutional underpinning (including physical and human infrastructure and supportive academic and administrative policies)
- embrace open collaboration with business and other stakeholders
- attract major business engagement and collaborate with other Research Organisations
- employ strategies which exploit market opportunities
- stimulate entrepreneurial capacity in the Creative Economy

Evidence of institutional commitment will be required in a statement from a Pro-Vice Chancellor or equivalent endorsing the bid and specifying the contribution.

6. Governance

The lead Research Organisation should propose, in outline, an appropriate governance structure to include AHRC, external stakeholders and other partners collaborating in the KE Hub as appropriate.

7. Eligibility

UK Higher Education Institutions, or accredited AHRC Independent Research Organisations: (<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/IndependentResearchOrganisations.aspx>), with an established track record of research excellence in relevant aspects of the arts and humanities, and the infrastructure essential to foster collaborative working with the Creative Economy.

Note: a Research Organisation may lead only one Expression of Interest, but may also be a partner in those led by other Research Organisations.

8. Funding

A total of £19.2M full economic cost (FEC) value is available to support up to four AHRC KE Hubs over four years. Institutions may therefore apply to the AHRC for up to £4.8M FEC. Successful applicants will be funded at 80% of FeC. The expectation is that the Hubs will also leverage significant additional income from other sources. Funding will be profiled to support a Hub's planned activities and we anticipate that funding will taper-off during the final year of the Hub's AHRC-funded lifespan as they develop their sustainable legacies (see page 1 above).

AHRC funding will be released in stages depending on successful progress against objectives and agreed milestones and the extent to which the Hub is delivering against AHRC's strategic ambitions in the Creative Economy.

9. How to Apply (Stage 1)

Applicants should submit an **Expression of Interest** addressing the key headings given at Annex 1 to this document. Submissions should not exceed the word limits under each heading.

Expressions of Interest should be sent by email to Susan Amor, AHRC Head of Knowledge Exchange (KEHubs@ahrc.ac.uk) for receipt **by 4pm on 27 April 2011**

10. Assessment criteria for Expressions of Interest

An AHRC panel including external expertise will review Expressions of Interest using the following criteria:

- fit to the call specification
- demonstrable expertise in relevant research, and engagement with the Creative Economy across the lead organization and any consortium partners
- strength of vision and leadership
- the distinctive offer and added value of the Hub's overall aims, approach and knowledge exchange activities
- the quality and innovation of proposed knowledge exchange activities and their alignment to the AHRC's strategic ambitions, the lead Research Organisation's strategic plans and those of major partner bodies
- the infrastructural support offered by the host institution(s)
- the extent to which proposed activities are demand-led and respond to the pressing needs in research, economic development and skills training in the Creative Economy
- evidence of engagement with business partners and plans for attracting new partners
- plans for a sustainable legacy
- value for money (including the potential to obtain additional income).

11. Application and assessment process

Stage 1: Expressions of Interest

The AHRC will review Expressions of Interest submissions against key criteria as set out in this document and may subsequently discuss bids with applicants if appropriate. Expressions of Interest will be assessed by an AHRC panel including external expertise and then shortlisted.

Stage 2: Full application

Shortlisted applicants from Stage 1 will be invited to submit a full proposal and business plan to stage 2. Applicants may be invited to attend an interview panel which will then make recommendations to the AHRC.

Call timetable

Stage 1:

Expressions of Interest call announced:	7 March 2011
Town Meetings:	15 and 21 March 2011
Closing date for submissions:	27 April 2011
Shortlist announced:	13 May 2011

Stage 2:

Closing date for full applications:	7 July 2011
Assessment Panel/interviews:	w/c 25 July 2011

Announcement of successful bids:
Earliest start date:

w/c 15 August 2011
1 January 2012

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AHRC Knowledge Exchange Hubs for the Creative Economy

Expression of Interest

(please include total word count used under each section)

Hub title and structure *(limit 300 words)*

- Name of the KE Hub, outline structure including the lead applicant and those primarily responsible for delivery (you should include the identity of the proposed Director of the Hub if known)

Demonstration of need *(limit 500 words)*

- Identify target sectors/beneficiaries in the Creative Economy, their location and specific business/organisational needs
- Describe how the KE Hub will add value and be distinctive in relation to other research-led activity in this area

Key features of proposal and strategic fit *(limit 750 words)*

- Provide the overall KE Hub aims and vision and start and end dates together with a summary of key knowledge exchange activities
- Indicate how the aims and key activities will contribute to:
 - the AHRC's ambitions for stimulating impact in the Creative Economy through research
 - the lead Research Organisation's business and community engagement strategy
- If relevant, indicate how this complements any existing development plans supported through other funding streams such as HEIF.

Key partners *(limit 500 words)*

- Indicate the key partners (both Research Organisations and others) who will be involved in the work of the KE Hub and provide a brief account of their role and contribution

Funding and legacy *(limit 500 words)*

- Provide outline costs and the contribution to be made by the partners, including the lead Research Organisation
- Indicate potential external sources of funding
- Describe the potential for a sustainable legacy after four years

Institutional commitment (*limit 100 words*)

- Provide a signed statement by the lead Research Organisation's Pro Vice Chancellor or equivalent endorsing the Expression of Interest bid and summarising the level of institutional commitment

Statements of support from partners and signatures (*limit 250 words per statement*)

Attach a two page Curriculum Vitae of proposed KE Hub Director (if known) and evidence of support from any partners.

Lead Applicant signature and contact details

The Creative Economy

The Creative Economy is made up of a landscape of activities and actors operating across several sectors and at significantly different scales of activity. These range from major corporations to micro businesses, from public sector organisations to for-profit businesses. Research indicates a strong symbiosis between the different elements in a complex ecology.

There is a growing research and policy literature which proposes taxonomies for the Creative Economy. Overall, the AHRC takes a relatively accommodating approach to definition. One description – developed by the team at AHRC – proposes a classification across four areas which may be helpful: Cultural Promotion and Preservation; Creative Activities; Creative Communications; and Creative Interfaces. (Please see the diagram below.) Activities delivered within these areas contribute crucially to economic growth and employment creation as well as to cultural enrichment and national wellbeing. They involve interactions and collaborations that cut across disciplines and sectors, ranging from knowledge exchange to user involvement; from creative clusters and networks to informal discussions and popular publications as set out below.

For the purposes of the AHRC KE Hubs Expressions of Interest call, this taxonomy is provided for an indicative stimulus only. You are free to ignore it. Successful bids will not necessarily conform to it. Still less do we anticipate that the Hubs will attempt to cover all or even a major part of it. A productive focus on relevant elements will be crucial.

The landscape of activities and actors in the Creative Economy

Cultural promotion & preservation	Creative activities	Creative communications	Creative interfaces
Museums, galleries, libraries & archives	Music	Advertising, branding & 'experience economy'	Creative interactions with business
Heritage services	Performing arts	Publishing & printed media	Creative R&D with science & technology
Arts & antiques markets	Visual, literary & graphic art	Film, television, radio, 'new media' & other broadcasting	Cultural production alongside new technologies
Archaeological work	Video & computer games		
	Architecture		

Exhibitions & festivals	Craft Design & fashion	Internet, social networking & other new media	Ethical interactions with technological advances Regulation Intellectual property
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