Briefing document

Open call for
creative commissions, in response to climate change and COP27

Overview

The British Council is inviting applications for Creative Commissions which bring together art, science and digital technology and offer innovative, interdisciplinary and inclusive responses to climate change. The Creative Commissions are collaborative between the UK and Egypt, taking place in the lead up to the United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP27), which Egypt is hosting in November 2022.

About the British Council

The British Council builds connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language.

We work in two ways – directly with individuals to transform their lives, and with governments and partners to make a bigger difference for the longer term, creating benefit for millions of people all over the world.

We help young people to gain the skills, confidence and connections they are looking for to realise their potential and to participate in strong and inclusive communities. We support them to learn English, to get a high-quality education and to gain internationally recognised qualifications. Our work in arts and culture stimulates creative expression and exchange and nurtures creative enterprise.

We connect the best of the UK with the world and the best of the world with the UK. These connections lead to an understanding of each other's strengths and of the challenges and values that we share. This builds trust between people in the UK and other nations which endures even when official relations may be strained.

We work on the ground in more than 100 countries.

Last year we reached over 75 million people directly and 758 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications.

Climate change and COP27

Looking after the planet requires understanding and empathy, collaboration and connections, imagination and innovation.

In our fourth survey of almost 40,000 young people across 36 countries climate change is perceived to be the most important issue to these young people (aged between 18 – 34).

Egypt will host the 27th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP27) in Sharm El Sheikh on 6 – 18 November 2022. Egypt will lead Africa in its determination to show its leadership in climate action through showcasing its contributions to a global movement to tackle climate change, its role in facilitating and mobilising action at scale, its vision for a just and sustainable future to its people and to the wider global population. The hope is that COP27 will be the turning point where the world came together and demonstrated the requisite political will to take on the climate challenge through concerted, collaborative and impactful action.

This Creative Commissions call is one of many activities the British Council is delivering in the run up to COP27. We are working with partners in the UK and Egypt to support the success and legacy of COP27 by using our global network to create opportunities for cooperation, dialogue and action which address the shared challenge of climate change.

This Creative Commissions call is a follow-on to the past Creative Commissions for Climate in the lead up to COP26. Find out more here: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/climate-connection/be-inspired/creative-commissions>

Programme brief

We are inviting collaborative applications in response to this open call from individuals and organisations across the UK and Egypt

We want these commissions to stimulate conversations and connections between the UK and Egypt, bringing together people, cultures and communities to understand each other’s perspectives and collaborate on creative responses and solutions towards climate change. We want to spark imagination and innovation, and inspire new ways of working, including through a digital-first approach.

We are looking for interdisciplinary and collaborative ways of working through these Creative Commissions – bringing together artists, creatives, scientists and technologists. We are particularly interested in collaborations between individuals and organisations of differing backgrounds who may not traditionally have had the chance to work together.

We welcome action-focused, interactive responses, which tackle difficult issues head on, push boundaries and are a catalyst for real change. This means thinking beyond a single artwork, event and/or digital moment, and instead focusing on mass participation and engagement, ideally leading to longer term movements and campaigns. We are interested in ideas that have high impact, sustainability, the potential to be scaled up, or those which can be shared globally using digital platforms and tools.

Climate change is everyone’s responsibility, and we all have a role to play. But we are also mindful that children and young people are the custodians of our future planet. We particularly welcome ideas which specifically engage young people (aged 18 – 24), recognising the importance of sharing knowledge and experiences across different ages and generations. When working with children and vulnerable adults, we take safeguarding seriously and expect all projects to meet the British Council standards.

We are also interested in foregrounding the voices of individuals and communities already experiencing the consequences of climate change in different settings. We want to see ideas grounded in lived experience, which connect with and draw upon credible scientific research.

As part of our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, we actively invite groups and communities who are underrepresented in climate change discussions to respond to this brief. This includes taking an inclusive approach to the development of your idea considering the audiences you want to reach. We expect to engage with individuals and organisations of different genders, ethnicities, sexualities, abilities and ages either directly through the commission – or indirectly through your project audiences. We are also interested in ideas that explore, interrogate, educate and respond to the connection between the environment and diversity, including gender equality and racial justice.

The Creative Commissions will be expected to report quantitative data every three months, including direct participation, audience reach, and online engagement. A narrative and financial report will be required at the end of the project, including activities, reach, impact, outcomes and actual spend.

Finally, we are looking to support low carbon solutions and environmentally friendly practice in project planning and delivery, as well as your choice of partners and suppliers.

Eligibility for the UK-Egypt Creative Commissions

* Applications must include at least one partner in the UK and one partner in Egypt. Applicants must be living in their respective country at the time of applying and for the duration of this project.
* Applicants can apply for up to £20,000 to realise their creative idea, and we are looking to support up to 5 projects. Applicants with in-kind or matched support are welcome, although this is not essential. Match funding cannot be provided through other British Council funded programmes.
* Applications should be jointly submitted and signed by all named collaborators. Either partner can lead on the proposal.
* Individuals, organisations and/or informal collectives/networks are all eligible to apply but should have demonstrable experience of managing similar projects and grants.
* Mutuality must be a central component to the international collaboration, which should be reflected through the project planning (including budget allocation), delivery and dissemination. This includes demonstrating how the non-UK partners or their audiences may benefit from showcasing opportunities, new networks and/or capacity building.
* We expect applications to embed principles of equality, diversity and inclusion through their core proposal and idea (including costs relating to captioning videos, using sign language interpretation or translating content).
* We are interested in new, original ideas in response to this brief. Existing projects and programmes will be ineligible. Exceptions apply for existing ideas which have reached a pilot or prototyping phase, but have not been realised publicly.
* Applicants will be expected to plan, design and realise their project from August 2022. Main activities can take place any time during the year, although we particularly welcome ideas which will be delivered during COP27.
* Applicants can use any platforms to showcase their project idea, but must provide detail on how this will be realised and confirm that agreements in principle are in place with host organisations, festivals, online sites, media partners etc.
* Applicants from a range of different sectors are welcome and encouraged. All outputs and responses should be innovative in their nature, demonstrating creativity in working across disciplines, including arts, science and digital technology.
* Applicants should support the ethos and values of this Creative Commission and where appropriate, have a demonstrable history of supporting environmentally friendly and low carbon ideas and initiatives. Applicants who are new to sustainable practice and want to include this in their businesses or work moving forward are encouraged to submit joint applications with those who have more experience in this area.
* Applicants should demonstrate that they have taken into consideration the local context in both countries, including climate change priorities. The concept or idea should address a specific need or issue in a creative and/or innovative way.
* Successful applicants will own the copyright of any work created but must grant the British Council, as the commissioning partner, free and unequivocal use of any arising outputs, which may include promotion of works through our digital channels or exhibiting works in the future.
* Successful applicants may be invited to take part in additional showcase opportunities and British Council alumni programmes in the future.
* Successful applicants will be required to maintain regular communication with the British Council, offering project updates and support the project monitoring and evaluation.
* Prior to contracting, and as part of the British Council’s delivery standards, the successful partners will need to pass due diligence requirements, including ethical and credit screening, and comply with safeguarding standards.

Selection criteria

Applications will be reviewed by a diverse panel of representatives from the British Council, along with guest panellists, representing a range of sectors.

Our assessment of successful applicants will be based on the following criteria:

* Big ideas – the project should take an interdisciplinary approach, combining arts, science and digital technology. The project should address key climate themes in line with COP26 outcomes and COP27 priorities, the Paris Agreement and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (25%)
* Collaboration – the partners involved and the nature of the collaboration, with a particular emphasis on the level of mutuality within the partnership. This includes demonstrating mutual benefit throughout the project cycle, including budget allocation (25%)
* Impact – the potential impact this Creative Commission will have on the partners and audiences involved, including estimated audience participation and engagement, as well as potential for additional showcasing, scaling up or further development beyond the scope of this commission. An understanding of the local context and climate change priorities is an asset (20%)
* Quality – the experience of the applicants in delivering high quality work in their respective field(s) and the integrity of any scientific contributions or analysis (15%)
* Budget – the extent to which costings are appropriately calculated, reflect good value for money, are relevant to the proposed approach and are distributed amongst partners (15%)

Applicants may be approached with clarification questions or to attend an interview with the panel. Applicants must be available to respond and/or attend an interview (conducted digitally) in line with the schedule below.

Key dates

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| Milestone | Date |
| Announcement of call/application window opens | Tuesday 28 June |
| Application deadline | Saturday 23 July 2022, 22.00 GMT/23.00 BST/00.00 Cairo Local Time |
| Clarification questions to applicants and interviews (as appropriate and if necessary)Due diligence and screening | w/c 25 July |
| Successful applicants informed and grant agreements issued | w/c 7 August 2022 |
| Project and activity window | September – November 2022 |
| Programme evaluation | December 2022 – January 2023 |

How to apply

Please submit your application by registering on the Submittable platform and using the online form [here](https://britishcouncil.submittable.com/submit/b5fcfea2-1070-4303-aa9b-454f60a986ac/creative-commissions-egypt-for-cop27)

Applications should be submitted by **Saturday 23 July, 22.00 hours (GMT)/23.00 (BST)/00.00 (Cairo time)**

Applications submitted after this date and time will not be considered by the reviewing panel.

If you have any questions about these commissions, please email cathy.costain@britishcouncil.org.eg and allow at least three working days for a response.

Applications can be submitted through the form in either written or video format, with a written budget. Applicants who may have additional access needs and would prefer to submit their application in another format should get in touch in advance. We will endeavour to do everything we can to accommodate any needs.

We look forward to receiving your application.