



HERA

Humanities in the European Research Area

Programme Specification:

Humanities as a Source of Creativity and Innovation

- 1. Overview of HERA and its objectives** – will be prepared by NWO
- 2. Development of HERA Joint Research Programmes** – will be prepared by NWO
- 3. Rationale for the programme**

General Objectives

Historically, critically and practically, creativity is a central term in the vocabulary of the arts and humanities. Implicitly or explicitly, it informs our value systems and our critical discourse; historically, it contributes to our sense of the periodization of culture; and practically, it defines the aims and aspirations not only of the creative and performing arts but of new thinking in almost any area of intellectual endeavour: science, medicine, engineering and technology would all lay legitimate claim to creativity as a central term of their research and development. And yet, despite its centrality, the nature of creativity – its defining conditions, its workings in different arenas, and its values – seem often to be assumed rather than critically understood.

In recent years, creativity has come to be linked almost formulaically in a new conjunction, 'creativity and innovation', which is proposed as a key driver of the economy. Not only in the 'creative industries', but also in business and industry more generally, creativity and innovation are seen as forces to be harnessed in the service of economic growth. Policy reports and publications such as the Lisbon Declaration (2000)

argue that *creativity* and *innovation* are central to progress and development, and the goal for Europe to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based community in the world by 2010 has put *innovation* at the top of the European research agenda.

This conjunction of creativity and innovation can be perceived both as a threat and as an opportunity. On the one hand, there is legitimate concern that the values of creativity – the imaginative leap, the risks of the genuinely new, the iconoclasm in the face of established conventions of thought – are tamed and instrumentalized when they are placed at the service of the economy. On the other hand, the very centrality of the conjunction offers arts and humanities research the opportunity for real interdisciplinarity, engaging with the ways in which the terms of creativity are being revalued by science, technology and the wider economy and bringing our own research to a better understanding of what it means to link creativity to innovation – culturally, socially and economically. It is the aim of this programme to seize this opportunity.

We welcome proposals that address creativity in all its aspects in the expectation that new research, whether it be disciplinary or interdisciplinary, into the processes and conditions of human creativity will add new understandings of the value systems of the humanities and the practices and conditions of the creative, performing and visual arts, and a much better understanding of how these values and processes might contribute to cultural, social and economic innovation. In particular, the programme will draw value from the collaboration between researchers in a range of European countries with different experiences of the creative industries, different models of the creative community or the 'creative city', and different histories of engagement in the agenda which links creativity and innovation.

Through this programme we will bring together researchers from arts and humanities disciplines across Europe in order to understand the issue of creativity and innovation and how humanities might contribute to creativity and innovation in society at large. It is expected that the programme will stimulate high quality research across the arts and humanities and encourage interdisciplinary collaboration in and beyond academia.

In achieving these objectives, the programme will:

- Provide new opportunity to European researchers to collaborate across countries and across disciplines and facilitate exchange of knowledge and expertise

- Generate new knowledge and develop new perspectives on creativity and innovation research
- Make a significant international impact in the field

Scientific state of the art

At one end of the spectrum, the question of creativity focuses on the relationship between the creative artist or creative ensemble and a creative output. It is a question of expressivity and agency which has preoccupied academics within various fields of arts and humanities research throughout the twentieth-century and into the twenty-first, and has been re-invented and re-articulated through the study of successive periods and aesthetic movements: renaissance, romanticism, modernism, structuralism, poststructuralism and postmodernism. With the erosion of the boundaries between high art and popular culture, and the growing significance of craft, applied arts, and new technologies the relationship between creativity, commerce and industrial production raises new theoretical and aesthetic questions. Added to this, of course, questions about creativity, expressivity and the role of the artist have not only preoccupied academic research but have been at the heart of many of the art movements of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

At the other end of the spectrum, creativity, now coupled with innovation, has become a question on which the wealth of nations is seen to depend. In the UK, a report by the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA), *Creating Growth: How the UK Can Create World Class Creative Businesses* (2006), estimated that the Creative Industries accounted for eight per cent of the UK economy – a total of £56.5 billion – with exports contributing £11.6 billion to the UK balance of trade in 2003. Globally, NESTA estimates that the global market value of the creative industries increased from \$831 billion in 2000 to \$1.3 trillion in 2005, with global revenues from cinema admissions alone amounting to \$25 billion http://www.nesta.org.uk/assets/pdf/creating_growth_full_report.pdf. This is clearly very big business, and economic, social and policy research has become a matter of national or regional priority in a number of territories as the economy shifts from production to consumption, and from manufacturing to services.

For arts and humanities research, the interesting questions may lie in the links which stretch from one end of the spectrum to the other, and which might tie together – perhaps in critical tension - familiar questions of creativity and expressiveness with new questions of creativity and innovation. In a 2001 paper, 'Cultural policy: rejuvenate or

wither', Tom O'Regan, Director of the Australian Key Centre for Cultural and Media Policy, follows David Throsby (*Economics and Culture*, Cambridge University Press, 2001) by posing a model comprising three concentric circles: the first circle consisting of traditional creative arts such as dance, theatre, literature, visual arts as well as new arts like video art, performance art, multimedia; the second consisting of industries such as television, publishing, film whose output is cultural but whose structure is industrial; and the third consisting of industries like advertising and tourism which exist outside the cultural sphere but whose outputs may have cultural dimensions.

<http://www.griffith.edu.au/ins/collections/proflects/oregan01.PDF>

Such a model, as O'Regan recognizes, has informed cultural policy and state intervention, dividing the field into different business models – from subsidy to free market competition. The danger of such a division into compartments is two-way: it may miss *both* the questions of creativity and culture which flow from the inner circle to the outer *and* the questions of innovation and entrepreneurship which may flow from the outer to the inner.

Some of these issues are addressed in work on the 'creative city' and the 'rise of the creative class' which Richard Florida addressed in his influential US 'national bestseller', *The Rise of the Creative Class* (Basic Books, 2002). While Florida's book has come under criticism, both for its data and its categories, it is suggestive in its identification of both the material and the intangible components which provide the environment within which a creative community flourishes: not only employment opportunities and technology, but also life style, social interaction and openness to diversity. In Europe such modeling had already been influential in regional policies since the 1980s, with studies such as John Myerscough's work on the economic importance of the arts in the regeneration of cities (see for example, Myerscough [1988], 'Measuring the economic and social impact of the arts: a review' <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/documents/publications/340.pdf>). In policy initiatives there has been a growing recognition of the significance of cultural amenities in attracting mobile middle- and upper-management to cities which had traditionally depended on a 'captive' industrial labour force. There is continuing scope for such work, tracing the workings of creativity through the various communities which make up an innovative and risk-taking regional or national culture. More particularly, there is scope for bringing the questions which arts and humanities researchers are most adept at addressing into a new alignment with the questions which are the specialist province of economists and policy researchers. In particular for humanistic research, some focus on the demand-side of culture and creativity might profitably adjust a balance which has been weighted heavily towards the supply-side.

A question which may have been lost in the research focus on economics and cultural policy formation concerns the *critical* function of creativity. However much we may regret its cultural pessimism, the accusation which Adorno and Horkheimer leveled against the cultural industries in 1944 still haunts us. The function of 'genuine art', they claimed, was to negate and challenge the alienation of advanced capitalism; the 'culture industry' merely extends the 'administrative rationality' of industrial production into the sphere of art and culture. The culture industries, in their analysis, deprive art of its critical function. Much of the thinking about cultural policy and creativity and innovation seems to confirm their suspicion: the value of creativity and innovation are defined as incremental and instrumental, adding value which enables social and economic benefits such as economic growth and social well-being rather than inherently valuable as challenges and provocations. Arts and humanities research tends to be most comfortable with an approach in which art, culture and creativity is valuable – and valued – for itself. It may be time for arts and humanities research to break free from this comfortable dichotomy, and to consider, for example, the complex relationship between an incremental paradigm in which creativity is placed at the service of innovation, and the critical paradigm associated with the great iconoclastic, experimental and avant garde movements of twentieth-century modernism which rebelled against orthodoxies, challenged social convention, and, arguably, changed the ways in which we saw the world. Are such historic movements purely historic or do they have something to tell us about change and innovation?

In the 2005 European Commission Working Document, 'The future of creative industries: implications for research policy' ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/foresight/docs/a4_eur21471_web2_final.pdf, the Commission identifies a set of twelve 'possible research needs'. Many of these are concerned with issues such as the impact of technologies, the promotion of the cultural industries, statistical indicators, etc., to which arts and humanities research (particularly humanities-based cultural policy research) might (and should) contribute, but which do not pose core questions or invite methodologies familiar to traditional humanistic research. There are, however, questions of cultural diversity, of definition and of education and training which are central to the arts and humanities research community, and, in particular, Question, no. 7, 'Understanding better the idea of creativity as a factor conducive to innovation', may be seen as the inspiration for this programme for Humanities in the European Research Area. It affords the possibility of a new perspective which complicates a purely incremental and instrumental relationship

between creativity and innovation, traces the terms of creativity from individual expressivity to public good (and back again), and brings to bear insights and research concerns which are at the heart of arts and humanities research.

European context and added values

Bringing an European dimension to this programme will provide added value to national research efforts in the area of creativity and innovation. The collaboration of researchers from across Europe will also build new expertise and produce new knowledge, which will strengthen European competitiveness in this area.

4. Research Topics

The programme is structured around three themes which raise a range of research questions. These are indicative questions and researchers are not required to answer a particular question or to work on a single theme. It is expected that some applicants may wish to address issues in more than one theme and may pose other questions. The scope of the programme is expected to be transnational in nature.

Whilst applications must be relevant to the arts and humanities we would welcome proposals across a range of disciplines, including the social sciences.

The themes have been identified following a consultative workshop in June 2007. Many of these themes are already being addressed in practice not only in the arts and humanities but in business, science and technology. The aim of the programme is to draw them together more systematically; to ground them in research; and to add value to the research by collaboration between researchers across Europe, developing fresh perspectives by bringing together different national experiences and research traditions.

A. Creative Values

Discussions about creativity and innovation are informed by a range of values - imaginative, spiritual, aesthetic, for example. Some may have particular national inflections while others are supra-national; some may be specific to the humanities, while many others will be shared by science, technology, industry, marketing. This theme examines our perceptions, understandings and views about creativity; how they have been formed; and how they are being re-formed. They might be addressed through a range of research questions, of which the following are abstract and indicative

examples. To have research value these questions would have to be rooted in historical and/or contemporary case studies.

- What do we mean by 'creativity', and how are its meanings shaped by different models of the creative process? Is a creative technologist creative in the same way as a creative artist? Are the terms of invention and experiment shared or different?
- What are the social attitudes to creativity and how are they formed historically and nationally? Is there anything to be learned about contemporary creativity and innovation from the workshops of the Renaissance or the historical conjunction of, purely for example, Einstein and Picasso?
- How is creativity distributed in terms of region (rural/urban), class, ethnicity, gender and sexuality?
- What happens to the values of creativity when they are adopted by business, the economy and society?

B. Creating Value

This theme examines the value which creativity brings to the individual and/or society and/or the economy. In particular, it offers the opportunity to interrogate the assumption that art and creativity are good in themselves, requiring no further justification. On the one hand, these assumptions underpin public subsidy and patronage for the arts; on the other hand, the absence of evidence makes it difficult to find a secure place for the arts on a scale of public policy priorities which also includes health, education, security and economic development. Many claims are made for the instrumental benefits which participation in the creative arts may bring to many socially desirable outcomes (benefits to health, for example, or to social cohesion), or for the importance of artistic creativity in affirming identities, whether communal or national. The evidence, however, is slender. This theme is intended to encourage rigorous research both on the value which human creativity might add to the individual, public and economic good through innovation. Importantly, it also offers the opportunity for innovative and interdisciplinary models of how research on the value of creativity and innovation might be conducted.

- What is the relationship between market values and creative values? What forms of resistance do creative values and creative practices pose to traditional economic models?

- What is the relationship between creative values and systems of intellectual property?
- Under what conditions does creativity lead to innovation and what are the barriers?
- What are the implications of the argument that art is a public good, and what is the evidence base for claims that art is good for the individual, and/or for communities and/or for society at large?
- What are the benefits of participation in creativity through the visual, literary and performing arts; how might these benefits be researched, and what evidence might be developed?
- What is the role of creativity and innovation in urban or rural regeneration? What is a 'creative community' or a 'creative city', and what robust evidence is there for their contribution to a 'creative economy'?
- In what ways are the creative industries either creative or industrial?

C. Creativity and Innovation in Practice

This theme examines creativity and innovation in practice in various environments, inviting research into appropriate comparative, interdisciplinary and practical models of how it comes into being and how it operates. In effect, research might pursue many of the same questions about value and values as those exemplified above, but with a specifically practical and empirical focus. Particular emphasis might be placed on national comparisons with a view to offering models of successful practice. In particular, the research might examine models of creative practice which lead to innovation either as an explicit aim or according to the law of unintended consequences, and consider the conditions which make them possible, or which make them difficult. For example:

- In what ways do new social formations, new technologies or new economic pressures and opportunities enable – or hinder - new links between creativity and innovation?
- Can creativity be taught and/or learned? What models of good practice are there for developing and supporting creativity and encouraging innovation?
- What are the European models of a creative community or a creative city? What are the conditions which define and enable them?
- How can communities who make creative works and those who study them come together to work effectively and innovatively?
- What are the political and social conditions under which some forms of creativity

are encouraged and preserved while others are suppressed, ignored or destroyed? What are the ethical considerations, stated or tacit, that lie behind these decisions?

5. Networking and knowledge transfer

By providing networking opportunities, we will promote effective engagement and transfer of knowledge and understanding between stakeholders in the creative and cultural sectors, in the public sector, in business and into society in general.

Researchers are also encouraged to work with colleagues from beyond academia to develop practical solutions for increasing creativity and innovation. We expect that the resulting research and other outputs will be relevant beyond the immediate academic sphere, to the creative communities and wider non-academic audiences. Applicants should therefore be addressing issues of collaborations and knowledge exchange, especially focusing on the particular contribution that arts and humanities can make. It is important that the applicant demonstrate the potential use of the research beyond academia and the potential impact of the research, in social, cultural or economic terms.

Some concrete examples of potential use of research beyond academia include:

- Contributing to public awareness of a specific issues in the field of arts and humanities
- Making research useful in a commercial and cultural project or in regional, national or international initiative
- Informing regional, national or international future policies
- Improving the quality of tourism.

6. Collaboration beyond the HERA network – will be prepared by ESF

7. Programme structure and management – will be prepared by ESF

8. Instructions for outline proposals – will be prepared by ESF