

A Global AI Agenda for the Cultural and Creative Industries

Global Creative Economy Council

11 key actions

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**Creative Industries
Policy and Evidence Centre**

Led by
 Newcastle University | Business School

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The Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (Creative PEC) works to support the growth of the UK's creative industries through the production of independent and authoritative evidence and policy advice. Led by Newcastle University, with the Royal Society of Arts and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, Creative

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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.

www.britishcouncil.org

About the Global Creative Economy Council

The Global Creative Economy Council (GCEC) brings together academics, practitioners, policy professionals and investors from five continents to identify and discuss emerging trends of global significance in creative economy practice and policy. It provides inclusive perspectives on global

policy issues that span both Global South and Global North, and consider ideas for transnational policies and standards.

The GCEC is a joint initiative between Creative PEC and British Council.

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Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) has long been employed in the cultural and creative industries, particularly in content recommendation and digital distribution, as well as in certain areas of production. However, the rapid deployment of large language models and other generative AI tools has dramatically reshaped the cultural landscape by bringing AI into content creation on a massive scale.

This shift has generated both opportunities and challenges across all creative sectors and extends to virtually all countries worldwide. Yet, the sheer pace of these transformations has, so far, prevented the development of effective and coordinated responses. As a result, countries across the Global North and South are often addressing these issues in fragmented ways, limiting possibilities for knowledge sharing and, in some cases, giving rise to regulatory arbitrage and globally incoherent policy frameworks.

In this context, the need to articulate a comprehensive, forward-looking strategy has become urgent. The Global Creative Economy Council (GCEC) has therefore undertaken a process of research and consultation with representatives from a wide range of sectors and regions, with a view to delineating shared priorities, identifying key gaps and outlining core directions.

Building on the 11 points of the Global Agenda for the Cultural and Creative Industries published in December 2021, which has since become a widely recognised reference framework, the GCEC now presents a proposal for a Global AI Agenda for the Cultural and Creative Industries. This strategy is likewise structured around 11 key actions, ensuring continuity with the underlying principles of the original Global Agenda while addressing the specific challenges raised by recent technological advances. It should be noted that the order of presentation of these 11 actions does not imply any hierarchy or ranking; all should be regarded as equally important, interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

The AI Agenda is conceived as a set of principles and strategic actions to guide the design of concrete public policies to be adopted by governments in the Global South and North alike, while remaining relevant to private sector actors and civil society stakeholders. Although new trends, opportunities and challenges will inevitably emerge as the technological environment evolves, these principles and actions have been selected for their enduring relevance.

1 Invest in AI Skills

The GCEC calls on governments at local, national and regional levels to make sustained investment in AI skills across the cultural and creative sectors, ensuring that artists, creators and cultural professionals are able to master AI tools relevant to their practices. Sector-specific AI competence should be strengthened through tailored approaches adapted to the concrete needs of fields such as music, audiovisual production, visual arts, publishing, performing arts and cultural heritage.

Such investment should be grounded in a lifelong learning perspective, combining continuous upskilling

with targeted reskilling programs for mid-career creatives in response to technological change, as well as training and education for those entering the workforce and for freelancers.

Governments should also promote interdisciplinary education that bridges the arts, humanities and computer science, as well as the development of foundational skills, including transversal competences that are increasingly central to creative work in the AI era, such as critical thinking, adaptability, collaboration, experimentation, leadership and problem-solving.

2 Promote AI Literacy and Awareness

Alongside efforts to support the mastering of AI tools and the development of skills, the GCEC calls on policymakers to place AI literacy and awareness at the center of public action. AI literacy policies should aim to foster a shared and accessible understanding of how AI systems function, their limits and risks, and the principles that frame their use. These initiatives should foster awareness of transparency and explainability requirements, relevant regulatory approaches and stakeholder responsibilities.

For the general public, the GCEC emphasises broad AI literacy initiatives aimed at strengthening understanding

and critical judgment. Priorities include the ability to recognise AI-generated or manipulated content, assess information authenticity, identify privacy and data risks, and engage with AI technologies in a responsible manner.

The GCEC further recommends targeted AI literacy initiatives for cultural policymakers and public institutions. Such efforts should enhance strategic capacity and foster a clear understanding of how AI systems affect creative value chains, including how added value is distributed, their impact on content, data, IP and cultural diversity, and ways to address potential harmful effects.

3 Nurture AI-Driven Entrepreneurship and Innovation

The GCEC urges governments to support AI-driven entrepreneurship and innovation across creative industries by ensuring equitable provision of indispensable AI tools. Public policies should facilitate low-cost and non-discriminatory access to AI infrastructures, while adapting financing instruments and fiscal incentives to the specific innovation cycles of creative AI.

In a context where generative AI is reshaping the economic dynamics of cultural sectors, targeted incubation and acceleration programs tailored to the creative industries are essential to align AI technologies with concrete entrepreneurial needs. These initiatives should provide comprehensive support, including

technical adaptation, compliance guidance and access to strategic partners, to facilitate the transformation of innovative ideas into viable market outcomes. Pilot projects should be encouraged, alongside targeted backing for research and development, to enable experimentation and drive creative AI innovation.

The GCEC also emphasises the labor dimension of AI-driven innovation. Policies should support creative professionals whose activities are most affected by AI adoption, through protection measures and transition support. At the same time, priority should be given to approaches that expand human creative capabilities rather than simply automating existing tasks.

4 Unlock the Potential of Intellectual Property (IP) in the AI Age

The GCEC calls on governments to take the necessary measures in the field of IP to harness the full economic potential of creative content in the context of AI, while safeguarding the rights and remuneration of creators and rightsholders. This includes the establishment of clear authorisation and licensing mechanisms for AI training, grounding, fine-tuning and other uses, as well as support for IP marketplaces that facilitate lawful access to content and data. Furthermore, transparency requirements should ensure that the use of creative content for AI purposes is properly disclosed.

Governments should also address the growing circulation of synthetic content within digital environments. This may involve the introduction of labeling requirements for AI-generated content, enabling users to distinguish between human-created content (with or without the assistance of AI tools) and purely synthetic works with no real human contribution. In addition, greater legal clarity is needed regarding the copyright status of synthetic outputs.

5 Foster Diverse and Inclusive Creative Ecosystems

Governments should foster diverse and inclusive creative ecosystems through their AI policy frameworks. Many AI systems reproduce structural biases, including limited linguistic diversity and the marginalisation of local narratives, reducing the visibility of minorities, Indigenous cultures and gender-diverse perspectives.

Public action should prioritise measures to mitigate bias across AI development and use, while preserving and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions. This includes sustained action to strengthen local content creation and improved discoverability of local and minority content, as well as targeted support for grassroots cultural initiatives led by communities themselves. Policies should actively promote

representation of diverse cultures, languages and narratives in datasets and models, and establish governance mechanisms that ensure meaningful participation of underrepresented groups.

Special attention should be given to Indigenous expressions and protocols. AI policies should recognise Indigenous rights to self-determination, narrative sovereignty and cultural continuity, and support Indigenous-led and locally owned AI projects. Culturally appropriate safeguards are essential to protect traditional knowledge, ensuring that inclusion in AI systems does not result in extraction, misappropriation or loss of control over cultural heritage.

6 Protect Rights and Human Dignity

The GCEC calls on governments to use all available measures to protect human rights and dignity from harms associated with and amplified by AI. As AI systems become increasingly embedded in everyday life, public action should prevent harassment, abuse, reputational harm and other forms of injury, with particular attention to children and young users of digital platforms. Transparency obligations should apply to AI systems, including requirements for clear disclosure of AI-generated content.

Specific safeguards must be put in place to address deepfakes, impersonation and other forms of identity

misuse. Governments should strengthen the protection of personality and image rights in AI-generated content, including measures against unauthorised replication of voice and creative style. Protection of personal data and privacy also remains essential in this context.

Within the creative economy, governments should promote the responsible use of AI technologies. This includes protecting traditional cultural practices, recognising the right to create and practice culture without the use of AI, and equally recognising the right to use AI as a creative tool under ethical conditions.

7 Strengthen Digital and AI Infrastructure

The GCEC encourages governments to strengthen digital and AI infrastructure for the creative sectors in order to address structural, territorial and sectoral asymmetries. Persistent disparities between the Global North and the Global South, as well as within countries between major urban centers and underserved regions, risk concentrating AI-enabled creative capacity in a limited number of locations.

Public action should prioritise reliable connectivity beyond metropolitan areas and equitable access to computing power, software and digital systems for

all stakeholders, including creators, SMEs, cultural institutions and the public. Cybersecurity investment is also essential to ensure resilient digital environments in an era increasingly shaped by AI.

Infrastructure policy must likewise address AI sovereignty. Excessive dependence on a small number of dominant providers can reinforce market concentration. In this context, support for open and interoperable AI models and standards, as well as responsible open data policies, can play a useful complementary role.

8 Make Creative AI Environmentally Sustainable

The GCEC calls on governments to integrate environmental sustainability into creative AI policies. This includes developing global indicators and assessment frameworks to better understand the environmental footprint of AI systems, while allowing flexibility to reflect national circumstances. Public action should promote green and low-carbon AI, with attention to energy consumption as well as the use of water, minerals and other critical resources, in alignment with climate objectives and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Policies should encourage the deployment of resource-efficient AI solutions through targeted incentives.

Particular emphasis should be placed on task-specific and domain-adapted AI systems, such as small language models and locally deployed solutions.

Governments should also support shared computing infrastructures that limit redundant development and reduce environmental impact. In parallel, sustainable procurement criteria for AI tools should be promoted within cultural institutions, ensuring coherence between creative AI strategies and national environmental and climate policies.

9 Invest in Research and Knowledge

The GCEC urges governments to increase investment in research and knowledge production on AI in the creative sectors. Effective policy requires comparative and forward-looking evidence on how AI is reshaping creative ecosystems across countries, regions, regulatory contexts and market structures.

Public action should support data collection and research to identify structural gaps and emerging AI trends. Continuous monitoring is essential to inform anticipatory policy responses, including in areas such as IP, labor dynamics, platform governance and new forms of cultural production.

Systematic mapping of AI use across each creative sub-sector is critical, with attention to differences between

large firms and SMEs, building on initiatives such as the Creative PEC's Creative Business Panel. Public funding should also support the documentation of best practices in AI adoption, such as fair remuneration models and data governance approaches. The development of standardised indicators and metrics, combined with structured knowledge exchange at local, national and international levels, can support informed and coordinated policy development.

Public agencies involved in cultural statistics should be encouraged to investigate how AI can be employed to enhance data collection, particularly in its ability to capture informality, scale data collection and integrate diverse data sources in ways that traditional methods cannot.

10 Foster Local Collaboration

The GCEC emphasises the importance of advancing local collaboration around AI and the creative industries. The impact of AI on culture is shaped within regional ecosystems where public institutions, creative actors, researchers, startups and communities interact. Policy frameworks should therefore improve coordination between cultural, digital, education, labor and innovation agendas, ensuring closer alignment across public agencies.

Creative industries should be actively engaged in the design of AI strategies and regulatory frameworks. Their participation would help ensure that technological

development supports a more diverse and dynamic cultural ecosystem.

Public action should also reinforce regional creative clusters and innovation hubs that connect cultural organisations, AI startups and research institutions. Furthermore, partnerships between universities and creative industries are essential to support knowledge transfer and the adaptation of AI tools to local contexts. In addition, governments should support multi-stakeholder forums and encourage the participation of communities, particularly in underserved areas, to foster inclusive and locally grounded AI-driven development.

11 Advance International Cooperation

The GCEC calls on governments to strengthen international cooperation at the intersection of AI and culture through coordinated policy frameworks, consistent with multilateral instruments and recommendations, including those of UNESCO. International collaboration helps promote a more balanced understanding of how regulation, innovation and economic competitiveness can be pursued in parallel. Indeed, countries can work together to advance a human-centered approach to AI that integrates social and cultural objectives alongside economic ones.

Governments should cooperate on AI and creativity through North–South and South–South collaboration to support policy learning and the exchange of best practices. Such cooperation should also advance shared regulatory approaches, including on IP, as well as capacity building, technology transfer and initiatives to reduce infrastructure imbalances between countries. More broadly, international cooperation can enable the development of mechanisms to strengthen transparency and accountability of transnational AI actors whose commercial and political influence increasingly transcends national jurisdictions.

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Italy/UK

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(Deputy Chair)
UK

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Singapore/India

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Canada

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Kenya

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Argentina/Italy

Pearl Wang Haoqing
China

Avril Joffe
South Africa

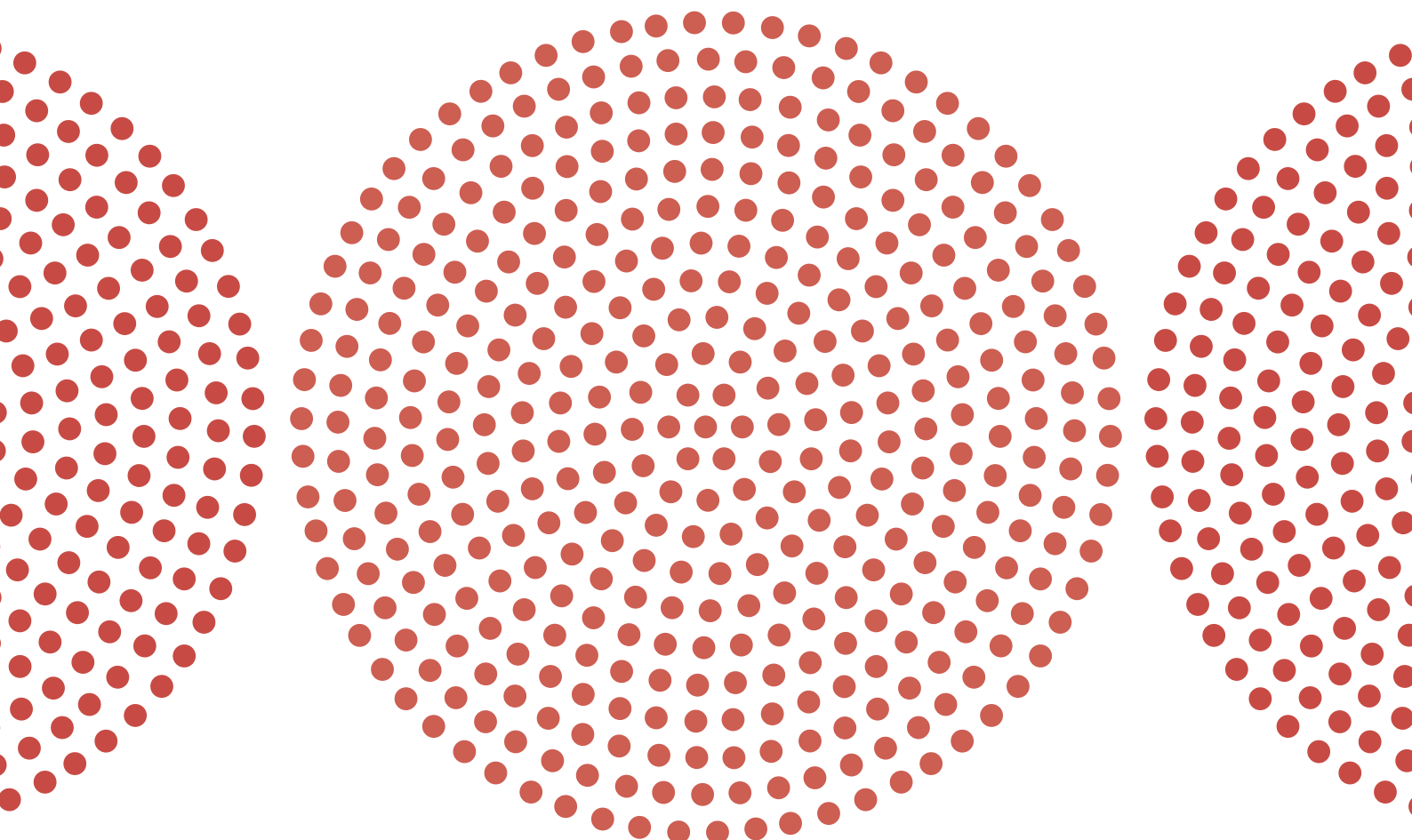
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UK

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Newcastle University, 2 The Helix, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE4 5TG
The Royal Society of Arts, 8 John Adam Street, London, WC2N 6EZ

