

Banja Luka Creative

19-20 March 2024 - Dom omladine, Banja Luka

In times of rapid economic and technological changes, cities around the world are striving to gain an international reputation as attractive hubs for investors, tourists, and skilled workforce. Improvement of infrastructure, creation of a more appealing environment for the citizens and the strategies to attract and keep the most successful are key priorities for urban development nowadays.

However, it cannot be denied the most important ingredient in making a city attractive is its soul – the creatives and the artists working in it. Furthermore, in the modern world, the creative sector is not merely seen as an entertainment industry but is also considered to be one of the key engines of development and a significant contributor to the economy. That's why many governments around the world are bringing forth policies and incentives for this sector to grow.

In the last couple of years, we have witnessed tremendous changes in Banja Luka. Economic growth, new infrastructure, and dynamic society have become more prominent and gained recognition and visibility. In order to integrate and develop the creative sector further, the City Council recognised the opportunity and has taken several actions such as building two new hubs the House of Milanović and the MMVI Shelter. Banja Luka has been recognised as the City of Music by UNESCO.

In the UK, the sector has been fostered for more than three decades, and its impact and contribution to the national GDP have been closely monitored. However, to keep pace with the ongoing advancements, the sector and government bodies are constantly reframing the approach to the sector development.


This two-day event will provide a platform for professionals from the sector to compare their experiences and methods, examine good practices, successes, and failures to set the ground for closer relations and collaboration within the field between Banja Luka and the UK.

The City of Banja Luka and the British Council are inviting professionals (creative producers, entrepreneurs, thinkers) from Bosnia and Herzegovina working in the fields of film, music, gaming, tech, architecture, design and fashion, theatre, visual arts, cultural heritage, interdisciplinary to take part in the meeting and contribute to the development of the joint strategy recommendations.

British Council's Creative Economy Programme in the Western Balkans

Globally, our Creative Economy programme focuses on policy, research, and advocacy of the sector, and on capacity building for creative professionals and policymakers. We build networks and support collaboration for long-term impact, mutual benefit, and greater international understanding. By working with policymakers, we support their work at a strategic level, ensuring the conditions are in place for

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creative individuals and organisations to grow, reach their potential and make a relevant, sustainable change.

In the Western Balkans, these goals are achieved through two main activities: Sector development events and exposure to UK expertise through Delegations. Our principal approach in the field is to act as a facilitator in a) particular sectors (gaming, film and music industries, design, fashion, cultural heritage creative economy...), b) intersectoral dialogues and c) policy development efforts through engaging with decision and policymakers (ministries, various relevant government and sector agencies, local authorities, Chambers of commerce, and Tourist organisations)

Sector development events are, by default, delivered within the existing and emerging platforms in the Western Balkans (Creative Economy conferences, sector-specific gatherings, and festivals). Through these events, we are supporting sector development by exposure to UK practices and participation of UK experts in relevant fields. Besides, those events are used for sector representatives to build networks locally, regionally and with the UK aiming to define sector needs on the policy level.

In 2023/4 we will deliver our work through five platforms:

- Creative Expo Skopje, North Macedonia (November 2023)
- Sarajevo Creative Summit, Bosnia and Herzegovina (December 2023)
- Tirana Creative Encounters, Albania (January 2024)
- Banjaluka Creative, Bosnia and Herzegovina (March 2024)
- CIM Forum Kotor, Montenegro (June 2024)

Banja Luka Creative– CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

DAY 1 – 19 MARCH 2024

10.00	Welcome and opening remarks
10.30	Conference introduction British Council and City Council Banja Luka
11.00 – 13.00	The Concept of Creative Economy and UK Overview
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 17.00	Defining policy and priority practices recommendations

Sector working groups

The afternoon sessions are dedicated to four priority areas of intervention. The first part of each working group will present some successful examples and practices in Banja Luka, the Western Balkans region and the UK. In the second part of these sessions, all conference participants will work jointly in identifying sector/theme priorities which will be presented in Day 2. Each of the working groups will have the task to address cross-cutting topics such as gender equality, diversity, inclusion, and sustainability.

Working group 1 **New cultural infrastructure**

With the new developments in our societies and technology, the culture needs new infrastructure and new economic models on which they operate. Similarly, to the cities in the UK, the city of Banja Luka invested and is planning to invest in new spaces for culture. To make them successful those venues must reflect the community's needs. This working group will investigate some of the existing models in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the UK. In the discussion part, each of the participants will get the opportunity to join the discussion and help define eight to ten priority areas in the design of future actions.

Working group 2 **City Identity – Integrating the cultural offer into the city's brand**

As the cities are rapidly changing, they are becoming home to numerous new identities. Equally to heritage and traditions, new identities are often an attraction for tourists or future citizens who are looking for ways to realise their careers. How can a cultural offer contribute to a city's brand? How the institutions such as the Museum of Contemporary Arts of Republika Srpska and the National Theatre or festivals such as Demo Fest, the cultural synonyms of Banja Luka manage to reach their wide audiences? How other new developments and initiatives can add to the reputation of the city? What are the opportunities and obstacles in attracting new audiences? How to improve cultural tourism development? Why innovation is so important in a city's identity in newer days? This working group will offer some answers to these questions.

Working group 3 **Banja Luka – The City of Music**

Recognizing the crucial role of cultural and creative industries, particularly in music, video production, multimedia, and performing arts, the city of Banja Luka has embarked on an innovative journey. Understanding the importance of investing in infrastructure to support these sectors, the city actively pursued membership in UNESCO Creative Cities Network, focusing on music. This strategic decision highlights Banja Luka's dedication to nurturing a vibrant environment for artistic expression and innovation. By joining this prestigious network, the city aims to access global expertise, share best practices, and create opportunities for collaboration, ultimately solidifying its position as a dynamic cultural centre and driving sustainable growth in the creative industries.

This working group aims to identify how the title of City of Music can contribute to sustainable growth, ensuring inclusive access to music education, cultivating international collaborations, integrating music into urban development, and promoting community engagement.

Working group 4 **Technology! Technology! Technology!**

85 per cent of jobs that will exist in 2030 haven't been invented yet. How does the creative sector cope with this fact? What are the skills that exist and where does the creative sector want to get to? This working group aims to analyse the potential of Banja Luka. What are the opportunities for the existing so-called traditional art forms like music and performing arts in general, visual arts or film? Do the developments in technology threaten them?

On the other hand, the IT industry is in constant need of storytellers and artists from various art forms. Why is gaming considered to be art? Join the workgroup and have your say!

Day 2 - 20 March 2024

10.00 – 11.00 **Working group presentations**

11.00 – 13.00 **Shared agenda in the creative sector**

In the past, the changes in policy and practices happened when various sectors in the creative sector acted together. In this session conference participants will take part in a joint discussion and will use the working groups recommendations as a starting point. The objective is to define five key shared requirements towards the policymakers.

13.00 – 14.00 Lunch

14.00 – 16.00 **This is what I do**

Series of 10-minute presentations introducing projects and organisations from Bosnia and Herzegovina and the UK.

20.00 – 22.00 **Daddy G (MASSIVE ATTACK) – DJ SET**