1 WELCOME and INTRODUCTION

DRAFT ORIENTATIONS WP 2026-27
EXPECTED IMPACT & MAIN EXPECTED OUTCOMES

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Innovative Research on European Cultural Heritage and Cultural and Creative Industries - building our future from the past

Strategic plan 2025-27, expected impact

Proposals for topics under this destination should set out a credible pathway to contributing to the following expected impact:

> The **full potential of cultural heritage, arts and cultural and creative industries** (CCIs) as drivers of both **sustainable innovation** and a **European sense of belonging** is realised through a **continuous engagement with society, citizens and economic sectors**.

Research and innovation actions will support the generation of new knowledge, solutions and technologies that strengthen the innovation potential of cultural heritage, arts and cultural and creative industries, contributing to sustainable growth, competitiveness, resilience and job creation.

DRAFT ORIENTATIONS WP 2026-27
EXPECTED IMPACT & MAIN EXPECTED OUTCOMES

CULTURAL HERITAGE

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Policy context

- Leverage culture and creativity to foster and facilitate a human-centred, desirable, fair and sustainable approach to the digital and clean transitions

- Understand and facilitate the contributions of culture and creativity to bolster societal resilience, foster social inclusion and tackle regional inequalities

- Explore and boost the societal value of cultural heritage and the arts, including supporting better, wider and more equal access to Europe's cultural heritage and promoting its cultural and linguistic diversity

- Understand and leverage the contributions of European cultural and creative industries to a global Europe

- Support bottom-up impact-driven collaborative research through open call topic(s)

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CULTURAL HERITAGE

Innovative Research on European Cultural Heritage and Cultural and Creative Industries - building our future from the past

FRAME Ongoing initiatives + forthcoming under WP 2025

European Partnership for Resilient Cultural Heritage

European Collaborative Cloud for Cultural Heritage

Culture and Creativity Driven European Innovation Ecosystem

Increase awareness of heritage; European sense of belonging; solutions for green treatment methods and materials to preserve, conserve, and restore cultural heritage assets; regeneration and life extension of heritage buildings; Economic growth and job creation; sustainable business models; cross-European impact; economic, social, and environmental sustainability; preservation of traditional craftsmanship; resilience of the cultural and creative industries (CCIs); transparency in the music ecosystem; accessibility to cultural experiences; modernization of the performing arts sector; creation of immersive video games that promote empathy and understanding of museums; human-centred digital transition; Competitiveness and sustainability; Cultural influence; Resilience in the digital era; Cross-sectoral digital integration; Prevention of illicit trafficking of cultural heritage; CCIs in non-urban areas; Competitiveness of the European film industry, Transformation of public libraries in the digital age; Visibility of European arts, culture and EU priorities; International access to the European cultural heritage and arts; Multilevel cooperation (local, national, European); Strengthening CCI presence worldwide; Identity preservation; Youth engagement in language policies; Empowering linguistic communities

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IDEAS for research areas to develop

3 types

- Complement previous actions with new perspectives (e.g. based on new Commission priorities)
- Consolidate and strengthen previously launched key initiatives (CH cloud, CCI Platform)
- Strengthen long-term impact of actions, incl. possible synergies with other initiatives like the new EIT Culture and Creativity KIC

Characteristics

- May become standalone topics or components of larger topics
- Cover several of the main expected outcomes, thus contributing to the expected impact
- Incorporate many of the inputs and ideas received from PC-delegates and co-creating DGs

Keep in mind

- Need to formulate fewer, larger and more open topics than in previous work programmes

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CULTURAL HERITAGE

Innovative Research on European Cultural Heritage and Cultural and Creative Industries - building our future from the past

OVERVIEW of possible research areas to develop

A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness

1. Artistic intelligence to address challenges, enhance soft skills and boost productivity and competitiveness
2. A consolidated culture and creativity driven innovation ecosystem
3. Creative startups fostering disruptive innovation
4. AI integration in CCSI work practice: catalyzing innovation and competitiveness through fruitful collaboration
5. Towards a fair and transparent market for cultural content in the era of gen AI and other emerging tech
6. AI4Creatives: supporting the embracing of a fair AI revolution
7. Crafting routes to a circular economy
8. Creative alliances: Fostering global partnerships in cultural policies and CCIs

Supporting people, strengthening our societies and our social model

9. Culture and CCIs boosting wellbeing and mental health
10. Re-imagining the creative economy: CCSI and the social economy
11. Beyond the horizon: Cultural heritage shaping future technologies
12. Implementing sustainable cultural tourism policies and strategies
13. Societal impact of culture and cultural heritage, including addressing access for young people and gender inequalities
14. Strategies for safeguarding & transmission of intangible cultural heritage
15. Safeguarding linguistic diversity in Europe
16. Countering illicit trafficking of cultural goods

Transversal: Open topics

European Commission

Overview of possible research areas

A NEW PLAN FOR EUROPE'S SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY AND COMPETITIVENESS

European Commission

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CCIs

1

Artistic intelligence to address challenges, enhance soft skills and boost productivity and competitiveness

TENTATIVE EXPECTED OUTCOMES	• The potential of art/science collaborations and their capacity for spurring innovation and devising actions addressing societal challenges is understood • Guidance, toolkits and methodologies are offered to policymakers at all levels. They clarify the span of possible interventions, their applicability to diverse fields and contexts, and propose evaluation tools. • Frameworks for the integration of the arts and creative practices to enhance soft skills within various industries are developed • Strategies for propelling cross disciplinary creativity-driven innovative solutions become available • By leveraging creativity, the EU boosts productivity and enhances competitiveness, while improving the employment conditions of artists and creatives
RESEARCH GAPS / RATIONALE	• Inter-, multi-, trans-disciplinary and lateral, "out-of-the-box" thinking are essential to confront today's complex challenges. Research-based arts and arts-based research are by now recognised as avenues of innovation on a par with scientific research. • Need to develop knowledge and understanding for the potential of art-science collaborations, fostering them across a range of policy areas and specific tools for evaluation. • In parallel, engagement with creative practices can enhance transversal skills like creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, emotional intelligence, highlighted by Draghi as crucial for productivity and competitiveness.

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CCIs

2

A consolidated culture and creativity driven innovation ecosystem

TENTATIVE EXPECTED OUTCOMES	• A thriving culture and creativity driven European innovation ecosystem, contributing to prosperity and competitiveness at local, regional, national and European levels • Deepened knowledge on the potential societal contributions of such ecosystems and established effective measures to foster them
RESEARCH GAPS / RATIONALE	• Under Horizon Europe, substantial investments have been done to establish a culture and creativity driven European innovation ecosystem • An action to distil the key outcomes of these efforts into a long-term sustainable innovation and competitivity driving platform could be beneficial

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CCIs

(3) **Creative startups fostering disruptive innovation**

TENTATIVE EXPECTED OUTCOMES	• Challenges and barriers faced by innovative creative startups are better understood • Practical support mechanisms for creative startups that allow scaling up are devised and tested. • Pilot projects are designed, incubated and/or prepared for funding • The number of creative startups able to scale up and contributing to disruptive innovation are significantly increased • Contributions to the visibility and recognition of the innovative power of Europe's creative startups and CCIs • EU competitiveness and innovation increases
RESEARCH GAPS / RATIONALE	• CCIs feature a high rate of startups capable of engaging with AI and other cutting-edge technologies (Single Market Report). • However, CCIs also face specific challenges often hindering scaling up (eg access to finance, skill shortages, etc). The EIT KIC on C&C started and is gathering evidence on this. • CCIs can stimulate innovation across multiple sectors. The path toward recognising and enhancing such impact needs consolidation. • There is the need to bolster the creative startup ecosystem, positioning it as key in broader innovation agendas while ensuring fair working conditions. • How can the set up for EU funding (EIC, EIB,EIT, related programmes) better foster creative startups? How can venture capital be attracted to EU creative startups?

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CCIs

4 | **AI integration in CCSI work practice: catalyzing innovation and competitiveness through fruitful collaboration**

TENTATIVE EXPECTED OUTCOMES	• Frameworks, capacity and tools for AI integration into CCSI core practices and workflows • AI-enabled product-development through federated data sources, digital infrastructures, tools, and methods • CCSI reduce production times and costs and increase market reach. New job categories. • Creators and cultural professionals benefit from innovative AI empowered solutions and services based on ethical principles and values, and fostering fair remuneration and revenue allocation. • By mastering ethical AI in creative workflows, innovative cultural and creative expressions are fostered, diversity and values are preserved. • CCSI and the tech industry work in cooperation to overcome current challenges and experiment in key application areas.
RESEARCH GAPS / RATIONALE	• Need to harness AI's potential for CCSIs to ensure relevance, innovation and competitiveness on a global scale. Integrating AI solutions enables focusing on high value activities to boost creativity and productivity. • Establishing a robust policy dialogue on AI in culture and creativity can help address challenges and ensure a balanced approach to AI. AI tools based on ethical standards can enhance cultural diversity and ensure representation and inclusivity. • There is a need to enable environments conducive to the development of services and products that respond to the needs of the cultural and creative sectors, leverage opportunities and address potential risks posed by AI to cultural diversity.

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CCIs

5 Towards a fair and transparent market for cultural content in the era of gen AI and other emerging tech

TENTATIVE EXPECTED OUTCOMES	• Policymakers and the cultural and creative sectors gain grounded insights on the impact of AI and other emerging technologies on the creative content market and related services and on the public's perception of cultural products and services. • The market for cultural and creative content becomes fairer and more transparent through the development and assessment of innovative solutions and standards to detect AI-generated or manipulated content. Citizens benefit from easy-to-use tools allowing them to easily detect AI-generated and manipulated content. • IP mechanisms and other models and legal frameworks are leveraged to ensure creators are remunerated fairly and creative work is safeguarded. • Policy frameworks are available governing cultural considerations in AI developments and usage. Insights guide EU in maintaining their global leadership in creativity and innovation.
RESEARCH GAPS / RATIONALE	• Need to understand the socio-economic impact of AI and emerging technologies in the area of culture and creativity and to develop adequate policy and legal frameworks to address this gap. • Need to increase accuracy, robustness and standardisation, and to reduce shortcomings of currently available technologies aimed at detecting AI-manipulated content. • Need to explore how the EU legal framework and IP mechanisms can be leveraged to enhance creative work and ensure effective content moderation

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CCIs

6

AI4Creatives: supporting the embracing of a fair AI revolution

TENTATIVE EXPECTED OUTCOMES	• The cultural and creative sectors and industries have access to a virtual European AI competence center for CCSI • The sector is equipped with common services, know-how and tools needed to drive innovation and competitiveness and to further integrate AI into the core practices and workflows of CCSI. This includes training programmes and shared resources. • A strong network of CCSI professionals, researchers, AI tech companies, and startups focusing on R&I is established. • AI applications are developed in line with EU values and principles.
RESEARCH GAPS / RATIONALE	• Siloed approaches: often creatives and CCSI projects work in their own silos without taking advantage of economies of scale. • There is a need to coordinate, support and disseminate the outcomes from Horizon Europe projects and other EU funded projects in this field, provide commons services and increase their impact.

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CCIs

7

Crafting routes to a circular economy

TENTATIVE EXPECTED OUTCOMES	• The cultural dimension of circular economy is understood. The way craft practices can contribute to and benefit from circular economy principles is brought into focus. • Strategies for ensuring the sustainability of crafts through innovation, and sustainable innovation through making and crafts are developed. • Open innovation principles are experimented in craft businesses and practices, potentially leading to new collaborative models.
RESEARCH GAPS / RATIONALE	• Craftmanship is key part of the value chain of creative and high-end industries, from fashion to design. Contemporary artistic crafts leverage traditional knowledge and artisan's manual ability to create quality functional objects. • Crafts speak the language of sustainability and master principles of resource management and circular economy thinking. • Along with other cultural and creative industries, crafts can develop innovative solutions for circular economy and sustainable innovation.

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CCIs

(8) **Creative alliances: Fostering global partnerships in cultural policies and CCIs**

TENTATIVE EXPECTED OUTCOMES	• Capacity building is mutually achieved through the exchange of best practices and successful policy models. • International cultural relations and cultural soft power are strengthened through sustained dialogue and partnerships focused on shared challenges and solutions • Creative industry ecosystems are boosted by new insights, skills, and collaborative opportunities • Innovative policy approaches addressing both local and global challenges are developed, documented and analysed. • An international network on collaborative research and development focusing on innovation in cultural policy and strategies for creative industries is established.
RESEARCH GAPS / RATIONALE	• Creative industries are gaining significant attention globally for their multifaceted impact on economies, societies, and national soft power. • There is a growing need for mutual learning and the development of international partnerships to share best practices, strategies, and innovations, thereby amplifying their positive impacts worldwide. Africa, South America, South Korea, among other world regions, appear particularly interesting.

Overview of possible research areas

SUPPORTING PEOPLE, STRENGTHENING OUR SOCIETIES AND OUR SOCIAL MODEL

European Commission

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CCIs

9

Culture and CCIs boosting wellbeing and mental health

TENTATIVE EXPECTED OUTCOMES	• Deepened knowledge and greater visibility of the potential positive effects of cultural experiences on mental health, wellbeing and inclusion, in particular for young people • European residents, including young people, have access to a broad range of effective interventions to support their mental health • Key industrial and regulatory actors are engaged in deploying culture to improve mental health, for example online multiplayer video games contributing to inclusion and wellbeing • Policymakers at local, regional, national and European levels have access to validated methods to develop more systematic approaches to culture-based interventions to increase mental health, with particular attention to youth and children from fragile contexts
RESEARCH GAPS / RATIONALE	• The intersection of CCIs with mental health and wellbeing is an under researched area with great potential societal impact • Evidence suggests CCIs can strongly contribute to wellbeing, inclusion and mental health – but evidence is not yet solid enough to support a wide uptake • Sometimes, CCIs can also augment problems, for instance online multiplayer video games can be toxic environments - at the same time as video game communities also give opportunities for isolated, underprivileged or discriminated people to find a sense of belonging

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CCIs

10

Re-imagining the creative economy: CCSI and the social economy

TENTATIVE EXPECTED OUTCOMES	• Innovative evidence-based policy frameworks that promote the convergence of creative and social economy • New models of cultural economy incorporating social economy principles, offering hybrid solutions balancing profitability with social responsibilities • Strategic collaborations, recognition and support • Case studies, indicators and evaluation methods
RESEARCH GAPS / RATIONALE	• CCIs encompass a diverse array of market-oriented and socially-oriented organizations, playing a pivotal role in the socio-economic fabric and in building social capital. • While the cultural and creative sector is acknowledged for driving economic growth and innovation, its connection with and contribution to social economy could be better understood. • By rethinking the creative economy through the lens of social economy, new paradigms that leverage the strengths of both sectors to enhance CCIs contributions to social cohesion, societal resilience and sustainable development can be explored.

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CCIs

11

Beyond the horizon: Cultural heritage shaping future technologies

TENTATIVE EXPECTED OUTCOMES	• Solid, science-based and credible understanding of possible future human, cultural and societal consequences of technological developments • Researchers and experts as well as institutions in the fields of culture, creativity and cultural heritage are mobilised to proactively engage in future-making in relation to technological developments
RESEARCH GAPS / RATIONALE	• In the coming decades, technological developments will likely ever stronger challenge many deeply held human beliefs, values and cultural traits • Cultural heritage institutions and CCIs have unique capabilities to make sense of such changes and help define desirable future outcomes

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CCIs

12 **Implementing sustainable cultural tourism policies and strategies** (co-created for 2025 WP)

TENTATIVE EXPECTED OUTCOMES	• Knowledge and tools are disseminated and shared with policymakers and stakeholders and are operationalised. Capacity for implementing sustainable cultural tourism policies and strategies is built. • Europe as a tourist destination becomes even more attractive. • Tourist flows are managed and diversified. Slow tourism is boosted. Cultural heritage and the environment are protected. Lesser-known destinations and local communities flourish. • Cultural tourism contributes to local development, intercultural dialogue and EU soft power
RESEARCH GAPS / RATIONALE	• The cultural tourism sector faces significant challenges related to sustainability, over-tourism, environmental preservation, technological development, community welfare and others • Several H 2020 and HE funded projects produced valuable knowledge and findings for sustainable cultural tourism, besides policy recommendations, case studies, tools and other solutions. • There is a need for strategies and actions enabling such knowledge and solutions to support policymakers, local authorities and stakeholders in designing and implementing informed and effective sustainable cultural tourism policies

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CCIs

13 **Societal impact of culture and cultural heritage, including addressing access for young people and gender inequalities**

TENTATIVE EXPECTED OUTCOMES	• Enhanced understanding of the social and economic impacts of cultural heritage and its societal benefits. • Improved understanding of access to cultural heritage and of the levers for better access to culture and arts. • Strategies developed on how to engage youth in CH related activities, especially reaching out to those not likely to have access. • Deepened understanding of the representation of diverse gender identities in cultural fields, and ways to tackle persisting stereotypes.
RESEARCH GAPS / RATIONALE	• CH Conservation no longer seen as an end in itself , but also as a resource and contribution to society well-being and cohesion. • Cultural Heritage is central to social needs and to the preservation of social fabric & cohesion. • High potential for CCIs to drive social positive change • Areas that would benefit from further research include: access to culture and cultural heritage, the complex challenges and barriers posed by gender inequalities in the CCIs

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CCIs

14 Strategies for safeguarding & transmission of intangible cultural heritage

TENTATIVE EXPECTED OUTCOMES	• Better understanding of the state of play of safeguarding of ICH in Europe, in the Context set by the 2003 UNESCO Convention. • Enhanced understanding and recognition of the significance and value of ICH in different social, cultural and economic contexts. • Innovative policy ideas and frameworks for ICH safeguarding are available, but also for mobilising it as a resource for innovation and competitive edge.
RESEARCH GAPS / RATIONALE	• ICH research underfunded as compared to the (tangible) CH field more generally. • ICH continually transforms, therefore its safeguarding encounters different challenges as compared to the built heritage sector. • Besides its key role in preserving cultural diversity, ICH can be a valuable resource for innovation and competitiveness.

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CCIs

15 **Safeguarding linguistic diversity in Europe**

TENTATIVE EXPECTED OUTCOMES	• Map the situation of multilingualism in Europe and offer an overview including linguistic maps displaying features and locations of languages; • Regional, minority and local languages as vehicles of oral expressions and traditions, are well documented and identified, in line with the principles of the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the ICH. • Visual presentations and Linguistic cartography are made available, using digital technologies and developing the theme Visualizing Linguistic Diversity through Cartography and GIS. • Good practice identified, what works, to safeguard linguistic diversity and promote multilingualism.
RESEARCH GAPS / RATIONALE	• Linguistic diversity is a fundamental part of Europe's cultural heritage. When languages disappear, a whole knowledge system disappears and cultural diversity is impoverished. • Multilingualism has the potential to contribute to multiple societal objectives, e.g. social cohesion, migrant integration, economic competitiveness, health and well-being. • Multilingualism is part of Europe's DNA. The EU has 24 official languages and some 60 other languages spoken in particular regions or by specific groups. They are an essential part of the rich fabric of European culture.

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CCIs

16 **Countering illicit trafficking of cultural goods** (co-created for 2025 WP)

TENTATIVE EXPECTED OUTCOMES	• Strengthen Capacity Building with experts and Heritage Institutions and foster uptake of Tools Developed by EU-Funded Research Projects • Gain insights from Comprehensive Review of Existing Legal Frameworks and Law Enforcement Mechanisms in the EU and Beyond to enhance greater collaboration and knowledge sharing at the border • Expand the geographical scope of research to include under-studied regions and zones in conflict
RESEARCH GAPS / RATIONALE	• Persisting challenges and urgent need to effectively tackle trafficking in cultural goods. • EU-funded projects' outputs are yet underutilized by law enforcement often due to inadequate consideration of the legal dimension, or a multiplication of similar tools. • A permanent EU funded structure and pool of experts are needed to sustain efforts and showcase research results. • Concrete insights were provided by the CERIS workshop gathering 14 EU-funded projects and experts in the field.

Overview of possible research areas

TRANSVERSAL

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CCIs

2 open topics (2026 & 2027)

TENTATIVE EXPECTED OUTCOMES	• Innovative findings and methods that significantly contribute to the expected impact of the Destination
RESEARCH GAPS / RATIONALE	• There is a need to support bottom-up impact-driven collaborative research under this Destination, contributing to the expected impact in innovative ways.

CLUSTER 2 WP 2026-2027

CULTURAL HERITAGE

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Transversal: Open topics

European Commission