



Research Tender: Cultural Policy in Southeast Asian Cities

World Cities Culture Forum, In Partnership with the British Council

1. BACKGROUND

By 2030, two-thirds of the world's population will live in cities. Rapid urbanisation is driving unprecedented change, and governments are increasingly challenged to respond effectively. Cities are now at the forefront of addressing many of the most pressing issues of our time, from climate change to social equity.

Culture plays a vital role in meeting these challenges. It contributes to economic growth through the creative economy, strengthens tourism, supports social cohesion, and enables a shift in mindsets that is essential for building sustainable, resilient urban futures.

To further this agenda, World Cities Culture Forum (WCCF) and the British Council are partnering on a research project to engage up to five Southeast Asian cities. The aims are to:

- Build a deeper understanding of the cultural policy landscape across the region.
- Highlight Southeast Asian leadership and best practice in culture-led approaches to sustainable urban development.
- Strengthen WCCF's presence in Southeast Asia and foster long-term collaborations between cities in the region and the global network.

The five cities selected for this research are:

- Jakarta, Indonesia
- Bangkok, Thailand
- Hanoi, Vietnam
- Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- Metro Manila, The Philippines

2. ABOUT THE PARTNERS

World Cities Culture Forum

World Cities Culture Forum is the leading global network of civic leaders from over 40 creative cities across six continents, collectively representing a population of over 245 million. World Cities Culture Forum champions the role of culture as a driver of equitable, sustainable, and prosperous cities. Our network shares ideas and solutions to tackle 21st-century challenges, such as climate change, cultural tourism, affordable workspace, and diversity in public spaces, by placing culture at the heart of city planning and investment.

Through our Global Summit, leadership programmes, and research, we empower city leaders to build thriving communities and economies where culture flourishes.

The British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We support peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and



trust between people in the UK and countries worldwide. We do this through our work in arts and culture, education and the English language. We work with people in over 200 countries and territories and are on the ground in more than 100 countries. In 2024–25 we reached 599 million people.

<https://www.britishcouncil.org>

3. OUTPUTS

A co-commissioned report between British Council and World Cities Culture Forum on the landscape of cultural policymaking and the creative economy in five ASEAN member state cities.

The report will be approximately 30 pages and will include:

- **A trends overview:** grounded in the five participating cities outlining cultural policy developments, creative economy strategies, and sectoral challenges, opportunities, and successes. This may connect to wider trends across the region.
- **Five city profiles:** A double page spread per city with key data, an overview of culture and the creative industries, and one compelling city case study with images.
- **Expert interview:** with a prominent regional thought leader working in culture, creative industries or the creative economy.
- **Impactful visuals:** such as city imagery, infographics, data visualisations or quotes

The researcher will be responsible for delivering a polished, publication-ready report, incorporating feedback from both commissioning partners and working with a designer to ensure clarity, accuracy, and cohesion.

The report will be disseminated in 2026 at key events such as British Council activities during the 5th anniversary of UK's Dialogue Partnership to ASEAN and the World Cities Culture Summit 2026.

Refer to recent publication on African Cities for an example of the contents and structure of the report [WCCF-African-Alternatives.pdf](#).

4. METHODOLOGY & RESEARCH EXPECTATIONS

The researcher will be expected to:

- Conduct a desk review of existing research (including material provided by WCCF and the British Council)
- Engage stakeholders via online roundtables and interviews
- Deliver a compelling and accessible final report that includes data-driven analysis, practical case studies, and clearly presented findings.

- Build on existing work by the World Cities Culture Forum and the British Council, both globally and in Southeast Asia, contributing new insights that support regional engagement and global learning.
- Work collaboratively with WCCF and the British Council to refine the research scope, access regional contacts, and ensure relevance and uptake of the findings.
- The researcher or organisation may choose to work with local researchers based in each of the five cities to support contextual understanding and stakeholder access.

WCCF and the British Council will provide existing research and facilitate introductions to relevant stakeholders across the region.

The final report must be written in English, and strong proficiency in English is required for all outputs and communication.

5. RESEARCHER PROFILE

We are seeking an experienced and insightful researcher (either an individual or a team) to deliver a high-quality, action-oriented study that supports cultural policy development across five Southeast Asian cities.

Essential requirements:

- Proven expertise in urban and/or cultural policy, particularly with relevance to city-level governance.
- Professional experience in Southeast Asia, including strong contextual understanding and sensitivity to local dynamics.
- A track record of producing accessible, visually engaging, and impactful research outputs, especially for policymaking or programme development.
- Demonstrated ability to lead stakeholder engagement and translate complex insights into practical recommendations.
- Strong communication skills, including clear writing, visual storytelling, and experience presenting to non-academic audiences.
- Strong proficiency in written and spoken English is essential, and it is desirable that the researcher holds fluency in at least one of the major languages represented among the five cities (e.g. Bahasa Indonesia, Thai, Vietnamese, Malay, or Filipino/Tagalog)

6. SCORING CRITERIA

Criteria	Weighting
Quality	20%
Methodology and Approach	30%
Commercial	40%
Social Value	10%

Scoring Model – Tender responses will be subject to an initial review at the start of Stage 2 of the evaluation process. Any tender responses not meeting mandatory requirements or constraints (if any) will be rejected in full at this point and will not be assessed or scored further. Tender responses not so rejected will be scored by an evaluation panel appointed by WCCF for all criteria other than Commercial using the following scoring model:

Points	Interpretation
10	Excellent – Overall the response demonstrates that the applicant meets all areas of the requirement and provides all of the areas evidence requested in the level of detail requested. This, therefore, is a detailed excellent response that meets all aspects of the requirement leaving no ambiguity as to whether the applicant can meet the requirement.
7	Good – Overall the response demonstrates that the applicant meets all areas of the requirement and provides all of the areas of evidence requested but contains some trivial omissions in relation to the level of detail requested in terms of either the response or the evidence. This, therefore, is a good response that meets all aspects of the requirement with only a trivial level ambiguity due the applicants failure to provide all information at the level of detail requested.
5	Adequate – Overall the response demonstrates that the applicant meets all areas of the requirement, but not all of the areas of evidence requested have been provided. This, therefore, is an adequate response, but with some limited ambiguity as to whether the applicant can meet the requirement due to the applicant’s failure to provide all of the evidence requested.
3	Poor – The response does not demonstrate that the applicants meets the requirement in one or more areas. This, therefore, is a poor response with significant ambiguity as to whether the applicant can meet the requirement due to the failure by the applicant to show that it meets one or more areas of the requirement.
0	Unacceptable – The response is non-compliant with the requirements of the TOR and/or no response has been provided.

7. DELIVERY TIMELINE

2025

24 October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadline for research tender submissions
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of researcher
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional engagement and literature review: desk-based research & intelligence including key stakeholder mapping

2026

January - March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online roundtables with key stakeholders • Interviews with city leaders and thought leaders • Data collection
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April- May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate findings from research: Draft City Profiles, key data, case studies, and interim report • Begin report design and production
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final sign off and launch report
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination at the World Cities Culture Summit

8. RESEARCH FINANCE

The fee for this project is GBP £12,000 (inclusive of all fees, taxes or expenses) to be paid by World Cities Culture Forum.

This fee covers:

- All research activities, including desk research, survey development, stakeholder engagement and interviews
- Drafting of the full report (approx. 30 pages)
- Editing and refining the final report, including incorporation of feedback from both commissioning partners.
- Liaison with the report designer to ensure the final output is accurate, consistent, and publication-ready.

80% of the fee will be paid on commencement and 20% on completion.

9. TO APPLY

Please send the following via the application form by **24 October**:

- A short proposal (maximum 2 pages) outlining:
 - Your proposed methodology and approach to the brief
 - Relevant experience and networks in Southeast Asia
- A CV (or biographies of team members)
- One or two relevant writing samples or publications

We particularly welcome applications from researchers based in Southeast Asia or with significant regional expertise. Interviews may be held in late October- early November.