

JOB DESCRIPTION

Project Manager – World Cities Culture Award

Job Title:	Award Project Manager
Contract Type:	Fixed-term freelance contract
Duration:	16 months (September 2026 – December 2027)
Location:	London-based with some remote working and international travel where required
Total Fee:	£40,000
Reporting to:	Senior Communications & Digital Content Manager
Start Date:	September 2026

Role Overview

The World Cities Culture Forum is developing a new international award celebrating outstanding digital innovation in cultural heritage protection and promotion. We are seeking an experienced freelance Project Manager to lead the end-to-end delivery of this project, from research and criteria development through to the winner announcement at the 16th World Cities Culture Summit in October 2027.

This is a high-profile, externally facing role requiring strong project management, exceptional relationship-building skills, and a solid understanding of the international cultural and digital innovation landscape. Working with oversight from the Senior Communications & Digital Content Manager, the Project Manager will take ownership of the award's delivery across all workstreams, from award criteria and jury management to the production of a case study report and award ceremony.

The Award brings together the award funder's technological expertise and global reach with World Cities Culture Forum's global network of 50 cities across six continents. The Project Manager will play a central role in ensuring this partnership delivers an award of the highest international standing. The Project Manager will also coordinate the public launch of the Award in Winter 2026, working closely with project partners to deliver an international launch campaign. As the award funder is headquartered outside the UK, the Project Manager will also act as the on-the-ground coordination point, providing support for Award-related activity in London, across the UK and where required.

About World Cities Culture Forum

World Cities Culture Forum is the leading global network of civic leaders from 50 creative cities across six continents, representing a population of over 300 million. We are building a world where culture is at the heart of thriving, equitable, and sustainable cities. Our city network shares ideas and solutions to tackle 21st-century challenges – from climate change and tourism to affordable workspace and diversity in public spaces – by placing culture at the heart of city planning and investment.

Diversity Statement

We are committed to building a diverse and inclusive workplace where everyone feels valued and respected. If you are excited about this role but don't meet every qualification, we still welcome your application. We encourage applications from individuals of all backgrounds, including those from underrepresented groups. We value the unique perspectives and experiences that each individual brings, and we are committed to creating an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive.

Key Responsibilities

1. Project Management and Delivery

- Manage overall project delivery against the award timeline, ensuring all milestones are met from September 2026 through to December 2027
- Coordinate all workstreams across research, jury management, applications, report production, and event delivery
- Lead monthly check-in meetings with award funder, preparing agendas, notes and action logs to document progress and decisions
- Manage the award budget, providing regular financial updates and ensuring value for money
- Maintain an up-to-date delivery plan and risk register, proactively flagging issues to the Senior Communications & Digital Content Manager

2. Research and Award Criteria

- Conduct desk research into best-practice digital heritage projects across the 50-city network and internationally (September–October 2026)
- Map the landscape of existing heritage awards and benchmarks to inform criteria development
- Produce draft award criteria covering tangible and intangible heritage, digital innovation, collaboration thresholds, and requirements relating to scale and impact
- Facilitate meetings with the award funder to review and refine the criteria, incorporating their feedback before finalisation
- Involve the Award Jury for input and sign-off, with final criteria agreed by October 2026

3. Jury Recruitment and Secretariat

- Agree the jury's size, composition and representation criteria, ensuring geographic diversity across a minimum of four continents and gender balance (at least 50% women)
- Identify and confirm jury members with expertise across heritage, the creative industries, AI and technology, and cultural policy
- Issue formal jury invitations, manage agreements, and coordinate onboarding including briefing packs covering award criteria, timeline and responsibilities
- Provide full secretariat support to the jury throughout the award cycle, including facilitating scoring, organising moderation and coordinating the final deliberation meeting in summer/autumn 2027
- Notify shortlisted and unsuccessful applicants following jury decisions

4. Award Launch, Communications and Applications Management

- Oversee the production of the award's brand identity, visual assets and application guidelines in collaboration with the WCCF Communications Team
- Manage the online application portal, ensuring that the criteria, eligibility requirements and deadline information are clear
- Lead the coordination of the public Award launch in December 2026, working closely with the WCCF Communications Team to deliver an international launch campaign, including a global press release, social media campaign and partner communications
- Beyond the public launch, support project-related communications in the award funder's home market and internationally, working with the WCCF Communications Team to coordinate messaging, content, media materials, social media and distribution through partner channels, and to align relevant timelines and approval processes
- Distribute the call for entries across our 50-city network, proactively identifying and approaching outstanding projects globally and supporting potential applicants through the process

5. Case Study Report Production

- Lead the production of a compelling report outlining the field of heritage and technology, supported by examples of global best practice
- Conduct in-depth interviews and case study research with shortlisted projects (5–8 case studies covering context, impact, technological innovation and partnerships)
- Commission and manage a professional designer for the report
- Lead the review and sign-off process with WCCF, the award funder and shortlisted projects, ensuring the highest editorial standards
- Oversee the production of a bilingual report in English and Chinese
- Deliver the published Case Study Report by July 2027, distributing it digitally across our 50-city network and to international media

6. Stakeholder Engagement and Partnership Management

- Steward the partnership with the award funder, ensuring their queries are addressed and their expectations and reporting requirements are met throughout the project lifecycle
- Liaise with World Cities Culture Forum cities, cultural organisations and civic institutions to support nominations, partnership activity and award promotion
- Represent the award at public events and in high-level stakeholder meetings, including the World Cities Culture Summit in October 2027
- Support the planning of the award ceremony and a dedicated panel on heritage and technology at the 2027 World Cities Culture Summit, including logistics, speaker coordination and materials preparation
- Produce a project evaluation report and contribute to scoping conversations for a potential Round 2 of the award
- Act as the day-to-day coordination point, providing support for Award-related activity in London, across the UK and where required – including partner meetings, institutional introductions, site visits, venue and supplier liaison, and on-the-ground event support
- Support potential engagement by the award funder with cultural, heritage and academic institutions where relevant to the Award, helping to identify suitable partners, arrange and attend meetings, and follow up on agreed actions

Consultant Profile

Essential

- Minimum 3-5 years' senior-level experience managing complex, multi-stakeholder projects in the cultural, arts or international development sectors, including end-to-end delivery against tight deadlines
- Strong understanding of digital innovation in the cultural and heritage space, with the ability to assess and articulate the significance of projects across diverse city contexts
- Experience conducting landscape and scoping research, including mapping existing programmes, benchmarking international practice and synthesising findings to inform programme design – particularly in digital innovation, cultural heritage or related policy areas
- Proven experience managing senior stakeholders, including funders, jurors and institutional partners at an international level
- Strong written and editorial skills, including experience commissioning or producing reports, publications or case studies to a high standard
- Confident and credible when representing programmes at public events and in high-level stakeholder meetings
- Highly organised and self-directed, with the ability to manage multiple workstreams simultaneously with limited day-to-day supervision
- Genuine interest in cities, culture, heritage and international collaboration
- Based in London and able to work in person across the UK, with an established network among UK cultural, heritage and academic institutions that can be drawn on to support the award funder's London and UK-based activity

Desirable

- Experience working with global networks, membership organisations or city government partners
- Familiarity with cultural heritage, digital innovation, or the intersection of technology and culture at policy or programme level
- Experience recruiting and managing expert panels or juries
- Fluency or working proficiency in English and another language, particularly Mandarin, given World Cities Culture Forum's network of Chinese member cities and the international scope of the award
- Experience working on technology-related initiatives through global or regional platforms and/or cultural organisations