

## **Member Briefing: Industrial Strategy and Sector Plan 2025**

On Monday 23 June, the UK Government published its long-awaited 10-year Industrial Strategy, setting out a national plan to drive growth across eight priority sectors – including the Creative Industries. Alongside the Industrial Strategy White Paper, detailed Sector Plans have been released for five of these sectors: Advanced Manufacturing, Creative Industries, Clean Energy, Digital and Technology, and Professional and Business Services.

This briefing provides a detailed look at the overarching Industrial Strategy framework and offers a focused analysis of the key commitments and opportunities outlined in the Creative Industries Sector Plan.

Supporting documentation for today's announcements can be found here:

- [The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy](#)
- [Creative Industries Sector Plan](#)

### **Summary**

There is much to welcome in the Creative Industries Sector Plan: a clear signal that our sector and its workforce are key to the UK's 10-year Industrial Strategy and long-term growth ambitions. As one of the eight priority growth sectors in the Industrial Strategy, the accompanying Sector Plan reflects the economic and cultural power of the creative industries – and the vital role the sector plays in driving innovation, exports and opportunity across all regions of the UK.

The Sector Plan's focus on access to finance, R&D and innovation, skills, trade, place and IP are welcome – all key enablers for scaling creative businesses. Commitments to further leverage the British Business Bank and extend the reach of expert intermediaries, and increased support from public finance institutions like National Wealth Fund, demonstrate a maturing understanding of what the sector needs to thrive.

The Sector Plan has tasked Creative UK with leading on the development of a 'Single Front Door' for creative firms to access information on how to identify and unlock private investment. This is a necessary step towards streamlining an unclear and complex investment landscape. We recognise it is critical that this offer is developed in partnership with organisations from across the creative industries to ensure that it accurately reflects business needs and investment pathways.

Creative UK is also delighted to see the appointment of a Freelance Champion – a significant step forward for a workforce that is dynamic but for too long vulnerable to precarious employment conditions. Creative UK and its members have consistently called for more tailored support for freelancers, and this commitment has the potential to deliver meaningful change.

While credit is owed to all who helped to bring the Plan to life, delivery will now be key. The Sector Plan provides a strong foundation for the creative industries to coalesce around, but the policies and interventions will need to be designed and delivered in ways that fully serve the needs and potential of the sector at large. This means working with all relevant government departments to ensure that the unique dynamics of the sector – from its interconnected ecosystem underpinned by IP to its high proportion of SMEs and micro-businesses and dependence on freelancers – are represented throughout the development and implementation of both the Industrial Strategy and Sector Plan.

### **Next steps and advocacy priorities**

- Creative UK will continue working with counterparts from the other priority Industrial Strategy growth sectors to develop a joint response on global investment positioning, highlighting the wider economic value and international potential of our combined industries.
- Ensuring that new and increased support for the creative industries from public financial institutions like the National Wealth Fund and British Business Bank addresses the misalignment of capital investment in the sector, so that public investment flows across the length and breadth of the creative economy – including those facing a funding crisis characterised by reduced local authority funding, decreasing grant-in-aid funding and challenges in securing alternative funding sources.
- Leading on the development of a ‘Single Front Door’ for creative firms to access information on how to identify and unlock private investment. This is a necessary step towards streamlining an unclear and complex investment landscape. We will continue to convene partners from across the creative industries to ensure that this offer reflects business needs and investment pathways.
- Continuing to support calls from leading retail banks for a regulatory sandbox to pilot IP-backed finance approaches – critical for delivering investment models that recognise intangible assets as collateral.
- Championing the impact and value of business support and investment readiness programmes, such as the Create Growth Programme, in building skills and knowledge while attracting investment and creating jobs within the sector.
- Engaging HM Revenue & Customs and HM Treasury to broaden the definition of R&D to explicitly include Creative R&D – not only where it drives innovation in adjacent sectors, but also where it is intended for use within the creative industries themselves and regardless of whether it generates spillover benefits for scientific and technological advancement.
- Working with DCMS and DSIT to inform the development of Creative Content Exchange - ensuring that it addresses licensing complexity, provides clear rights attribution and builds confidence among content creators. This is critical for the high proportion of SMEs and micro-businesses in our sector who may lack the legal, technical or financial capacity to participate fully in new IP marketplaces.
- Working with Chief Technology Officers (CTOs) across the sector to identify next steps and opportunities for the adoption of ethical and responsible AI. Creative UK will play a convening role and through its membership and networks will help share guidance and information around opportunities where they exist.
- Working in partnership with DCMS to ensure the scope and remit of the Freelance Champion effectively supports the appointee to represent the significant contributions of freelancers in the creative industries in government policymaking.
- Working with the UK Government to improve the visibility of the sector in official statistics, support the development of new metrics to monitor sector performance, and ensure that data and evidence are accessible to businesses, investors and policymakers.

## **INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY**

Seven months after the UK Government launched its Green Paper and consultation on a 10-year Industrial Strategy, it has now published a White Paper outlining a long-term economic plan to strengthen the UK’s position across eight priority growth sectors (referred to as the IS-8). This strategy

is designed to boost business investment by providing the certainty and stability needed for long-term decision-making.

For the creative industries, sector-specific interventions are detailed in the accompanying *Creative Industries Sector Plan*. Meanwhile, the Industrial Strategy White Paper sets out a broader framework for addressing systemic barriers to investment, growth, and skills. It draws on extensive evidence from stakeholders across business, academia, trade unions, local government and the wider public.

## **HEADLINES**

### **Promoting business stability and building an environment which makes doing and growing business easier**

- The UK Government will follow the Industrial Strategy with a Trade Strategy, building an integrated approach to supporting UK businesses to take advantage of opportunities overseas. Alongside a commitment to strengthening EU-UK ties and concluding live Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), the UK Government is legislating to expand the maximum size of UK Export Finance's (UKEF) portfolio and refocusing their overseas trade and investment networks to prioritise the IS-8.
- An expansion of public financial institutions, with the National Wealth Fund's mandate re-adjusted toward the IS-8 and the enhanced financial capacity for BBB, sit alongside reforms to boost capital market and domestic investor involvement in funding business growth across the economy, particularly in sectors which have historically faced funding gaps.
- Support and funding for innovation will prioritise IS-8 sectors and places where they are concentrated. UKRI will be pivoting programmes and budgets with Innovate UK and the Catapult Network central to supporting this. Accompanying this are interventions designed to increase industry-academia collaboration such as a £500 million R&D Missions Accelerator Programme, alongside continued funding for the Higher Education Innovation Funding Programme which supports university-industry knowledge exchange activities.
- Investment in building data (use and sharing) infrastructure that supports greater leveraging of data's economic, technological and social value for businesses and innovators. Planned £12 million investment in data sharing infrastructure initiatives which businesses will be able to adopt, alongside £36 million to support the development of smart data schemes (like that of Open Banking), both accompanying the previously announced National Data Library which will received £100 million of government funding.
- Realignment of the skills and education system to target IS-8 sectors. Key interventions include: 16-19 courses which provide skills pathways into priority occupations, a £200 million capital investment via the Skills Mission Fund to address IS-8 skills shortages, and Growth and Skills Levy-funded short courses targeting knowledge and skill areas in high demand by IS-8 sectors such as AI and engineering. Accompanying this will be TechFirst – a £187 million technology skills package which, alongside two other skills packages designed for IS-8 sector needs, will bring AI and digital skills learning to classrooms.
- Maintaining the current tax environment to foster business confidence and investment. This includes capping corporation tax at 25%, and continuing current R&D tax credits, Patent Box

reliefs, sector-specific tax reliefs and expenditure credits (particularly those in the creative sector) and investment schemes.

- The inclusion of the creative industries as one of the IS-8 provides a clear foundation for long-term growth and collaboration. The commitments outlined above demonstrate the potential, not just to deliver against the ambitions of the Creative Industries Sector Plan (detailed below), but to engage across sectors and disciplines. Creative UK is already working with counterparts from other IS-8 sectors to develop a joint response on global investment positioning, highlighting the wider economic value and international potential of our combined industries.

### **Focusing interventions on the City Regions and Clusters where IS-8 sectors operate**

- Accelerating the availability and number of investible sites to provide the infrastructure for regional and business growth. This includes making access to and use of industrial strategy zones (freeports and investment zones) more streamlined and attractive for businesses, alongside the development of AI Growth Zones in regions across the UK to bring in AI infrastructure investment.
- Providing avenues for city regions and clusters to attract and crowd in private investment. The British Business Bank (BBB) is to introduce a Cluster Champions programme, which is intended to provide specialist local knowledge and support investment readiness programmes by connecting local businesses to private investors. This support will be funded through a £450 million expansion of BBB's Nations and Regions investment fund which includes funding for the South East and East of England for first time. Alongside this, £500 million has been allocated to the Local Innovation Partnerships fund, led by both UKRI and local governments (particularly Mayoral Strategic Authorities), to enable delivery of Local Growth Plans and provide local businesses with grants and non-financial support, with the aim to grow regional innovation clusters and generate £1bn of private co-investment.
- Boosting connections within and between city regions, with £10bn allocated to the Transport for City Regions programme which will fund transport infrastructure development across 6 of the North's Mayoral Strategic Authorities (MSAs). There is also the recognition that North of England rail connectivity is an ongoing strategic priority, with the TransPennine upgrade the first step of this broader transformation.

### **Frontier Industries with strategic significance and high-growth potential are the key focus**

The Industrial Strategy, while concentrated on eight sectors, is particularly focused on frontier industries within them that are strategically important and/or have high-growth potential. For the Creative Industries these are:

- Advertising and Marketing
- Film & TV
- Video Games
- Music, Performing and Visual Arts

### **Build an environment which fosters partnership between government and business**

- The UK Government is focused on maximising private investment and recognises the important role of public and private co-investment to support industrial development and economic

growth. This includes a consideration of how grant programmes and awards could be adjusted to maximise their benefit for businesses, jobs, regional growth and resilience.

- Public procurement reforms that aim to ensure public bodies support economic growth, innovation and the Industrial Strategy through procurement and enable small and regional businesses to more easily bid for contracts.
- Introducing clear avenues and entry points into government for business leaders and investors across sectors with the expectation that this will enable more efficient communication, support and advice. Another key aim is to build out the commercial skills within government so businesses and government can better understand each other.
- Looking to improve the support offered to small and medium sized businesses (SMEs), through better access to key information and advice across government digital and regional infrastructure, and addressing the issue of late payments and extended payment terms through a new Fair Payment Code, possible legislative measures and the Small Business Commissioner.
- Implement pro-growth institutions and governance across government, with the Industrial Strategy Advisory Council put on a statutory footing to monitor progress and advise the UK Government, alongside the use of industry champions to advise on the implementation of Sector Plans and lead industry partnerships.

## **CREATIVE INDUSTRIES SECTOR PLAN**

The Creative Industries Sector Plan is described as a strategy aimed at significantly increasing business investment in the creative industries by 2035, while addressing key barriers to growth. It includes targeted interventions around boosting innovation, enhancing skills development, improving access to finance, increasing exports and supporting regional growth. As the Creative Industries Sector Plan sits under the broader Industrial Strategy framework, it focuses on dedicated support for “high-potential growth subsectors”.

The Sector Plan is built around six main pillars: Access to Finance, R&D and Innovation, Skills, Place, Trade, and Content and IP.

This briefing is structured around those six pillars, looking at what’s in the Sector Plan – and what’s missing – and where there are gaps, it offers guidance on where sector should focus its advocacy efforts.

### **ENHANCING ACCESS TO FINANCE FOR CREATIVE BUSINESSES**

**The British Business Bank (BBB) will significantly increase support for UK creative businesses with debt and equity finance**

- Creative UK is strongly supportive of the increase in the BBB’s total financial capacity, announced at the Spending Review, to £25.6bn – a two-thirds increase. Access to appropriately structured growth finance is critical to the success of the creative industries, where 93.4% of businesses in the sector are SMEs and micro-businesses. Creative UK’s *Unleashing Creativity: Fixing the Finance Gap in the Creative Industries* research revealed that 72% of creative industries organisations have strong growth ambitions (vs 59% of the general

business population), yet 41% felt no appropriate financial products existed – even among those confident in their financial knowledge.

- The Sector Plan provides more detail on how the increase to the BBB's capacity will specifically support the creative industries, acknowledging the existence of a £1.4bn equity finance gap in the sector. Of key importance is how this increased capacity can play a central role in crowding in significant additional private sector equity and debt investment into the sector, particularly in those industries historically underserved by private finance, such as IP-led content businesses. Through this investment, the BBB will begin to demonstrate more robustly both the substantial upsides and lower risks of investing in the Creative Industries compared to existing investor outlooks on the sector.
- The Sector Plan confirms that through an additional £4bn of Industrial Strategy Growth Capital – which will support investment and growth across all eight priority growth sectors – the BBB will fund specialist venture capital fund managers investing the creative sector. This is intended to improve the availability of finance through expanded early-stage equity funds, angel syndicates and debt funds.

### **Public finance institutions will increase their support for the creative industries**

- It also confirms that public financial institutions, such as the National Wealth Fund (NWF) and the Office for Investment, will increase their support for the sector to catalyse private investment. This comes off the back of the Chancellor's [Statement of Strategic Priorities](#), published in March 2025, which introduced changes to the NWF's mandate to extend beyond infrastructure and instructed to consider its role in supporting the delivery of the Industrial Strategy, including in the Creative Industries.
- Creative UK believes that NWF investment in the sector presents a real opportunity. Public capital investment in the UK's creative industries is currently misaligned, with a disproportionate share directed toward IT and software firms. Between 2013 and 2023, these businesses received £14.1 billion in equity investment – 85% of the sector's total – despite accounting for only 23% of the workforce and 40% of GVA. In contrast, non-IT subsectors such as design, publishing, music, and fashion collectively attracted just £2.2 billion over the same period. The National Wealth Fund (NWF) presents an opportunity to rebalance this disparity by supporting under-capitalised creative disciplines.
- Theatres and cultural venues, while not eligible for stand-alone funding under the NWF, could qualify as investible infrastructure if structured to deliver economic or environmental outcomes. Multi-use hubs that integrate performance spaces with studios, training facilities, and enterprise zones may be eligible for investment where they support job creation, digital production, or decarbonisation.
- The UK's film and high-end television sectors face a persistent equity gap. Equity investment in UK film dropped by 60% between 2017 and 2018 following changes to the Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS). Although some private finance has returned post-Covid, it is largely debt-based and often directed at overseas-controlled productions. UK-owned producers continue to struggle with access to early-stage equity.
- Foreign direct investment (FDI) in the creative industries is heavily concentrated in mergers and acquisitions, rather than capacity building. Between 2021 and 2023, 64% of inward FDI took the form of acquisitions, reflecting a lack of growth capital and resulting in UK businesses being bought rather than scaled. Sub-sectors such as music, performing arts, film, and publishing – despite comprising 61% of the sector's workforce – received only 24% of FDI.

- Long-term debt remains underutilised across the sector, with only 24% of creative firms having accessed it. However, evidence from Creative UK's Creative Growth Finance portfolio shows that businesses receiving structured debt finance achieve productivity levels twice the sector average, demonstrating its potential to drive sustainable growth.
- It is positive to see the cultural sector explicitly recognised in the Sector Plan and the foundational importance of performing and visual arts. However this must be viewed alongside the Spending Review figures, which saw DCMS resource and capital budgets fall by 1.2% and 2.8% respectively over 2025-29. Local authorities remain the largest public funders of arts and culture, yet they are operating under severe pressure. It is essential that the Arts Council England (ACE) review supports the cultural sector to tackle the barriers posed by constrained council funding, recognising that cultural organisations are integral to the wider creative industries ecosystem, as the Sector Plan itself makes clear.

**The UK Government will increase access to suitable investment options for creative businesses, including IP-backed lending**

- The Sector Plan confirms that the UK Government will establish a new working group to consider steps to address regulatory and non-regulatory barriers to lending for IP-rich SMEs, including in the creative industries.
- This will see the BBB and Intellectual Property Office (IPO) explore how best to support IP-backed lending in the creative industries, alongside a commitment to publishing an update on progress made and next steps by the end of 2025.
- Creative UK has endorsed calls by leading retail banks for a regulatory sandbox led by the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) to pilot IP-backed finance approaches. We will continue to support financial institutions and alternative lenders to pilot lending and investment models that incorporate intangible assets as collateral. Graduates of Creative UK's Creative Growth Finance (CGF) fund, and Culture and Creative Investment Programme (CCIP), have gone on to secure IP-backed loans from large banks, showing that appetite exists from traditional finance providers, and businesses with the right knowledge and support can secure this financing.

**A commitment to building the sector's investment readiness**

- Through the new £150 million Creative Places Growth Fund, six Mayoral Strategic Authorities (MSAs) will be able to increase locally tailored investment readiness support. This is described as building on DCMS' Create Growth Programme and the £150 million funding will be devolved to MSAs in the West Midlands, West of England, West Yorkshire, the North East, Liverpool and Greater Manchester.
- The Sector Plan also commits the UK Government to better signposting financial support resources for SMEs through the Department for Business and Trade's (DBT) new Business Growth Service – a nationwide initiative designed to provide streamlined support, advice and resources to businesses across the country.
- Creative UK has been designated as leading a 'Single Front Door' for creative firms to access information on how to identify and unlock private investment. This is a necessary step towards streamlining an unclear and complex investment landscape. We will continue to convene partners from across the creative industries to ensure that this offer reflects business needs and investment pathways.
- Existing data has shown the significant impact the Create Growth Programme (CGP), alongside other locally tailored investment readiness and business support programmes, can have on cultural and creative businesses. Over 90% of business owners (surveyed in six of the twelve

CGP regions) reported their confidence in running their business had increased, and over 80% reported an increased knowledge of investment as a result of the programme. Not only are these programmes vital for building skills and knowledge, they are also central to attracting investment to, and creating jobs within, the sector. Over three-quarters of participating businesses secured the investment they applied for, and two-thirds increased their headcount, with investment exceeding £20 million and approximately 500 new jobs created across those surveyed.

## **ACCELERATING INNOVATION AND IP IN THE CREATIVE ECONOMY**

### **Increased support and public funding for UKRI, with it a new Creative Industries R&D strategy, the next wave of R&D creative clusters, support for commercialisation and tech adoption, and five new CoSTAR R&D labs**

- UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) will lead efforts to significantly increase public funding, leveraging industry investment, to build a stronger R&D and innovation ecosystem for the creative industries. UKRI will publish a new Creative Industries R&D Strategy later this year.
- The £100 million UKRI investment over the Spending Review period will support the next wave of R&D creative clusters throughout the whole of the UK. This builds on the success of the first wave of clusters through the Creative Industries Clusters Programme (CICP) which delivered £5 of private and public co-investment for every £1 spent.
- Through the Catapult Network, UKRI will support commercialisation and tech adoption across the creative industries.
- DCMS are providing £25 million in funding for the Creative Futures Programme, which will add five new CoSTAR R&D labs and two showcase spaces across the UK.
- Combined with the Creative Places Growth Fund, these programmes have the potential to catalyse substantial public and private investment in R&D and drive long-term growth for creative businesses. To maximise their impact, however, a coordinated approach is essential – bringing together delivery partners, Mayoral Strategic Authorities (MSAs), and UKRI. This should be underpinned by a broad, accessible suite of grant competitions designed to support innovation and commercialisation across the full breadth of the creative industries.

### **Revised guidance for R&D tax reliefs to be published by HMRC**

- The Sector Plan document says this will clarify that where a project in the creative sector seeks an advance in science or technology, those R&D activities which take place in the creative sectors but “directly contribute to an advance” by resolving scientific or technological uncertainties, will be eligible for R&D tax reliefs. The new guidance will be published in 2025.
- While this is a welcome step towards recognising interdisciplinary creative R&D, we will continue to engage HM Treasury and HM Revenue & Customs to incorporate flex in its definition of R&D so that creative R&D which *could* lead to advances in adjacent sectors, even if its intended use is primarily in the creative sectors, remains eligible for tax reliefs.

### **Learning lessons from the FinTech sector to drive commercialisation and growth of the UK's CreaTech sector**

- UKRI will be tasked with bringing together stakeholders to tackle barriers and accelerate the growth of creative technology, reporting to DCMS and DSIT with evidence-based recommendations by the end of 2025.



- The Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (Creative PEC) will lead on developing evidence while the Creative Industries Council has been asked to demonstrate stronger ‘CreaTech’ representation.
- This is a highly valuable opportunity for creative businesses to gain insight of what approaches to technology adoption and use worked within a highly regulated sector – where digital platforms, AI and machine learning, and human-machine interfaces are now ubiquitous – and how these can be adapted and leveraged within the contexts of the sector.

### **UK Government commits to publishing a detailed economic impact assessment on all options proposed in the consultation on Copyright and Artificial Intelligence**

- As one of the concessions made before the Data (Use and Access) Act gained Royal Assent, an economic impact assessment will be produced within nine 9 months of the Act being passed and a report on the use of copyright works in the development of AI systems, including ways to enforce requirements and restrictions on developers on the use of copyright works.

### **Establishing Creative Content Exchange (CCE) – a marketplace for selling, buying and licensing creative assets**

- This is intended to open up new revenue streams and allow content owners to commercialise and financialise their assets while providing data users with ease of access.
- The Sector Plan says the discovery and testing of appropriate models and technologies with early adopter content-owners will be supported by UKRI’s R&D Missions Accelerator Programme.
- Creative UK broadly welcomes this but to make it work, it will be essential to address underlying licensing complexity, ensure clear rights attribution and build confidence among content creators, many of whom are microbusinesses and SMEs and may lack the legal, technical or financial capacity to participate fully in new IP marketplaces.

### **A commitment to taking forward findings from the Technology Adoption Review**

- This includes the introduction of a ‘Create Smarter’ banner, through which UKRI will provide resources and support for technology adoption across its programmes. An online directory of facilities across the UK where creative businesses can access new technologies will also be made available.
- Creative UK will work with Chief Technology Officers (CTOs) across the sector to identify next steps and opportunities for the adoption of ethical and responsible AI. Creative UK will play a convening role and through its membership and networks will help share guidance and information around opportunities where they exist.

## **PLACE-BASED INTERVENTIONS TO UNLEASH THE POTENTIAL OF THE UK’S CITIES AND REGIONS**

### **Investing in creative clusters**

- The UK Government has identified 12 high-potential creative clusters across the UK. These clusters are seen as key engines of local economic growth, innovation and job creation.
- These clusters will receive tailored support to build on their existing strengths, attract investment and scale up local creative businesses.

- The approach builds on the success of the first wave of UKRI’s Creative Industries Clusters Programme (CICP), which demonstrated strong returns on investment and spillover benefits across local economies.

### **£150 million Creative Places Growth Fund**

- A new £150 million Creative Places Growth Fund will be devolved to six Mayoral Strategic Authorities.
- This fund is designed to provide investment readiness support tailored to local needs, helping creative businesses access finance, scale up, and contribute to regional economic development.
- The Fund will support initiatives such as mentoring, business planning, IP registration, and connections to investors, building on the DCMS Create Growth Programme.

### **Championing London as a Creative Supercluster**

- London will be positioned as a ‘Creative Industries Supercluster’, recognising its global leadership in creative content, talent and infrastructure.
- The Mayor of London will invest over £10 million over the next four years to support this ambition.
- This includes significant investments in major cultural infrastructure projects such as East Bank and the Smithfield sites, which will serve as hubs for innovation, education and public engagement.

### **Approach to working with Devolved Administrations**

- The UK Government will work in partnership with the devolved governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to build on the support they already deliver to creative industries.
- This includes aligning investment strategies, sharing best practices, and ensuring that creative businesses across all nations of the UK benefit from the Sector Plan’s interventions.

### **Supporting the development of Creative Corridors**

- The Plan also supports the development of creative corridors—geographic areas that connect clusters and enable collaboration across city regions.
- Notable corridors include:
  - The Northern Growth Corridor, linking creative hubs across northern cities.
  - The West of England–South Wales Corridor, supporting cross-border collaboration.
  - The Thames Estuary, which is being developed as a creative production and innovation zone.

## **STRENGTHENING THE CREATIVE WORKFORCE AND FREELANCE ECONOMY**

### **Improving access to and increasing the provision of creative education to build a sustainable skills pipeline into the sector**

- The independently led Curriculum and Assessment Review, which is expected to publish its final report in the autumn, will “seek to deliver a curriculum that readies young people for life and work in the sector.

- The already announced National Centre for Arts and Music Education will launch in September 2026, improving access and opportunity for children and young people and strengthening collaboration between schools and industry.
- DCMS, DfE and Skills England will be expected to support increased access to quality specialist creative education. This will be delivered in partnership with the Creative Industries Council and Mayoral Strategic Authorities (MSAs) which have been tasked with identifying opportunities, focusing high growth regions.
- The recent Skills England Sector Skills Needs Assessment highlights ongoing and significant shortages in key knowledge and skills across the labour market, resulting in persistent vacancies for creative businesses. While this data provides a valuable foundation, it should be seen as a starting point for deeper research. Further analysis is essential to ensure that future education and training interventions are aligned with the needs of students, the workforce, and employers across the cultural and creative industries.

#### **A refreshed UK-wide £9 million creative careers service**

- The UK Government will launch a refreshed £9 million UK-wide creative careers service, expand training pathways including short courses and Higher Technical Qualifications. This will be designed in collaboration with employers to support young people from all backgrounds.

#### **Establishing a new Creative Sector Skills Forum**

- This will be led by DCMS in partnership with Skills England and will identify skills needed to support emerging roles in AI and ensure the skills system is flexible enough to respond to changes in job roles driven by technological change.

#### **Championing diversity in the creative industries**

- Creative UK's Create Diversity Hub is recognised as a key initiative to improve diversity and inclusion. Creative UK will also support the development of skills passports to document and transfer industry-recognised skills and competencies, improving progression and lifelong learning, ensuring that these are available and communicated to the length and breadth of the creative industries workforce.

#### **Use of the Growth and Skills Levy in the creative industries**

- Skills England and DCMS will work with industry to expand access to high-quality specialist creative education across England, including through new short courses in digital, AI, and engineering funded by the Growth and Skills Levy.
- So far, it is unclear whether the Growth and Skills Levy relate to the creative industries in their widest sense, or only digital pathways into the creative industries. Creative UK will engage both DCMS and DfE to seek clarity on this point, highlighting the need to support training pathways into the sector – across all disciplines, not just those which are primarily digital in their focus.

#### **DCMS to appoint a 'Creative Freelance Champion'**

- The new Creative Freelance Champion will become a member of the Creative Industries Council, and the Terms of Reference will be developed with industry with an appointment to be made in 2025.
- Alongside many of our valued members, Creative UK have produced evidence in support of strong advocacy to land this Sector Plan announcement. We look forward to working closely with DCMS to ensure the scope and remit of the Freelance Champion effectively supports the

appointee to represent the immense contributions of freelancers in the creative industries in government policymaking.

### **Support for CIISA to tackle bullying, harassment and discrimination in the creative industries**

- The UK Government will drive cross-industry support for the Creative Industries Independent Standards Authority (CIISA), which will be asked to support priority subsectors Film and TV, Music, and Theatre during its initial stage before rolling out more widely.

## **DRIVING EXPORTS AND INTERNATIONAL GROWTH**

### **Launching a reformed Creative Industries Trade and Investment Board (CITIB)**

- The new-look board will lead the development of new trade and investment plans for priority and high-growth markets. These plans will focus on high-growth sub-sectors and include export promotion, inward investment, trade policy, and soft power.

### **UK Government commits to removing market access barriers, with a focus on cultural and artistic exchanges**

- The Sector Plan references progress made during the recent UK-EU Summit, committing to further work to prioritise the removal of market access barriers on IP protection, mutual recognition of qualification and outbound temporary business travel.

### **Exporters in Industrial Strategy priority growth sectors to benefit from £80bn in UK Export Finance's financing capacity**

- UK Export Finance (UKEF) will enhance its support for creative exporters, with £80 billion in financing capacity available. The GREAT campaign will amplify UK creative strengths on global platforms, including at major international events such as SXSW, Cannes Lions, and the World Design Congress.
- The expansion of UKEF's portfolio size could have a significant positive impact on the ability of creative businesses to tap foreign markets and opportunities that were otherwise out of reach due to financing or risk constraints. However, close co-operation between UKEF, BBB, the National Wealth Fund and sector leaders is vital to ensure businesses can leverage all this support to grow both in the UK and overseas.

### **Further DCMS support for British Fashion Council's NEWGEN programme announced, alongside increased support for the BFI Film Festival, London Games Festival and the World Design Congress 2025.**

- The investment will help to support emerging UK designers with funding for London Fashion Week showcases and business mentoring.
- The BFI Film Festival, London Games Festival and World Design Congress 2025 will also benefit from increased investment, raising their profile and through promoting international trade in these sectors.

## **MEASURING IMPACT AND SECTOR PERFORMANCE**

### **Improving the visibility of the sector in official statistics and understanding the sector's business behaviours and dynamics**

- The UK Government will continue to invest in the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC) and support the delivery of the Creative Business Panel, a new longitudinal study on business behaviours, performance, and activities.
- DCMS, DBT, and ONS will work together to improve access to official statistics and develop new estimates using data sources such as the UK Innovation Survey, Management and Expectations Survey, and HMRC R&D tax relief statistics.
- Creative UK will work with the UK Government to improve the visibility of the sector in official statistics, support the development of new metrics to monitor sector performance, and ensure that data and evidence are accessible to businesses, investors, and policymakers. This includes contributing to the review of SIC codes and supporting the development of the Cultural and Heritage Capital Framework.