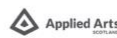


road to COP26's innovation grant programme

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Press Release

21 January 2021

Open Call for Innovation Grant Programme

British Council in Nepal, Kathmandu University (School of Arts, School of Engineering), Applied Arts Scotland and Edinburgh Napier University's Creative Informatics with the National Innovation Center have announced a unique opportunity to participate in its Innovation Grant Programme which includes an incubator programme followed by grants and showcase opportunities in the lead up to COP26.

The programme is a part of Road to COP26, a campaign of activities implemented by the British Council with support from the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Nepal. The programme aims to support the development of new, exciting and innovative ideas for sustainability that harness nature-based and craft-related solutions to promote positive environmental impacts and climate change resilience.

The programme includes an incubation where ideas that can deliver social and environmental outcomes besides economic ones will be further developed through guidance/training from Nepali and UK experts. Following the incubation participants can bid for one of the five grants that includes financial support and tailored mentoring opportunities with UK and Nepali experts. Grantee outputs will be presented to industry and climate change stakeholders in Nepal and the UK in the lead up to COP26, which takes place in Glasgow, Scotland from 1 to 12 November 2021.

"We are excited about this UK-Nepal academic partnership to look at climate change through the potential of creative sector solutions. Climate change concerns us all and our shared futures, we hope this collaboration will help researchers to develop their skills, build international networks and work on solutions for climate that will contribute to long-term gains of supporting Nepal's national response to the

*global challenge,” stated **Shahida MacDougall, Country Director of the British Council.** “British Council is working closely with the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office to provide unique platforms for a range of climate change actors, including women and girls, young people, entrepreneurs and leaders, to present their concerns, perspectives and solutions to national and international stakeholders in the lead up to COP26.”*

Challenging commonplace notions of innovation’s exclusivity to fields of sciences and technology, this pioneering initiative hopes to highlight green recovery solutions that are grounded in Nepal’s informal yet significant sectors of craft-making which directly engage many marginalised communities.

“Innovation is important for Nepal’s economic development, which is currently threatened by global challenges like climate change. We look forward to supporting participants with their ideas. At NIC we have always welcomed innovators from all disciplines, ages, backgrounds so we believe looking at the creative sector can further conversations around what is innovation? and what should it mean for Nepal?,” comments Mahabir Puri, Founder, National Innovation Center Nepal, on the issue of inclusive innovation.

Individuals, teams, communities, and organisations from diverse backgrounds are invited to apply through an open call process for a placement with the programme.

“Innovation Grant Programme of the Road to COP26 Project is a very timely initiative not only from the perspective of its potential impact on the people on creating awareness regarding the interconnectedness between the social, cultural, environmental and professional aspects of our lives, but also from the point of view of opportunities it can create for better and healthier livelihoods for the people engaged in traditional craftsmanship,” stated **Sagar Sharma, Professor and Dean of School of Arts, Kathmandu University.**

Working closely with Kathmandu University is the Edinburgh Napier University and Applied Arts Scotland. Together the partners will co-develop and deliver the programme for Nepali beneficiaries. **Dr. Inge Panneels, Research Fellow, Creative Informatics, School of Computing, Edinburgh Napier University** is one of the key personnel attached to the programme. She says, *“Edinburgh Napier University is delighted to be working with Applied Arts Scotland and Kathmandu University on the British Council’s Road to COP26 campaign. We are particularly excited to work closely with our academic partners in Nepal to explore how the Quadruple Bottom Line (of Profit, People, Planet and Purpose) can be identified, encouraged and promoted in Nepali craft traditions and nature-based solutions, and how these may inform innovation towards a zero carbon economy.”*

“Working with longstanding knowledge from nature-based and craft-embedded methodologies at the intersection between practice and research enables creative, innovative and sustainable responses to climate change. Applied Arts Scotland are excited to be working in partnership with organisations in Scotland and Nepal on the Road to COP26 Programme,” states **Dr Lynne Hocking-Mennie, Vice Chair at Applied Arts Scotland.** Adding, *“by sharing knowledge about craft innovation, sustainable business practices and creative entrepreneurship between Nepal and Scotland, we will create an interdisciplinary opportunity to nurture exciting new ideas from within the Nepali craft sector that promote resilience to climate change for the benefit of people and communities in Nepal and beyond.”*

For questions/interviews, please email cop26@kuart.edu.np.

About the project and the partners

Road to COP 26

British Council with support from the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office Nepal, is creating a campaign, **Road to COP26**, which aims to strengthen capacities and amplify voices of those most impacted so that they can engage national and international stakeholders of climate change response in the lead up to COP26. Working with our network of collaborators, partners, and global programmes we hope to inspire action ahead of COP26. Joining forces with education, arts, media, civil society, and private sector organisations and the UK, we aim to enable a diverse set of actors in Nepal to respond creatively to the challenges of climate change.

Know more about the project - www.britishcouncil.org.np/road-cop26

British Council Nepal

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We build connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language. Last year we reached over 80 million people directly and 791 million people overall including online, and through broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934 we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. We receive a 15 per cent core funding grant from the UK government. We have been working in Nepal since 1959. Every year we connect with thousands of students, educators, policymakers, academics, creatives and entrepreneurs in Nepal.

[Kathmandu University](#) is an autonomous, not-for-profit, self-funding public institution established by an Act of Parliament in December 1991. It is an institution of higher learning dedicated to maintaining the standard of academic excellence in various classical and professional disciplines. The University operates through seven Schools: (i) School of Arts, (ii) School of Education, (iii) School of Engineering, (iv) School of Law, (v) School of Management, (vi) School of Medical Science and (vii) School of Science.

[Applied Arts Scotland](#) is a membership organisation run by makers for makers giving an authentic, collective and professional voice for the sector and delivering tangible benefits to the professional maker community in Scotland. We nurture the creative heart and soul of making practice, celebrate expertise, and facilitate practical opportunities for creative and professional development.

[Edinburgh Napier University](#) is modern, research-active university in the heart of Edinburgh with a strong industry focussed teaching and research agenda. [Creative Informatics](#) is an ambitious research and development programme based in Edinburgh, which aims to bring the city's world class creative industries together, providing funding and development opportunities that enable creative individuals and organisations to explore how data can be used to drive ground-breaking new products, businesses and experiences.

[National Innovation Center Nepal](#) a non-profit sharing organization incorporated on Nov 9th, 2012 is dedicated to developing the culture of research, technology and innovation in Nepal. NIC Nepal provides a unique platform to help retain and foster innovative, talented, and passionate human capital of Nepal and leverage their intellect and creativity in strengthening the country's social and economic growth through inspired intellect and persistent effort.