



**IFACCA**

International Federation  
of Arts Councils  
and Culture Agencies

# *From Symbolic Acknowledgment to Tangible Recognition*

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*Pathways to harness the values of culture*

IFACCA Dossier for MONDIACULT 2022

September 2022

[ifacca.org](https://ifacca.org)

## ABOUT IFACCA

The **International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA)** is the global network of arts councils, ministries of culture and government agencies, with 90 Member institutions representing over 70 countries. Our Members operate in developed and developing countries across Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Pacific.

Our membership comprises public institutions whose purpose is to advance arts and culture through investment, policy and promotion. We have two types of members: National Members and Affiliate Members. National Members are committed to the public support of arts and culture through investment, policy and promotion at a national level, with each country able to be represented by one National Member with voting rights. Affiliate Members too are committed to the public support of arts and culture, but they include sister institutions to existing National Members; intergovernmental bodies; and government agencies that operate at subnational levels (including state, regional, provincial and local government).

### OUR MEMBERSHIP 2022: 90 Members

National Members: 61 (68%)

Affiliate Members: 29 (32%)



**56%**

Developing  
countries

**44%**

Developed  
countries

**National Members** represent arts councils and agencies, as well as ministries of culture, with an almost even balance between these two types of institution (and both arm's length and non-arm's length) across the Federation. They range from mature institutions that have operated for more than 30 years to younger institutions operating with new mandates and structures. They work within different government models, from constitutional and presidential republics to people's republics. And they represent countries across each inhabited continent. These similarities and differences are a source of strength for the Federation, as Members can access a wide-ranging wealth of knowledge, experience, and expertise specific to supporting culture at the national level; take inspiration from different perspectives, ideas and ways of thinking; and benefit from meaningful collegial relationships with a cohort of peers who are uniquely placed to understand - and support them in - their work.



**61%**

Arts Council  
or Agency

**39%**

Ministry /  
Secretary

## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our shared vision is a world in which arts and culture thrive and are recognised by governments and peoples for their manifold contribution to society. Our guiding principles are at the heart of who we are and what we stand for. Collectively we are committed to international dialogue and exchange, undertaken in a spirit of solidarity, inclusion, reciprocity, and mutual learning. The Federation represents plural voices and perspectives, **unified in the belief that arts and culture are a public good** - with the potential to further inclusive social transformation - to be shaped and accessed equitably by all peoples. As an international Federation, we respect national governance and commit to the promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions.

# URGENCY AND MOMENTUM AT MONDIACULT 2022

Since the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted in 2015, the world has been shaken by multiple challenges: pandemics, international conflicts, human displacement, natural disasters, rapid technological developments, and economic crises. These challenges have revealed the potential to harness culture to foster resilient societies and imagine the way forward.

At the same time, recent upheavals have shown the lack of mechanisms to maintain viable cultural and creative sectors (CCSs) in the face of global challenges. Despite growing evidence of culture's contribution across public life, there is a continued lack of recognition for the value and atypical nature of cultural workers' labour. Symbolic acknowledgement of the social and economic value of culture is not beneficial without ensuring robust and permanent frameworks to support the cultural sector and protect its workers. This status quo is of particular concern for IFACCA.

The UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development – MONDIACULT 2022 gathers ministers of culture in Mexico, for the first time in 40 years, at a key moment for us to assess the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda and imagine the post-2030 sustainability paradigm.

**This is a timely and unique opportunity for us to take stock of crucial developments and rethink the position of culture within policies and national agendas.**

For IFACCA, participation in MONDIACULT will allow us to assess gaps in existing frameworks and paradigms that define cultural policy, further explore issues already being debated within the Federation, and expand these discussions to countries and contexts beyond our membership.

It is an important chance to identify concrete and viable solutions to ensure that culture is integrated in the post-2030 agenda in a way that is both precise and as stand-alone as well as transversal.

Only with such dual recognition of culture will we be prepared for future challenges, with cultural and creative sectors that are strengthened against potential future crises and culture enhanced as a source and resource for resilience and development.

## OUR DOSSIER

The presentation of this document, our Dossier for MONDIACULT 2022, frames and conveys the collective response of our Members to the fast-evolving reality in which they strive to build a more sustainable and inclusive future for the CCSs.

- It delineates the key values of culture; makes the case for activating and sustaining various pathways and actions to recognise these values; and presents a set of recommendations related to the issues faced by our National Members worldwide.
- It articulates synergies between our Members, nationally and regionally; maps the plurality of their voices; and draws insights from global expertise in the field of cultural policy.

It is built on the collective knowledge of our diverse membership, with information generated by Members and the Secretariat over the past decades and intelligence collected via consultation with Members in preparation for MONDIACULT 2022, through which National Members have shared short-, medium- and long-term concerns and priorities for cultural and creative sector development in their countries.

The consultation was conducted in June-August 2022 through a National Member survey completed by 70 percent of the Federation (43 National Members) and five meetings of our Regional Chapters in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Pacific.

Aligned to our guiding principles of plurality, this Dossier presents a shared perspective of our global membership, and includes national and regional references that add essential nuance and show diverse approaches to common challenges; but it does not purport to provide an exhaustive overview of all our Members' challenges and priorities. We are also mindful that there are different interpretations of various concepts, such as creative economy, sustainability, wellbeing, and even arts and culture.

In response to this urgency, we are critical and mindful of past errors from pre-COVID realities. This urgent call was conveyed by most Members. *As the Chair of IFACCA and CEO of the Canada Council for the Arts, Simon Brault, affirms:*

*'Our sector needs to recover from the pandemic, but we should not go back to where we were before. The recovery must bring change and lead to a new reality which recognises that culture is as much a sector as it is a dimension of society.'*

This Dossier is also informed by the findings and insights of our recent study *A crisis of sustainable careers? Examining working conditions for independent arts and cultural workers*, published in September 2022, which includes contributions from renowned expert authors from Algeria, Australia, France and Uruguay and recommendations for enhancing the sustainability of careers in the CCSs. The cultural workforce is a particularly urgent focus, as we seek to identify lesser addressed yet crucial issues in cultural policy frameworks and how we can tackle them.

# VALUE[S] OF CULTURE

**IFACCA Members are unified in the belief that arts and culture are a public good that has the potential to bring valuable contribution to multiple dimensions of life.**

**Arts and culture give expression to the diversity of human experience and enrich our lives in their own right:** they contribute to health and wellbeing, foster social cohesion, build communities, help us make sense of the world, and inspire experimentation and innovation and foster learning processes.

**Art stimulates critical thinking,** acceptance of ideas different to our own and the creation of inclusive spaces for plural voices to coexist peacefully.

**Culture brings people-to-people** dimension to international relations, which is crucial for building mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue.

Arts and culture can influence behaviour patterns and individual perceptions to **mitigate and adapt to climate change.** Artists have the tools and resources to be powerful messengers on sustainability concerns.

The value of these contributions and the leadership potential of our sector – working with shared resolve with public, private and civil society partners – must not be underestimated as societies work to rebuild and imagine better futures.

Given the vitality of the multiple values culture brings to every field of public life, it is important and urgent to acknowledge that any debate on cultural policy for the **future must begin with critical reflection on how these values are recognised and rewarded.**

**Artists and cultural professionals are key players in society:** their work directly contributes to fostering cultural diversity, innovation, and resilience.

**Culture has the potential to empower and unleash creativity,** which is crucial both for self-esteem and self-realisation.

Cross-border collaborations in culture and the arts have the potential to **foster peace and tolerance.**

The cultural and creative sectors have an important economic footprint, **create employment and stimulate business innovation.**

# KEY STATEMENT

The most recent global crises demonstrate that culture is an essential yet fragile resource. The inability of policy and regulatory frameworks to protect cultural and creative sectors in the face of turmoil can lead to the drain of the sectors' most vital component – *its workforce*. As we envisage a new paradigm for cultural policy and the place of culture within the post-2030 sustainability agenda, we must address existing fault lines and challenge the status quo; we must rebuild outdated frameworks and tackle their most significant flaw – *the value deficit*.

Therefore, we believe that to shape a robust and forward-looking vision for future cultural policies, **we must have tangible recognition of the social and economic values of culture.**

By tangible recognition, we mean **concrete actions, procedures and processes** that give due prominence to the role of culture as a societal shaper and improve the situation of the cultural workforce. This should be done by creating an all-embracing and sustainable framework for the cultural ecosystem to thrive, develop and continue to enhance its contribution to public life. The symbolic acknowledgement of culture's value – often featured in strategic and policy documents – must be translated into action that:

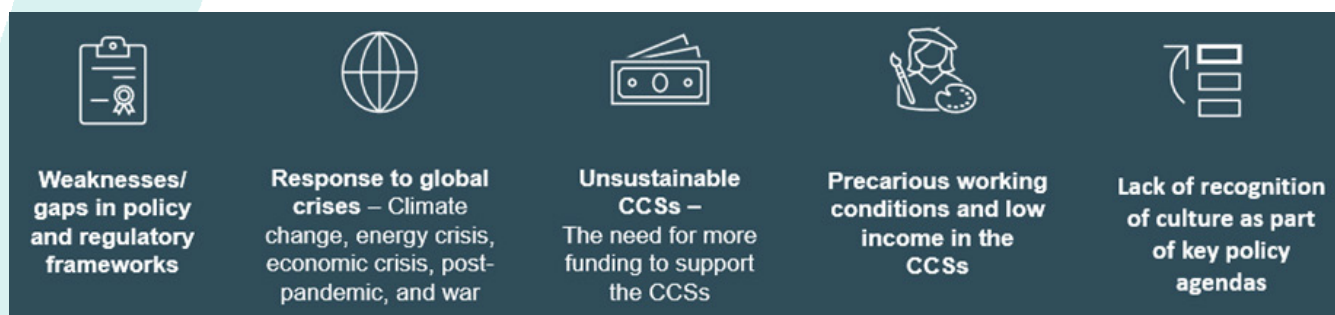
- creates effective legislative systems and frameworks
- strengthens operating environments
- integrates culture as a co-designer in key policy fields, and across portfolios
- increases and diversifies cultural investment.

We believe that culture must be effectively included across multiple policy portfolios, while its own dedicated policy space should be strengthened and well-resourced.

**Culture must be recognised both as an essential dimension of sustainable development and as a transversal driver of its other fields and goals.**

# RECOGNITION OF CULTURE: CURRENT REALITIES AND CRITICAL ISSUES

As we highlight in our report *A crisis of sustainable careers? Examining working conditions for independent arts and cultural workers* (2022), a lack of recognition, understanding and value negatively affects the viability of a sustainable cultural and creative ecosystem. This includes an invisibility of cultural work as labour, and of cultural workers as rightful members of a society's labour force; a lack of understanding of non-standard forms of employment in the sector; and a general deficit of recognition of the social value of culture and the arts.



Our Member consultation further revealed several aspects related to the current value deficit of culture:

- **Gaps in policy and regulatory frameworks** include:
  - absent or inadequate **copyright regulations** and other legislative systems protecting artists' rights in the digital age
  - a shortage of **metrics and indicator systems** to measure the economic and social footprint of the CCSs (a Member from a small island developing State shared that one of their urgent issues is how to quantify the creative economy's contribution to GDP as a rationale for government investment in culture)
  - a lack of access to **collective bargaining** as a mechanism to establish remuneration standards (a Member from Sub-Saharan Africa noted that there are no benchmarks for artists to negotiate wages, while such benchmarks exist for other sectors).
- Culture is disadvantaged within national strategies to address **crisis situations** and there is a shortage of effective solutions for culture in the face of global challenges, this includes:
  - lack of financial support for culture and strategies to retain the cultural workforce in **conflict situations** (one Member directly affected by war stated that 37 percent of creative professionals in the country had lost their jobs because of the conflict; and that if they do not receive immediate help, a whole generation of creatives will be lost, since these professionals will likely move to another country)
  - the **effects of the pandemic** which have damaged cultural and creative ecosystems and pushed creative talent to search for jobs in other sectors (one Member from Europe pointed out that cultural workers affected by inflation and the consequences of the pandemic are unable to engage solely in unpaid activities and are confronted with difficult professional choices)
  - **climate change** and natural disasters that affect creative value chains and cultural infrastructure; overall culture is not considered as a resource to deal with the environmental crisis, and there is a lack of support for the cultural sector to rethink its own practices, for greater sustainability.



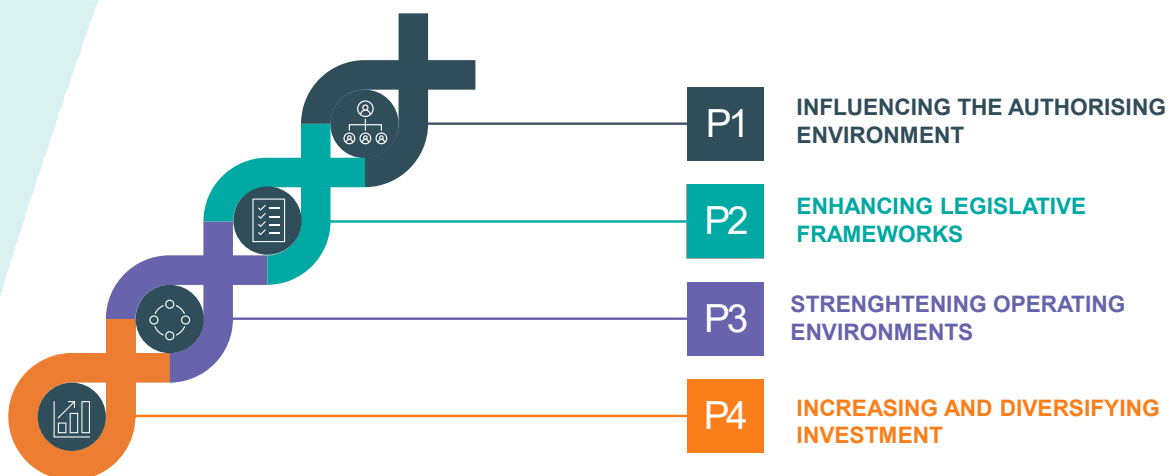
- **Fragility of the cultural and creative ecosystem** caused by the lack of understanding and acknowledgement of culture's economic and social contributions, means that cultural expenditure is **regarded as a cost rather than an investment in a public good**. This includes:
  - insufficient financial support and a limited **scope of investment sources** were highlighted across all five our Regional Chapters (a Member from Southern Africa noted that spending on culture is still the lowest among all sectors. It is a challenge to envisage the leadership of culture in sustainable development given the small size of the financial envelope allocated to CCSs. Another Member from the same region pointed out that there is some awareness that the creative economy can generate jobs; however, there is no increased support to CCSs at the national level, and a lot of advocacy work still needs to be done)
  - limited **capability-building**, both in the cultural sector and at the policy-making level: lack of digital and entrepreneurship skills; access to technologies; evaluation and measurement expertise; resources for data collection and analysis; competences for cross-sectorial cooperation; experience in strategising and elaborating roadmaps
  - lacking, inadequate or poor-quality **cultural infrastructure**.
- **Precarious working conditions** in the cultural and creative sectors are linked to the lack of recognition and weakness of regulatory and policy frameworks. The problem can also be aggravated by:
  - **institutions' limited scope** to navigate the complex policy matters related to the socio-economic position of artists and a lack of dialogue between cultural portfolio institutions and other ministries (for example, social affairs or taxation). As one arts council Member noted, its institution does not have ready solutions for the sustainability of independent artists and creators. Radically new models of support need to be developed and put in place to foster sustainable careers in the arts, but the solutions for that lie well outside the capacity of the Arts Council.
  - a lack of **comparable, measurable and longitudinal data and analysis** to understand the scope of the problem and how best to address multi-fold issues. A Member from Southeast Asia noted that even well-resourced institutions with the ability to collect and analyse data need a long time to make use of these processes, and this understanding should be part of the discussion on measuring synergies with other sectors and aspects of sustainability. Several Members from Latin America highlighted the need for developing common metric systems and building regional data capitals.
- **Lack of recognition of culture as part of key policy agendas**. This low place of culture within policy agendas is both a reason and a result of:
  - the absence of or insufficient weight given to **culture within global debates** and frameworks. As a Member from Africa pointed out, "If the value of culture is not recognised globally, it is difficult to advocate for it nationally"
  - inadequate **transposition of global references to culture** into national legislation and policy frameworks
  - insufficient **integration of culture** into national strategies, policies and key portfolios
  - lack of **understanding of the culture value chain** and creative economy modalities.

# PATHWAYS FOR RECOGNITION

Our Members shared many examples of how recognising the value of culture can be – and has been – translated into tangible actions by integrating culture in national wellbeing agendas; by shaping national cultural policy; by adopting laws on the status of the artist; and establishing artists’ unions, to name a few.

We believe that recognising culture’s value can be tangible and effective only if it happens in an all-embracing and transversal manner, implying cross-policy development and multi-stakeholder engagement.

This can be segmented into four key pathways:



To unleash the collective nature of the value recognition, the four recognition pathways should interlace and be pursued simultaneously.

## **+** INFLUENCE THE AUTHORISING ENVIRONMENT

Our Member consultation revealed that despite growing understanding of culture’s role in practice, social and policy positions of the cultural sector remain fragile and siloed. Future-proofed cultural policies must acknowledge that the cultural sector is an integral part of society and a vital driver for sustainable futures. This recognition should incorporate culture in national, regional and global agendas and strategies through two parallel approaches:

- a **whole-of-government approach** to cultural policies, which means that culture is transversally integrated as part of the national response to current and future challenges and is given tools and resources to contribute to the development and implementation of joint strategies, along with other ministries and public administration bodies, as well as all tiers of government
- a **whole-of-society approach**, which implies a structurally recognised and activated role for culture in shaping cooperative strategies in response to socially relevant matters, in collaboration with civil society, public and private stakeholders.

Concrete **actions** within these approaches can include:

1. establishing effective and continuous dialogue between cultural institutions and other public bodies, with a view to undertake joint actions in domains that affect the CCSs such as taxation, migration, social affairs, intellectual property and foreign affairs
2. including creative economy and cultural policies in key ministerial portfolios
3. incorporating culture as a key concept and co-designer of social and policy debates, for example around inclusion, wellbeing, and sustainability
4. including culture in major global, national and regional agendas, and defining culture's transversal contribution to other pillars within these agendas
5. developing and adopting relevant systems for measuring the impact of culture across societies and economies
6. enhancing institutional capacity to collaborate with a variety of policy, private and civil society stakeholders.



## ENHANCE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS

While there are substantial areas of legislative reform for culture, inadequate regulation of the digital environment and a lack of legal awareness of the non-standard nature of cultural labour are among the factors that undermine the livelihoods of artists and cultural workers. Therefore, tangible recognition of culture's value will be ineffective if we do not adopt new laws or reform existing legislative systems and frameworks. Cultural occupations should be legally recognised as fully fledged jobs, with due rights to benefits and entitlements that other sectors of the economy enjoy. The practical application of existing global, regional and international commitments, such as UNESCO's 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, is another aspect of this pathway.

**Actions** to create and improve legislative frameworks that reflect tangible recognition of the value of culture and cultural workers' contribution to society may include:

1. informing and educating other ministries and portfolios of the cultural workforce's atypical labour practices, challenges and gaps
2. adopting the status of the artist laws, which can include recognising intermittent work and enhancing independent workers' access to social security safety nets
3. developing and implementing regulatory measures that provide independent artists and cultural workers with access to collective bargaining
4. introducing laws on copyright and other aspects of monetisation of artists' and creatives' work in the digital environment
5. adopting regulations that establish contract modalities, including remuneration standards and force-majeure clauses.

Enhancing legislative frameworks must go hand-in-hand with raising awareness among the cultural workforce of workers' rights and responsibilities, and legislative processes.



## STRENGTHEN OPERATING ENVIRONMENTS

For the cultural and creative sector to unleash its potential and be a player in whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, it must have a dedicated place in the policy context. That is, culture must be recognised as a sector, the creative industry as part of the economy, and both must be recognised as key assets that shape social policy. This should be reflected in the creation of cultural policies and infrastructure, by instituting a dedicated policy-making portfolio for culture. Such institutional space and authority will be vital to a long-term vision that can ensure consistent and relevant policies, and develop cultural leadership; it will also be a source of diverse expertise across the creative value chain necessary to tackle current and future public policy challenges.

In addition to strengthening operating environments, we must build capability in institutional domains as well as the CCSs. This may include **actions** to:

1. diversify the breadth and scope of skills and competencies that are offered via training, education and grant programmes, for example in crisis management and social policy
2. build skills and competencies for digital, cross-sector collaborations, innovation and entrepreneurship, and knowledge about the culture value chain
3. provide support for cultural organisations to innovate, develop and adopt new internal processes, develop policies and ethical codes
4. put in place indicators and systems to collect and analyse data, review dynamics within the CCSs and measure its impact on other spheres
5. create and support platforms and networks for inter- and cross-sectoral collaboration
6. develop infrastructure by:
  - investing in the creation of new physical spaces – accessible to all – for cultural production, presentation and management
  - adapting existing physical infrastructure to ensure it is resilient against environmental changes, natural disasters and energy crises
  - enhancing access to digital technologies and digital spaces tailored for presentation, exhibition and matchmaking and allocating resources for digital experimentation.



## INCREASE AND DIVERSIFY INVESTMENT

Stable consistent financial support is essential to enable the cultural and creative sectors to thrive. Public investment creates CCSs that are resilient through turbulence and enables them to contribute to responses to global challenges. However, a deficit in investment has been highlighted as a persistent problem by our Regional Chapters. It was also one of the key findings of *UNESCO's 2022 Global Report Re/Shaping Policies for Creativity - Addressing culture as a global public good*.

A lack of allocation for culture in public budgets is often linked to cultural expenditure being seen as an expense, rather than an investment in a public good. The deficit in recognition of culture's value coupled with the scarcity of data on its contribution to national development (including, but not limited to, economic) are among the reasons why culture receives low levels of public investment.

Our Member consultation also revealed the need for exploring alternative sources of finance for culture – private and public – beyond culture lines of public budgets. Finally, while the scale of investment is important, it is also important to consider financial support policies and how they affect the resilience and sustainability of the CCSs, including which part of the creative process is financed and under what conditions.

This pathway can be pursued in more tangible terms, by taking the following **actions** to:

1. increase public support for culture as an investment in a public good that demands a sustainable future
2. revise funding models to improve working conditions of artists and cultural professionals and enable the cultural sector to adapt to crises and future disruptions, including:
  - supporting digital transformation
  - encouraging the CCSs to explore and adopt more sustainable practices
  - complementing the grant system with other funding models, such as investment in the creation of jobs
  - dispersing the focus from supporting production to investing across other activities of the creative value chain, such as artistic research, evaluation and documentation.

## REGIONAL LENS ON KEY PRIORITIES

### AFRICA

Our Africa Chapter highlighted the deficit of recognition for culture, linking it to the reclamation of African artists' rights. The CCSs in Africa must fully benefit from the resources of their continent, and African cultural heritage should belong to Africa. Capacity building and shaping of the creative economy must go hand-in-hand with embedding African cultures' voice in international agendas.

### AMERICAS

Our Americas Chapter expressed a sense of urgency to redefine what culture is and what it means in the context of region's complex reality, which is characterised by asymmetries and inequalities. As culture has been siloed for too long, it is time to reinstate the CCS as a stakeholder that plays a vital role across key portfolios for sustainable futures. This requires robust and regionally converged measurement systems and strong cross-sector ties.

### ASIA

Our Asia Chapter voiced the need to enhance the advancement and sustainability of the creative economy. Capability building in the CCSs is key in order to maintain excellence and harness synergies with other sectors. Elaboration of relevant indicator frameworks is essential for capturing the contribution of culture to sustainable development agendas.

### EUROPE

Our Europe Chapter is challenged by current instabilities that affect its ability to plan for the future, including an ongoing war. European Members seek viable and tailored solutions to support culture in the face of challenges such as economic upheaval, the pandemic, energy crisis and climate change. Social cohesion and decent working conditions in the CCSs are among key priorities.

### PACIFIC

Our Pacific Chapter expressed the need to consolidate its regional voice at the global level. Its common vision sees culture as a resource for wellbeing and an integral part of the response to the climate crisis, which is so tangibly felt in its part of the world. The Pacific Chapter concurs on the urgency to act to enhance the recognition of culture by developing culture-specific policies and embedding culture in key agendas.

# CONCLUSION

Common challenges emerged across all five of our Regional Chapters, including climate change, digital transformation, post-pandemic recovery and economic turmoil. However, there were also some asymmetries including access to financial resources; institutional capacities; understanding, accessing and nationally leveraging international instruments; technological development; increasing social inequities; and exposure to the direct effects of the climate change.

Despite diverse contexts and perceptions, the consultation process reaffirmed our Members' shared commitment to advance cultural and creative sectors and mould a more sustainable environment in which all can prosper.

**Together, we believe that structured and tangible recognition of culture's value is the way forward to build such an environment.**

This can be done and sustained via the four pathways – influencing the authorising environment; enhancing legislative frameworks; strengthening operating environments; and increasing and diversifying investment – which present an inclusive roadmap for different political, economic, social and geographical contexts.

We believe MONDIACULT is a vital moment to work together to translate this urgent need for change into action. Only through a collective effort, to build on global alliances at all levels, can we pave the way for a sustainable future for all.

The time to act is now, and together.



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