

# eunic cluster network

top tips for  
a successful  
cluster

purpose  
governance  
common  
projects  
communication  
engagement

# purpose

- 01** be strategic
- 02** respond to local contexts
- 03** think beyond projects

# 01

## be strategic

Decide what is desirable, feasible and impactful for you in your cluster

- ◆ Take time to decide and plan ahead what you want to do as a cluster
- ◆ Identify shared values and goals for the cluster
- ◆ Update your cluster strategy regularly and adapt your goals accordingly
- ◆ Take time to agree what a cultural relations approach means to you as a cluster
- ◆ See how in concrete terms through the cultural relations approach the cluster can add value to the needs of the local cultural sectors

# 02

## respond to local contexts

Act in response to your local context by maintaining a close dialogue with local cultural operators and partners, adapting your goals and strategy accordingly to the changing social and political context ♦ Co-create your cluster activities with relevant local partners and include their perspectives when updating your cluster's strategic plan to create more relevance and impact

*“We always made sure we had a lot of local input, both from local partners, we consulted participants through organising a conference as well as conducting a survey... in the final stage of creating our EUNIC Thailand climate toolkit project, we sent the drafts to various partners to get input from them, so the final result will really be a European-Thai product that makes sense here in the local context.”*

**Michael Schmeiser, Embassy of Austria in Bangkok,  
EUNIC Thailand**



# 03

## think beyond projects

A EUNIC cluster can be so much more than organising joint projects ♦ See it as a peer group, a space to exchange, share, and learn from each other ♦ Peer-to-peer exchange, support and capacity building amongst cluster members are just as important and valuable as delivering shared external-facing projects ♦ Our role and mission as cultural relations organisations are in constant evolution, presenting both challenges and opportunities – explore these evolutions with your cluster peer group

***“EUNIC Mongolia is a unique cluster with members in both Beijing and Ulaanbaatar, as many European institutions cover Mongolia from Beijing. This creates special challenges, as members in Beijing can’t visit often. In Ulaanbaatar, we act as the cluster’s eyes and ears, reporting on local initiatives and seeking opportunities for engagement with the cluster.”***

**Leonhard Heydecker, Goethe-Institute in Mongolia, EUNIC Mongolia (in Ulaanbaatar)**

***“Despite the distance from Ulaanbaatar, we have successfully participated in EUNIC Mongolia projects through online meetings and remote monitoring. It is indeed possible to be an active cluster member without a physical presence!”***

**Eric Messerschmidt, Danish Cultural Center in China, EUNIC Mongolia (in Beijing)**



# governance

- 04 go at your own pace
- 05 get organised
- 06 get engaged
- 07 understand each other's strengths
- 08 set up a presidency team
- 09 have fun

# 04

## go at your own pace

Make sure all cluster members meet regularly, at the frequency which feels right and realistic to you ♦  
You can also meet in smaller groups and at different levels according to interests and needs

# 05

## get organised

Find and establish an organisational governance structure that fits your cluster's specific purpose and goals ♦ Establish an approach for your cluster to administer budgets and receive funding

# 06

## get engaged

All cluster members need to be active and engaged within your capacity ♦ This can mean different things for different cluster members ♦ Joining a EUNIC cluster and signing the Cluster Charter is a commitment to being active, requiring accountability out of respect for each other's time and energy

*“It’s beneficial to include a range of members in your cluster, such as cultural institutes and Embassies. In Indonesia, this has allowed us to tap into a diverse array of voices, approaches, and practices, fostering creativity and innovation. Additionally, ensuring clear roles and responsibilities for all cluster members is essential so that the workload doesn’t rest solely on the shoulders of the president or the organisation leading the project.”*

**Summer Xia, British Council, EUNIC Indonesia**



# 07

## play to your strengths

While cluster members have different mandates, structures and capacities, everyone can bring something to the table

- ◆ Take the time to understand each other's strengths and capacities and clearly identify cluster members' roles and responsibilities based on these
- ◆ Not all members need to be involved in all activities – sometimes it can be more efficient to work with fewer members on a shared goal to maintain high-quality and innovative projects

# 08

## set up a presidency team

Build a presidency team with different cluster members to capitalise on the range of institutional knowledge, international affiliations and different resources ◆ Plan the succession of the next presidency well in advance and involve them early to ensure a smooth continuation

*“Establishing a co-presidency with another member helps distribute the workload efficiently and allows for the sharing of ideas. We maintain momentum by hosting events regularly – we hold monthly meetings, taking turns to host, and we also organise focus group meetings for our projects every two weeks.”*

**Charlotte Esnou, Institut français, EUNIC Indonesia**



# 09

## have fun

**Organise activities you enjoy** ♦ Plan a retreat day to get together or an offsite visit to meet with local partners ♦ Get to know your cluster members on a more human level

# common projects

- 10** be ambitious
- 11** stay focused
- 12** try something new
- 13** renew relationships

# 10

## be ambitious

Be bold and go beyond the sum of your individual parts ♦ Compared to what each cluster member does individually, a EUNIC cluster can address added-value topics through meaningful, relevant and socially responsible projects that go beyond bilateral relationships of cultural diplomacy ♦ Think about the deeper impact a shared cluster project can have

# 11

## stay focused

Stay focused and realistic  
– less can often be more

- ◆ When planning common projects, try to focus on quality over quantity and stay realistic within your ambitions
- ◆ Get rid of the pressure to organise a high number of projects, and rather try to implement a smaller number of (interconnected) activities that support local needs and can have a real impact

# 12

**try  
something  
new**

**A EUNIC cluster can be a platform to do things differently, it can be a space for new ideas and innovation**

- ◆ Give yourself freedom to leave your comfort zone, rethink activities creatively and try new things**

# 13

## renew relationships

As the cultural pulse and context is always evolving, create opportunities through the cluster to expand and refresh your contact and dialogue with local cultural actors ♦ Get a critical eye from the local sector on cluster projects, especially formats which have run for a long time already and where you feel there might be an opportunity to do things differently

*“We are a small cluster with a long history of EUNIC collaboration. For our project ‘The Routes We Take,’ we began by inviting two organisations to collaborate, present their ideas, and make suggestions – engaging cultural partners from different parts of the island proved invaluable. We received fantastic feedback, with partners noting that even those well-connected in the sustainability field discovered many new initiatives they weren’t aware of, opening up new avenues and connections.”*

**Stefan Winkler, Goethe-Institut Sri Lanka,  
EUNIC Sri Lanka**



# communication

- 14** communicate for impact
- 15** use eunic tools
- 16** tell your story

# 14

## communicate for impact

**Find coherent, catchy and convincing ways to communicate about your activities ♦ Have a strategic communication plan to increase the longer-term impact of your projects and activities**

***“This year, we achieved great success with our Cluster Fund project, ‘sā Ladakh’. We accomplished this by partnering with the local community and our EUNIC partners. Thanks to the EUNIC Cluster Fund, we were able to integrate numerous local artists and we achieved 815 million online interactions, making this our biggest and most impactful project. It addresses climate change through the lens of climate dignity and incorporates principles of regenerative art. It was a truly meaningful and impactful festival.”***

**Michael Pal, Austrian Cultural Forum,  
EUNIC New Delhi**



# 15

## use eunic tools

Use the communication tools of the EUNIC office

- ◆ Whilst forming part of a bigger network, each cluster has a level of autonomy on their local work
- ◆ Key communication tools and templates can help you communicate your cluster's work as part of a bigger whole within the network

# 16

## tell your story

Use your stories to strengthen advocacy: Sharing what you do locally with the EUNIC office is very relevant ♦ The work of clusters contributes directly to the wider political advocacy, storytelling and influence of our network ♦ That's why it is important to gather compelling evidence and communication materials to make the impact of your activities even stronger at a global level

# engagement

- 17** keep in touch
- 18** seek support from hq
- 19** use the eunic network

# 17

## keep in touch

Stay informed and make use of the diverse programme offer and opportunities managed by the EUNIC office

- ◆ Seek advice from the EUNIC team on any cluster related questions
- ◆ Regularly share developments and communication material from your cluster's activities with the EUNIC office
- ◆ Tag EUNIC Global in social media posts to make sure your activities are spread widely across the network

# 18

seek  
support  
from hq

Each member organisation of EUNIC has a Focal Point for EUNIC matters at their HQ

- ◆ Connect with your Focal Point and seek strategic and institutional advice
- ◆ Keep the discussion live with your HQs about what value and needs you have through participating in EUNIC

# 19

## use the eunic network

You are part of a vast network ♦ Connect with the wider EUNIC community on common practices on how to run a cluster, projects or innovative responses on specific topics ♦ This can be a source of inspiration and even regional cooperation ♦ Through bespoke communications, online meetings and live regional seminars, EUNIC clusters around the world can share their practice and build community

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