



WHITE PAPER

# Naming Rights.

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## A long-term strategic play.

*Modern sponsorship, shared value, and the future of cultural and commercial collaboration.*

By

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## IN BRIEF

# Executive summary

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**T**his paper makes a single argument: naming rights and long-term venue partnerships are the most significant untapped opportunity in UK arts and culture — for brands seeking distinctive, purpose-led reach, and for cultural institutions seeking sustainable, unrestricted investment. It draws on current market data, Baroness Hodge's 2025 review of Arts Council England, the European Sponsorship Association's research, and my own experience brokering the largest corporate naming rights deal in UK arts and culture history, Aviva Studios.

This paper distils my learnings over the last six years: where the opportunities lie, and the questions and possibilities they raise about the direction of travel that cultural organisations could take to stabilise and generate new income streams for the sustainability of their organisations.

## Key findings

- **A \$200 billion horizon — in potential.** Global sponsorship rights fees reached \$97.5bn in 2024 (IEG) and have grown at close to double digits. If that holds, the market could move toward a \$150–200bn horizon over the coming decade — driven by exactly the kind of long-term venue partnerships this paper examines.
- **Culture is under-invested, not under-attended.** All non-sport sponsorship is just 28% of the European market, yet up to 90% of Europeans engage with culture each year, and London's West End outdraws the Premier League (17.1m visits against ~11m).
- **£1.5–2 billion sitting idle.** CCP estimates £1.5–2bn of untapped commercial naming and partnership value across UK arts and culture — capable of driving both sector revenue and brand value.
- **Valuations must be grounded in reality.** Even in the Premier League, only around six of twenty clubs hold a stadium naming-rights deal (versus ~80% of NFL teams) — assets left unsold or overpriced. Deals get done when they are valued to evidence, not aspiration.
- **The barrier is knowledge, not appetite.** 61% of brands have never sponsored a cultural organisation, yet 62% are open to it — and only 32% feel they understand the offer.



- ▶ **Governance is now settled.** Arts Council England's 2026 risk-and-reputation framework places naming rights in its highest due-diligence tier, giving institutions an agreed standard to partner with confidence.
- ▶ **It has been done, at scale.** The Aviva Studios partnership — brokered by CCP's founder — is the UK's largest arts and culture naming rights deal, and the blueprint this paper turns into a repeatable model.

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# Introduction: The \$200 Billion Opportunity

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**T**he landscape of venue sponsorship has undergone a profound transformation. What began as a simple act of corporate branding — a company name placed on a building — has become one of the most sophisticated tools in modern marketing. Today, the principles of naming rights are being applied across an ever-widening range of sectors, from sport and entertainment to arts and culture, healthcare, education and public infrastructure.

This paper is written for three audiences: the cultural organisations that run our venues and hold the right to name them; the brands looking to build authentic, purpose-driven partnerships with them; and the owners of the buildings and places that host them. A word on language: throughout, it borrows the commercial vocabulary of the sponsorship world — “rights holder”, “property owner” — not to reduce cultural organisations to assets, but because learning to see their own worth through that lens is precisely the shift this paper argues the sector should make. It is grounded in current market data, informed by the most significant partnerships in the world today, and written from the perspective of a practitioner who understands the nuance and complexity of this fast-moving market.

Its central argument is simple but consequential: the most successful naming rights partnerships of the coming decade will be those that move beyond a transactional exchange and embrace a model of shared value. They will be built on a genuine alignment of mission and values, activated through an integrated strategy, and designed to create social and environmental impact alongside commercial return. Nowhere is that opportunity greater, or less exploited, than in arts and culture — and that is where much of this paper will focus.

# 01

PART ONE

## The Opportunity

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*Why naming rights matter now more than ever — the scale of the market, the white space in culture, and the case for moving first.*

**CCP.**

## CHAPTER 1

# The \$200 Billion Opportunity: Why Naming Rights Matter Now More Than Ever

In 2024, global sponsorship rights fees reached \$97.5 billion, according to IEG, the sector's benchmark source.<sup>1</sup> This is not a niche channel; it is a fundamental pillar of brand building, and it has grown at close to double digits year on year. If that pace is sustained, the market has the potential to move toward a \$150–200 billion horizon over the coming decade — the opportunity this paper sets out to map. That horizon is a potential, not a given. Reaching it will depend on the industry unlocking genuinely new value rather than re-pricing the deals it already has — and long-term, multi-year naming rights on major venues are among the clearest drivers capable of taking it there, provided they are valued and structured correctly.

**\$97.5bn**

Global sponsorship rights fees in 2024  
(IEG)

**90%**

of Europeans engage with a cultural  
activity each year

Within that landscape, venue naming rights have evolved from a novelty into a sophisticated, multi-billion-pound discipline. The marquee deals capture the headlines — the reported \$700 million, twenty-year transformation of the Staples Center into Crypto.com Arena, or the roughly \$30 million a year committed for SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles.<sup>2</sup> These are they are long-term investments in the cultural and emotional fabric of a city.

**Culture offers sport's reach — with a fraction of the competition, cost and clutter.**

THE CENTRAL ASYMMETRY

## A European snapshot

Bring the lens closer to home and the picture sharpens. In 2025 the European sponsorship market reached a record €34.45 billion, growing 4.7 per cent year on year, according to the

ESA Sponsorship Market Overview produced by Nielsen Sports for the European Sponsorship Association.<sup>3</sup> Sport accounts for 72 per cent of that investment — some €24.79 billion. Everything outside sport — arts, culture, entertainment, festivals and social initiatives combined — makes up the remaining 28 per cent, around €9.66 billion.<sup>3</sup>

The same research singles out naming rights as the standout driver of growth in that non-sport sector, citing recent long-term agreements by brands such as British Airways and Laya Healthcare.<sup>3</sup> In other words, the part of the market with the most room to grow is already being led by the very instrument this paper examines. The United Kingdom, growing 10.5 per cent to €6.15 billion, was among the fastest-moving major markets in Europe.<sup>3</sup>

## The untapped frontier

Here lies the central asymmetry — and the central opportunity. That 28 per cent is not arts and culture alone; it is all non-sport spending combined. Arts and culture is only a slice of it circa 9%. And yet the audience for culture is vast. Up to 90 per cent of the European public engages with a cultural activity over the course of a year.<sup>4</sup> In the United Kingdom, more people attend theatres in London's West End each year, some 17.1 million, than attend Premier League football matches, around 11 million.<sup>4</sup> The reach is there. The passion is there. The investment is not.

Why has such an obvious opportunity gone unclaimed? Partly because culture has, historically, been sustained first and foremost by public investment — commercial partnership was rarely a strategic priority, and for many organisations simply wasn't required. Partly because of a natural caution on both sides about how commercial and cultural interests sit together. And partly because the capability is unevenly spread: a number of major institutions build outstanding commercial partnerships, but many organisations have never needed to develop that expertise, because the requirement wasn't there. What has changed is that rising costs and ambitions now make new commercial revenue valuable in a way it wasn't before — and the sector's appetite has caught up with the opportunity.

For a brand, this is the rare combination of scale and white space. Sport is a mature, crowded, expensive market in which differentiation is hard won. Culture offers comparable reach, a more affluent and engaged audience, an authentic platform for environmental and social commitments, and far less competition for the best assets. The brands that recognise this early will secure the landmark partnerships of the next decade at a fraction of what equivalent visibility costs in sport — and will be remembered as the patrons who got there first.

## Why now

Two forces make this moment decisive. The first is media fragmentation. In a world of skippable advertising and fleeting attention, the power of a tangible, iconic destination — a place where communities gather and memories are made — has rarely been more valuable. A naming rights partnership offers a brand something genuinely scarce: permanence. It is an always-on platform that transcends the thirty-second spot or the passing social campaign.

The second is financial. Public investment remains the bedrock of the cultural sector and must continue to be — but it has not kept pace with rising operating costs or the capital needs of both new and ageing venues. That widening gap between resources and ambition is one that commercial partnership is well placed to help close, working alongside public funding rather than in place of it. What that means for rights holders and brands is the subject of Chapter 5 — the backdrop against which every argument in this paper should be read. And a policy dimension is now gathering behind this shift: a growing recognition — which Chapter 19 takes up — that the tax system itself could do far more to reward the long-term commitments culture most needs.

## **The argument of this paper**

This paper contends that we are at an inflection point. The continued explosive growth of the sponsorship market, the strategic diversification of naming rights, and the structural funding pressures facing culture have together created an opening without precedent. The greatest potential lies not in the saturated sports market but in a sector only beginning to understand its own worth. As the following chapters will show, this is where the next frontier of naming rights will be defined — and where brands have the chance to build something more durable than awareness: belief.



## CHAPTER 2

# From Ballparks to Boardrooms: The 30-Year Evolution of Naming Rights

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**T**he idea of putting a corporate name on a public venue is not new. Its roots reach back to the early twentieth century, to deals such as the 1926 agreement that christened the Chicago Cubs' home as Wrigley Field.<sup>1</sup> For decades, however, these were exceptions — charming quirks driven more by the paternalism of a local owner than by any calculated marketing strategy. For most of the century, venues were named for their location (Boston Garden), their function (The Forum) or a historical figure (John F. Kennedy Stadium).

The modern era began in the late 1990s. The catalyst was a confluence of forces: the soaring cost of building and maintaining state-of-the-art arenas, the growing sophistication of sports marketing, and a booming economy that gave corporations the confidence to make bold, long-term commitments. The watershed arrived in 1999, with a twenty-year, \$100 million agreement to name the new home of the Los Angeles Lakers the Staples Center.<sup>2</sup> This was a declaration that a venue's identity was itself a tradable, high-value asset.

The 2000s became the decade of financial services, as banks and insurers rushed to affix their names to the new cathedrals of sport. Agreements such as the reported \$400 million deal for Citi Field in New York and the roughly £100 million partnership for the Emirates Stadium in London set new benchmarks.<sup>3</sup> Naming rights became a tool for achieving mass-market recognition and projecting an image of civic importance and stability.

By the 2010s, the market had matured and globalised. Technology companies, flush with cash and ambition, entered the fray, and the partnerships themselves grew more complex. They were no longer about signage and media mentions alone; they evolved into multifaceted marketing platforms, integrating digital content, social campaigns, retail activation and exclusive hospitality. The culmination of this trend was the 2021 deal that saw the Staples Center renamed Crypto.com Arena — a reported \$700 million commitment that announced the arrival of a new, digitally native class of corporate partner.<sup>4</sup>

This brings us to the present: an era defined by purpose and integration. The most forward-thinking partnerships are no longer simply transactional. They are values-driven alliances that seek to deliver commercial return and meaningful social impact together. The rise of environmental, social and governance (ESG) priorities as a core business imperative has

reshaped the landscape, and brands now use these partnerships to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability, community and social equity.

That evolution is the key to understanding the modern opportunity. A naming rights deal is no longer a media buy; it is a strategic marriage between a brand and a community, a long-term commitment that embeds a company in the cultural life of a place. As the next chapter argues, this shift has profound implications — nowhere more so than in arts and culture, where the alignment of mission and values is not merely a benefit but a prerequisite for success.

## CHAPTER 3

# Beyond the Billboard: The Strategic Value of Integrated Partnerships

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**F**or too long, and especially in the arts, the conversation around naming rights has been dominated by a false dichotomy: artistic purity versus commercial compromise. It is a flawed and unproductive frame. The strategic value of a naming rights partnership lies not in the transactional exchange of cash for visibility, but in the creation of a deeply integrated relationship that generates value for the community, the venue and the brand alike. The myth of purity has arguably cost the arts more than any funding cut.

## Permanence and cultural embedding

A naming rights deal offers what no thirty-second spot or programmatic banner can: permanence. It transforms a brand from an advertiser into a landmark. The name of the venue enters the city's vernacular, woven into daily conversation, news reports and personal memory. This level of integration creates an enduring association that operates far below the transactional surface of conventional advertising — a presence rather than an interruption.

**The myth of purity has arguably cost the arts more than any funding cut.**

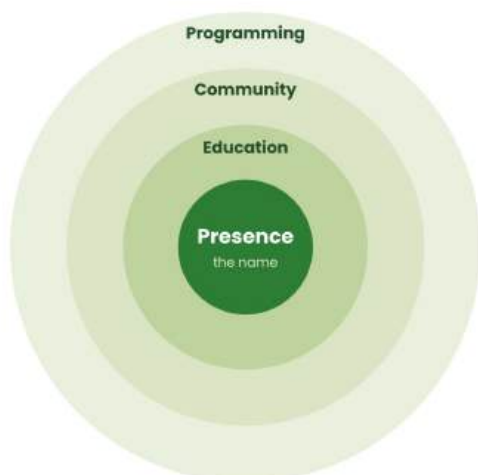
FIGURE — CHAPTER 3

CCP CULTURAL CAPITAL PARTNERS

BEYOND THE BILLBOARD

## More than a name on a wall.

A naming partnership is not only about presence. Its real power is the option to go deeper — to help shape the programming, the community and the education around the venue, where that is the right thing to do.



**Education** — support for skills, access and the next generation.

**Community** — a role in how it serves the place around it.

**Programming** — a say in what the venue creates and stages.

The Aviva Studios model — naming *plus* the Factory Academy skills programme *plus* affordable access — is not a campaign but an ecosystem. That is what compounds in value.

Cultural Capital Partners — Naming Rights

CCP.

## The economics of attention

Consider the sheer volume of exposure. A typical naming rights partnership generates billions of media impressions over its term. But the true value lies in their quality. Unlike a forced pre-roll, a mention of the venue name is organic and contextual — part of the story, not a break from it. The long-term nature of these deals also provides a predictability impossible to achieve through short-term media buys, and a cost-per-impression that, over a ten or twenty-year horizon, is often far more efficient than equivalent spending elsewhere. Most importantly, it builds brand equity over time, as the venue becomes more iconic and more beloved.

FIGURE — CHAPTER 3



THE ECONOMICS OF ATTENTION

# Two routes to attention.

TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Interruption you rent

- ▶ Pre-roll, paid social, banners
- ▶ Skippable — a break *from* the story
- ▶ Attention stops when spend stops
- ▶ Resets to zero each campaign

NAMING RIGHTS

Presence you own

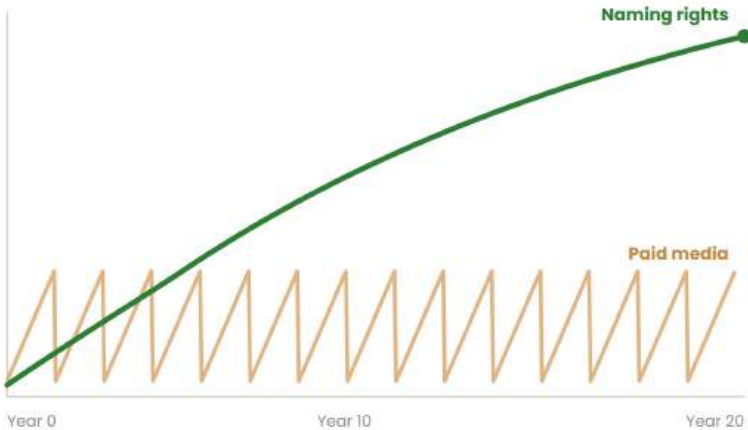
- ▶ The venue name enters daily life
- ▶ Organic & contextual — *part of* the story
- ▶ Always-on, year-round
- ▶ Compounds as the venue grows iconic

FIGURE — CHAPTER 3



THE ECONOMICS OF ATTENTION

# Value over time.



Illustrative. Paid media resets each campaign; naming-rights equity compounds across a 10–20 year term.

Over a twenty-year horizon, a naming partnership's **cost-per-impression falls** as its value climbs — the opposite of media spend, which buys the same impression again and again.

## The untapped opportunity

Despite its proven power in sport, naming rights remain relatively untapped elsewhere — most notably in arts and culture. As we have seen, sport still takes the great majority of European sponsorship;<sup>1</sup> the striking point is that the barrier is not appetite but knowledge. An ESA survey found that 61 per cent of brands had never sponsored a cultural organisation, yet 62 per cent were open to doing so — and only 32 per cent felt they had a good understanding of the arts and culture offer.<sup>2</sup> The gap, in other words, is one of familiarity, not value. For a brand willing to look beyond the stadium, the arts present a less cluttered and more emotionally resonant space in which to build and this is now coupled with a greater appetite.

## Defending your brand partner

The most enduring partnerships rest on mutual trust and loyalty. In a naming rights deal, the rights holder has a fundamental responsibility to stand by its brand partner, particularly under external pressure. But that loyalty is not blind — it is the product of rigorous, pre-emptive governance, the subject of Chapter 8. The duality is this: you defend your partner fiercely precisely because you have already done the hard work of vetting them thoroughly.

This wariness cuts both ways: some corporates have held back from larger arts partnerships for fear of backlash or negative press. That fear is answerable — through exactly the kind of rigorous, documented vetting set out in Chapter 8 — and the sector is now building the standards to make it routine.

This view is now echoed at the highest level. Baroness Hodge's 2025 independent review of Arts Council England states plainly that boycotting the sponsors of arts and culture will often be more damaging to the arts than to the sponsor, and that the Arts Council has a leadership role in challenging such boycotts.<sup>3</sup> Artist opposition, however sincere, reflects an individual's personal conviction; it is not an indictment of an operator's judgement. Where the ethical homework has been done in advance, the operator's duty is to uphold the agreement and defend the partnership.

## What naming rights solve that advertising cannot

A naming rights partnership is not a large-scale advertising buy. It is a different proposition that answers strategic challenges traditional media spend cannot reach. It offers permanence over campaigns — an always-on, year-round presence in place of activity that runs for a few weeks and is replaced. It offers civic equity over paid media — the chance to become a genuine community partner rather than another advertiser competing for cynical attention. And it offers legitimacy over reach — by aligning with a respected cultural institution, a brand can borrow a credibility and trust that would take years to build through

conventional marketing. The era of "slapping a logo on it" is over. The value lies in becoming part of the story of a place and its people.



## CHAPTER 4

# Playing It Safe Is Not the Safe Play

**F**or decades, much of brand and media decision-making has been driven by a single, unspoken objective: avoid risk. Not commercial risk, and not creative risk, but personal risk — the risk of being the executive whose decision draws criticism, creates internal discomfort, or becomes difficult to explain in a boardroom.

The instinct is entirely human. Chief marketing officers and senior leaders operate in environments where scrutiny is constant, tenure is fragile and a reputational misstep can be career-limiting. Playing it safe feels rational because it is defensible. Everyone recognises the media plan. Everyone understands the logic. Everyone can nod along.

**Playing it safe may protect today's meeting. It rarely protects tomorrow's brand.**

But there is a quiet contradiction at the heart of this thinking. Many of the "safe" decisions being made in marketing today deliver diminishing returns. Traditional plans are signed off not because they are effective but because they are familiar. Measurement frameworks are defended because changing them would expose uncomfortable truths. Campaigns are renewed on autopilot because challenging them would create friction. In other words, playing it safe is often not about performance. It is about preservation.

Naming rights and long-term venue partnerships sit directly in the crosshairs of this tension. They are not "safe" in the conventional sense. They are visible, permanent and difficult to walk away from quietly. They invite scrutiny not just of spend, but of values, intent and leadership conviction. And that is precisely why they work.

The evidence supports the point. The long-running analysis of Les Binet and Peter Field consistently shows that long-term, emotionally resonant brand investment outperforms short-term tactical spend on both growth and resilience.<sup>1</sup> Research into distinctiveness and mental availability shows that distinctive, high-visibility assets outperform frequency-based media in recall and brand linkage<sup>2</sup> — and naming rights are structurally distinctive. Behavioural research, meanwhile, indicates that organisations systematically overestimate reputational risk and underestimate the cost of inaction.<sup>3</sup> Boards respond more readily to visible criticism than to invisible decline.



The dynamics of backlash reinforce this. Studies of brand controversy show that negative sentiment peaks tend to be sharp but short-lived, while uplifts in awareness and consideration often persist.<sup>4</sup> Silence and withdrawal frequently prolong damage more than clear, consistent positioning. The greater risk, rarely acknowledged, is invisibility. When brands retreat into safety they do not avoid scrutiny; they fade into sameness. In crowded markets, that is the more dangerous place to be. No one protests what they barely notice, and no one advocates for a brand that feels interchangeable.

None of this is an argument for boldness for its own sake. Big moves made without due diligence, governance or strategic clarity can and do fail, and there are naming rights deals that have generated backlash, short-term sentiment dips and internal strain. That reality should not be ignored. What matters is proportionality and intent: not controversy to be courted, but uncertainty to be managed. Brands that understand risk properly — as something to be governed rather than feared — consistently outperform those trapped in safe but stagnant cycles.

The safest play, then, is not the one that avoids attention. It is the one that builds relevance, trust and memory over time, and is robust enough to withstand short-term noise. Playing it safe may protect today's meeting. It rarely protects tomorrow's brand.

There is a structural reason for this. As Rory Sutherland, Vice-Chairman of Ogilvy UK, put it at an event I recently attended, marketing has become a short-termist game: “you're held accountable for every penny of expenditure, but you can only claim credit for revenue generated in the last three months.”

A long-term naming or headline partnership escapes that trap, and culture offers what sport cannot: a return that is demonstrable, because publicly-accountable cultural organisations must evidence their public benefit — from education to access for young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. That is a legacy a brand can align to, effect and benefit from. In a discipline that punishes patience, culture is one of the few arenas where the long game can be played and proven — one not subject to promotion or relegation, but answering purely to the long-term benefit of the public.

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS • PART I — THE OPPORTUNITY

- ▶ Global sponsorship reached \$97.5bn in 2024, with the potential to move toward a \$150–200bn horizon — naming rights a key driver.
- ▶ Culture offers sport's reach with a fraction of the competition, cost and clutter: the biggest white space in the market.
- ▶ The barrier is knowledge, not appetite — brands are open to culture but don't yet understand the offer.
- ▶ Playing it safe is the real risk; visible, long-term partnerships outperform safe, forgettable spend.

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PART TWO

# The Players

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*Rights holders, brands and property owners — what each brings, what each needs, and the governance that makes a deal defensible.*

**CCP.**

## CHAPTER 5

# The Rights Holder: From Financial Imperative to Strategic Valuation

**E**very naming rights partnership begins with what the sponsorship world calls a rights holder — in our sector, simply the cultural organisation that owns a nameable asset and the audience that comes with it. For cultural organisations in particular, the conversation about partnership often starts from financial pressure — the widening gap between what public funding covers and what rising costs and ambitions demand. Understanding that pressure is essential — but so is moving beyond it, because need is a poor foundation on which to build a deal.

## 6 of 20

Premier League clubs hold a stadium naming-rights deal — versus roughly 80% of NFL teams

The pressure is real and well documented — not least by the Arts Council's own commissioned review. Baroness Hodge's 2025 review found that, in real terms and per person, public spending on culture by the Arts Council and local authorities declined by 18 and 48 per cent respectively between 2009/10 and 2022/23.<sup>1</sup> Just as telling is the physical strain: more than three-quarters of arts centres are unable to complete planned building work, and some 60 per cent have had no significant refurbishment in over a decade.<sup>1</sup> The issue is less any single funder than a widening gap between static resources and the rising cost of operating and maintaining venues. It is also why the policy question matters: as Chapter 19 argues, a tax system that actively rewarded long-term corporate investment could help close that gap — not by replacing public funding, but by drawing private capital in alongside it.

**Valuations grounded in reality get done; valuations grounded in hope do not.**

Against that backdrop, the temptation is to approach a prospective partner as a supplicant — to ask for help. This is a mistake. Desperation is visible, and it suppresses value. The rights holder that frames the conversation around its own need invites a transaction priced to that

need. The rights holder that understands the worth of what it owns begins a negotiation between equals.

That shift — from financial imperative to strategic valuation — is the central task of this chapter. A naming asset is not a donation box; it is a high-value marketing platform. Its worth is a function of several factors: the scale and quality of the audience it reaches, the media value it generates, the premium attached to association with a respected institution, the length and exclusivity of the term, the potential for activation, and the civic significance of the venue itself. The rights holder's job is to inventory these assets and to articulate their value in terms a brand will recognise.

The mindset that follows is decisive. A naming partner is not a benefactor but an investor, one who expects a return — commercial, reputational and social. The rights holder that can define that return clearly, and then deliver it, will command both better terms and longer, more resilient relationships. The evidence is consistent that multi-year partnerships deliver deeper impact and brand equity than one-off campaigns, which is why the most valuable propositions are framed around the long term.<sup>2</sup>

Even in the mature world of sport, that discipline is often missing — and the lesson travels directly to culture. In the Premier League, among the most commercially sophisticated competitions on earth, only around six of its twenty clubs hold a stadium naming-rights deal, against roughly 80 per cent of franchises in America's NFL.<sup>3</sup> Much of that gap is self-inflicted: assets are left unsold, or priced to an owner's aspiration rather than the market's evidence, and the deal never happens. A naming right — in sport or culture, on the venue or as a headline partnership — is worth what a credible partner will pay for the value it demonstrably delivers: no more, and no less. Valuations grounded in reality get done; valuations grounded in hope do not.

This is not only our contention; it is what the data shows. The Sponsor, a sponsorship-industry research publication that runs independent fair-market valuations of naming-rights assets, has tested precisely this question across the European market.<sup>4</sup> As Sean Connell of The Sponsor puts it:



*One of the most valuable findings from our research into the fair market value of naming rights across Europe's major stadiums was that, unlike many other sponsorship assets, pricing is remarkably disciplined. With front-of-shirt sponsorship, for example, reported deal values often fluctuate significantly from the underlying economic value of the asset. Stadium naming rights are different. Across more than 100 stadiums and over 35 concluded naming rights partnerships, we found that commercial deals deviated very little from fair market value. This suggests there is a relatively well-defined pricing range that sponsors are prepared to pay for stadium and venue naming rights. Assets priced within that range tend to transact. Those priced materially above it simply don't sell, something we have consistently observed across the European market.*

— SEAN CONNELL, THE SPONSOR

The discipline Connell describes is the same one this paper urges on culture, and the read-across is direct: a naming right is worth the evidenced value it delivers, whether the building hosts football or opera. The pattern is visible market by market — in Germany's Bundesliga, the most mature naming market in Europe, fourteen of eighteen top-flight stadiums carry a naming partner and deals price close to fair value. Where a market values its assets to the evidence, the deals get done. Sport's data now proves the principle; culture has the chance to apply it from the outset.

There is a sobering measure of how far the sector has to travel. In 2023/24, higher education in the United Kingdom raised £1.52 billion through philanthropy, while the arts raised £948 million.<sup>1</sup> The arts have historically under-monetised their own cultural capital. The opportunity, for any rights holder willing to professionalise its approach, is to close that gap — not by asking for more, but by valuing properly what it already owns.

## CHAPTER 6

# The Brand: Building a Legacy, Not Just a Campaign

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**W**hy would a brand commit millions of pounds, over ten or twenty years, to put its name on a building? The answer that separates the best partnerships from the rest is that they are not buying exposure. They are building a legacy.

Consider Aviva. One of the United Kingdom's oldest and most trusted financial services brands, it found in recent years that the numbers that matter most — spontaneous awareness, affinity and consideration — were quietly declining, even as prompted awareness held up. The problem was differentiation in a category where everyone looks and sounds the same. Aviva's response was a deliberate, venue-led strategy: a portfolio of world-class venues spanning sport, arts and music, chosen to mirror the diverse interests of its customers. In 2023 I brokered the naming rights to Manchester's landmark new arts and culture venue, Aviva Studios. As the company's head of group sponsorship, Tom Whiteside, put it, sponsoring the venue was "a deliberate decision not to follow the crowd back into big sports."<sup>1</sup>

**A campaign rents attention for a season. A legacy compounds in value year after year.**

That single decision captures the strategic logic of this paper. Where competitors clustered around the same saturated sporting properties, Aviva chose the less crowded, more emotionally resonant space of culture — and made its investment about more than a name above the door. The partnership is anchored in long-term community, social and economic commitment, including support for the Factory Academy skills programme and a long-standing commitment to affordable, inclusive access.<sup>1</sup> A campaign rents attention for a season. A legacy of this kind compounds in value year after year.

The commercial case is not soft. Brands that approach sponsorship strategically report returns that paid media struggles to match. The Irish telecommunications brand Three, for example, found through independent evaluation that its sponsorship activity was delivering close to four times the return on investment of traditional advertising, while building brand equity that advertising alone could not replicate.<sup>2</sup> The mechanism, in Three's own framing, was a simple equation — access plus experience equals emotional equity — and it is one any cultural partnership is well placed to deliver.



There is a further, often overlooked dimension to this. The overwhelming majority of the organisations a brand would partner with in the arts are not-for-profits — and that changes the nature of the investment entirely. A naming rights or headline partnership is not a payment that vanishes into someone's margin; because these institutions exist to serve a public mission, every pound is reinvested — into artistic programming, yes, but also into the education, the skills, the access and the community work that make places thrive, and into the buildings themselves. And those buildings need it: much of the country's cultural estate is ageing, costly to maintain, and carrying the same rising operating costs as every other sector, even as it keeps delivering for its audiences and communities. Investment at this level, then, is not a sunk cost or a badge on a wall. It is long-term infrastructure being built for the future of the sector — and, increasingly, of the country itself. For the brand, that is the rare combination: capital that genuinely endures and compounds in social value, delivered through a platform that still provides everything a commercial partner needs commercially, with all the governance and protections set out in Chapter 8. The return is real on both sides of the ledger.

Before committing, a brand should ask itself four hard questions:

- ▶ Do our values and the institution's genuinely align, or is the fit superficial?
- ▶ Does its audience meaningfully overlap with the one we need to reach?
- ▶ Do we have the appetite and the capability to activate the partnership, rather than merely funding it?
- ▶ And have we, with our partner, built the governance to withstand scrutiny?

A naming rights deal answered well on all four counts is among the most durable assets a brand can own.

The final caution is the most important. A name without activation is a wasted investment. The brands that succeed are those that commit to the partnership itself — to the programming, the people and the community around it — and not merely to the payment. The name on the building is the beginning of the work, not the end of it.

## CHAPTER 7

# The Property Owner: From Asset to Landmark

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**T**here is a third party to many modern naming rights deals whose interests are often overlooked: the owner of the physical asset. In an age of mixed-use developments, regeneration schemes and innovation districts, the entity that owns the building is frequently distinct from the organisation that operates within it. For that owner, a naming rights partnership is not simply a revenue line. It is a tool of placemaking that can transform a piece of real estate into a landmark.

The logic is one of value creation that extends well beyond the venue's walls. A named cultural venue anchors a district. It drives footfall, raises the profile and desirability of surrounding development, attracts tenants and commands a premium on adjacent space. A cultural institution confers a halo that few other anchors can match — it signals permanence, quality and civic ambition in a way a retail unit or office block cannot.

The economic weight behind that halo is substantial. The Hodge review records that the arts, museums, galleries and libraries contributed £10 billion in gross value added in 2023, within a creative industries sector worth £124 billion.<sup>1</sup> These are not soft, unquantifiable benefits; they are measurable contributions to local and national economies. The owner who understands a cultural venue as an economic engine, rather than a tenant to be subsidised, sees the asset clearly.

Aviva Studios in Manchester illustrates the point. Built in one of Europe's most creative cities as an ambitious, flexible, year-round destination for the arts, it functions as a cultural anchor within a wider regeneration story, and as a new model for what corporate partnership in the cultural sector can look like.<sup>2</sup> The value it generates is shared among operator, brand and the place itself.

For the property owner, this argues for a more sophisticated approach to structuring deals — one in which the owner is an active participant rather than a passive landlord. The interests of owner, operator and brand can be aligned so that all three share in the upside. It also argues for foresight: the condition and adaptability of the building, its capacity to be future-proofed, and the flexibility of the naming arrangement as the asset and its district evolve over a twenty-year horizon. The buildings that become landmarks are those designed, and named, with that long arc in mind.



## CHAPTER 8

# Governance and Ethics: The Foundation of a Defensible Deal

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**C**hapter 3 argued that a rights holder must be willing to defend its brand partner under pressure. This chapter explains what earns that right. Loyalty in a partnership is not a sentiment; it is the dividend of rigorous, pre-emptive governance. You can defend a partner with confidence only because you did the difficult work of vetting them before the ink was dry.

Good governance begins with structured due diligence. Before a partnership is signed, the prospective partner should be assessed against a clear ethical framework: the genuineness of the values alignment, the partner's conduct and track record, its exposure to controversy or category conflict, and the circumstances under which either party would need to exit. None of this is glamorous, and all of it is essential. The deals that collapse publicly are almost always the deals where this work was skipped.

**The defensible deal is the one that has earned the right to withstand criticism.**

That framework should be matched by precise contractual architecture. Well-constructed agreements set out naming durations clearly and include the protective provisions that allow a partnership to end with dignity if it must — termination triggers, morality and sunset clauses, and rights of refusal. These are the mechanisms that make a long-term commitment safe to enter for both sides, and they should be drafted with care and coordinated with a shared communications strategy from the outset.

This is no longer a matter of individual judgement. In 2026, Arts Council England and Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy published *Managing Risks and Reputation in Fundraising*, which sets out a risk-tiered due-diligence framework for the cultural sector. Naming rights and major sponsorships sit in its highest tier — the agreements that call for full-board oversight, source-of-funds and sanctions screening, an assessment of financial stability, contractual safeguards and exit clauses, and scheduled review throughout the life of the partnership. The sector now has an agreed standard against which any deal can be tested.

That framework matters because it moves governance from private conviction to shared practice. A rights holder that can point to a recognised, sector-endorsed process — and

show that it followed it — is far better placed to defend a partnership under pressure than one relying on assurances alone. Good governance, documented against a common standard, is what turns a defensible position into a demonstrable one.

Governance also protects the rights holder, not only the brand — and this is what reassures a sceptical cultural audience. The most respected partnerships are explicit about preserving the artistic and curatorial independence of the institution. When the Dublin International Film Festival partnered with Tanqueray 0.0%, the festival retained full curatorial independence, an arrangement the partners treated as a priority rather than a concession.<sup>1</sup> A brand that respects that boundary gains something more valuable than control: credibility. A rights holder that protects it keeps the trust of its artists and its public.

This careful groundwork is precisely what allows an organisation to stand firm when challenged. As noted earlier, the Hodge review is unambiguous that boycotting the sponsors of arts and culture will often damage the arts more than the sponsor, and that the Arts Council has a leadership role in challenging such boycotts.<sup>2</sup> But that confidence is only defensible when the homework has been done. An organisation that can show its work — a documented, principled, transparent process — is one that can weather opposition without capitulating. The defensible deal is not the one that avoids all criticism. It is the one that has earned the right to withstand it.

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS • PART II — THE PLAYERS

- ▶ Value the asset, don't ask for help: need suppresses price, strategic valuation commands it.
- ▶ Valuations must be grounded in evidence, not aspiration — even most Premier League clubs leave the asset unsold or overpriced.
- ▶ Brands win by building a legacy, not renting a campaign — tested on values, audience, activation and governance.
- ▶ Governance is the foundation: an agreed risk-tier standard, and a documented process, is what lets you defend a partner.

# 03

PART THREE

## The Process

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*From finding the right partner to structuring,  
activating and protecting a partnership built to last.*

CCP.

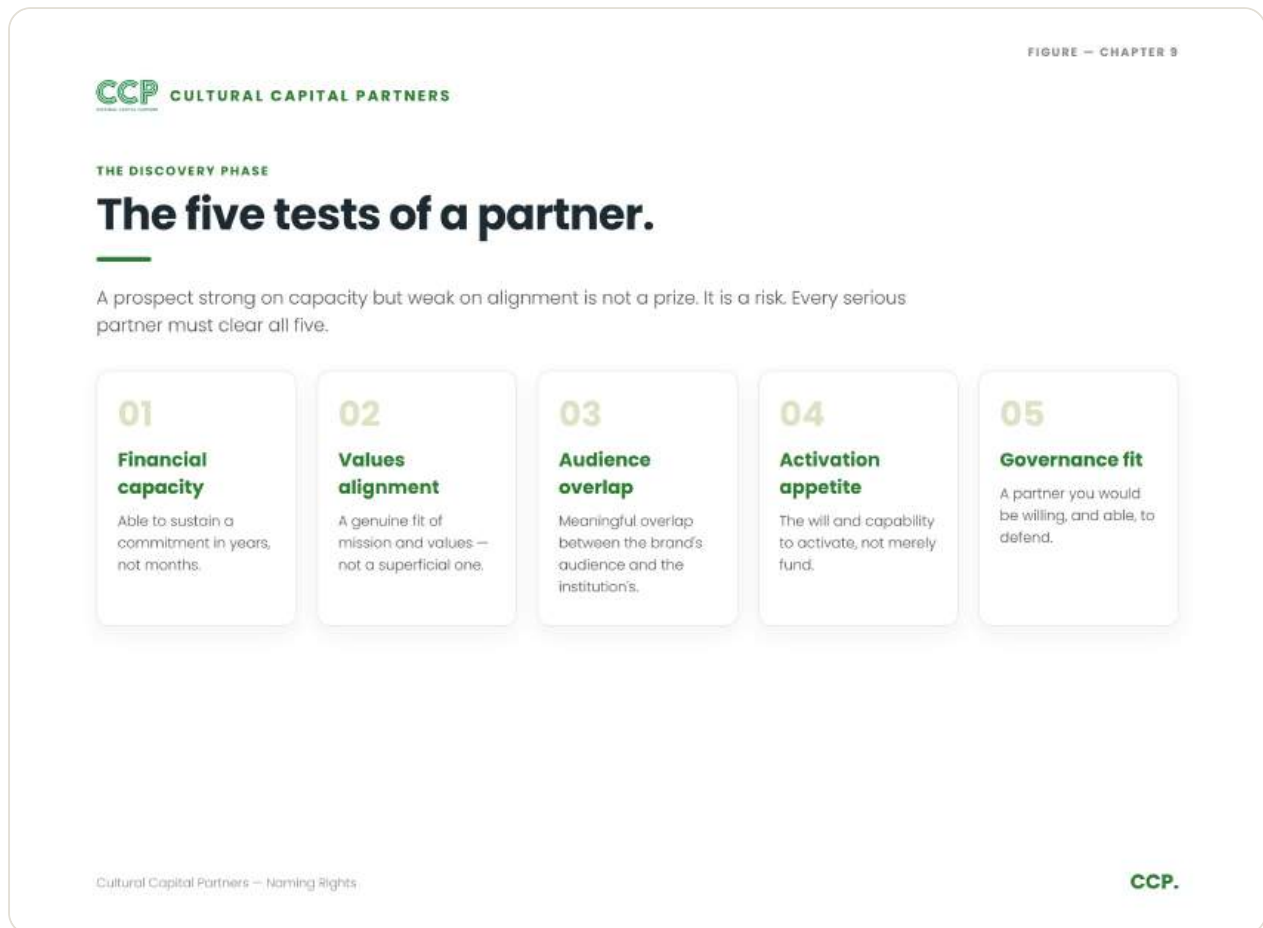
## CHAPTER 9

# The Discovery Phase: Identifying and Qualifying Partners

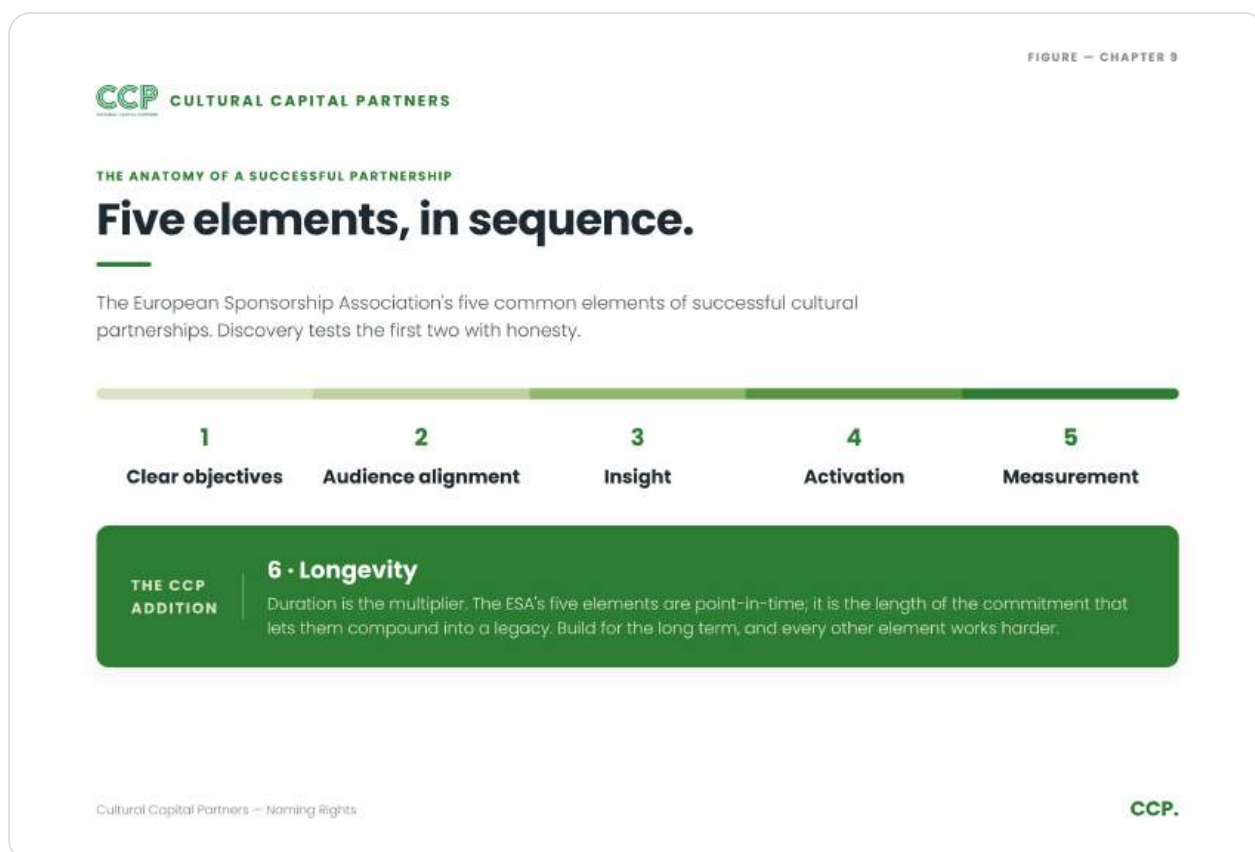
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**T**he discovery phase is not about finding a payer. It is about finding the right partner. This distinction is everything. The largest cheque from a misaligned brand is the most expensive mistake a rights holder can make, because it buys short-term relief at the cost of long-term credibility — and, all too often, a partnership that collapses under the first wave of scrutiny.

Qualification, properly understood, tests a prospect across several dimensions at once: the financial capacity to sustain a commitment measured in years rather than months; a genuine alignment of values and brand, rather than a superficial fit; a meaningful overlap between the brand's target audience and the institution's; the appetite and capability to activate the partnership rather than merely fund it; and a governance fit — in short, whether this is a partner you would be willing, and able, to defend. A prospect strong on capacity but weak on alignment is not a prize. It is a risk.



Discovery is also mutual. The brand is assessing the institution every bit as rigorously as the institution assesses the brand. The European Sponsorship Association frames five elements common to successful cultural partnerships — clear objectives, audience alignment, insight, activation and measurement — and the discovery phase is where the first two are tested with honesty.<sup>1</sup> A partnership that cannot articulate its shared objectives at this stage will not find them later.



The encouraging reality is that the appetite already exists; what is missing is familiarity. Part of the rights holder's task in discovery is therefore educational: translating cultural value into the commercial language a marketing director or finance director will recognise, and closing the knowledge gap that holds otherwise willing partners back.

There is no single route to the right partner. Some partnerships begin with a direct approach; others are brokered through specialist agencies and intermediaries.<sup>1</sup> The detailed mechanics of prospecting and qualification — the practitioner's toolkit — lie beyond the scope of this paper and perhaps a meeting with us! The principle, however, is universal: a disciplined standard applied consistently will always outperform opportunistic pursuit. The most valuable discipline in discovery is the willingness to say no. The best partnerships begin with the confidence to walk away from the wrong ones.

## CHAPTER 10

# Structuring the Deal: The Architecture of a Modern Partnership

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Once the right partner is identified, structure determines whether the partnership thrives or merely exists. The architecture of a modern naming rights deal is far richer than a name and a number, and the care taken in its design is usually visible, years later, in the strength of the relationship it produced.

## What “naming rights” can mean

Naming rights are not a single product; they span a spectrum, and the distinction matters commercially. At one end is a full naming arrangement, in which the brand’s name is applied to the venue itself. At the other are headline partnership structures — “powered by”, “in partnership with”, or a bespoke naming protocol — in which a brand becomes the named headline partner of a venue, or of a specific programme within it, without its name replacing the building’s.

The difference is frequently dictated by ownership. In many cases the organisation that operates a venue is not the organisation that owns the building, and an operator may not hold the right to place a partner’s name on the structure itself. A headline partnership still carries substantial value — and is often the more achievable and more governable route — but it will typically value below a full name-on-venue arrangement. Which model is possible, and what it is worth, depends on the rights held by owner, operator and any funders, and any naming convention requires all parties to agree. Establishing what can, and cannot, be sold before going to market is one of the first disciplines of a well-structured deal.

Several components form the core of any well-built agreement: the term, set long enough to allow brand equity to accumulate but with sensible review points; the precise definition of the named asset and the category exclusivity attached to it; the financial structure and payment schedule; and the activation commitment. A growing number of modern deals deliberately separate the naming fee from a dedicated activation fund, ensuring the partnership is resourced to come alive rather than simply signed and forgotten.

Duration is a strategic choice, not an administrative one. The most impactful partnerships are multi-year by design. OBOS and the Norwegian Opera & Ballet have worked together since the late 1990s, building a relationship that has delivered more than 1.1 million

discounted tickets; Barclays and Sadler's Wells have partnered for six years.<sup>1</sup> Equity compounds over time, and short deals rarely repay the effort required to build them and they become easier to deliver as time goes by also.

Shared value should be written into the structure, not bolted on afterwards. The strongest agreements embed social-impact commitments — skills programmes, access initiatives, community work — into the contract itself. Aviva Studios' support for the Factory Academy and for affordable access is contractual substance rather than public-relations garnish, and that is precisely why it is credible.<sup>1</sup> A genuine commitment that lives in the agreement survives changes of personnel and shifts in mood; a commitment that lives only in a press release does not.

Finally, structure is where ethics becomes enforceable. The governance provisions discussed in Chapter 8 — term and renewal, exclusivity, morality and sunset clauses, and protections for curatorial independence — all live here, in the architecture of the deal. A word on pricing: valuation is a discipline in its own right, and its detailed mechanics sit beyond this paper's scope, but the governing principle is simple. Price should reflect the demonstrable value the partnership delivers, not the size of the rights holder's funding gap.



## CHAPTER 11

# Community, Consent and Control: Navigating the Narrative

**A** naming rights partnership is never purely a private transaction between two parties. It plays out in public, within a community that feels a deep sense of ownership over its cultural institutions. Navigating that narrative is as important as negotiating the deal itself — and it is where many otherwise sound partnerships succeed or fail.

The concept that matters here is social licence: the informal permission a community grants for a partnership to proceed. It is earned through visible benefit and lost through perceived imposition. A name imposed on a beloved institution without consultation invites backlash; a partnership that demonstrably serves the public earns goodwill that no amount of advertising could buy.

**Community goodwill, carefully earned, is the strongest shield a brand partner can have.**

The Barclays partnership with Sadler's Wells shows how this is done well. Its Dance Pass placed £10 tickets in the hands of 16-to-30-year-olds, drawing more than 33,000 sign-ups, 86 per cent of them new to the venue.<sup>1</sup> The brand's presence is legitimised by the access it funds. TikTok's partnership with the Royal Shakespeare Company works on the same logic — £10 tickets, around 40 per cent of them going to state schools — turning a commercial relationship into a widely felt public good.<sup>1</sup>

Consent, however, does not mean unanimity. Artists and stakeholders may object, and their objections are often sincere. The task is genuine engagement and transparency, not capitulation. Where the underlying governance is sound, an organisation is entitled to proceed with confidence — a position the Hodge review explicitly supports in its treatment of boycotts.<sup>2</sup> Listening is essential; surrendering to the loudest voice is not.

Control of the narrative, then, is shared rather than seized. It rests on co-created communications, honesty about the nature of the commercial relationship, and a clear, repeated account of the public benefit the partnership delivers. The partnerships that lose the narrative are almost always those that appear to have something to hide. And there is a final, practical truth: social licence is also insurance. A partnership that has visibly served its

community is far easier to defend when challenged. Community goodwill, carefully earned, is the strongest shield a brand partner can have.

## CHAPTER 12

# Activation and Integration: Bringing the Partnership to Life

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**T**he name above the door is the beginning of the work, not the end of it. Activation — the programme of experiences, content and community engagement that brings a partnership to life — is what separates a logo from a legacy. It is also, too often, the part that is under-resourced and left to chance and should be baked in to the integrated strategy for rights holders before its even taken to market.

The first principle is co-creation. The European Sponsorship Association is quite rightly explicit that activation is where the potential of a cultural partnership is realised, and that brands and arts organisations must develop it together — especially when the brand is new to the cultural world and cannot simply import a sporting playbook.<sup>1</sup> The institution understands its audience; the brand understands its objectives; the activation lives at the intersection.

Experiential activation is one powerful mode. Mastercard turned the Barbican's Outdoor Cinema into a distinctive cardholder experience, with thousands of branded tickets and millions of digital impressions across the campaign.<sup>1</sup> adidas, partnering with Factory International, built its twelve-day BUILD festival at Aviva Studios around skate culture, reaching Gen Z directly — 63 per cent of whom felt more positive about the brand afterwards.<sup>1</sup> These are the reasons for an audience to care.

Access is another mode, and one in which the commercial and the social become indistinguishable. The TikTok and RSC ticket scheme, and OBOS's long partnership with the Norwegian Opera & Ballet — which has delivered well over a million discounted tickets — show activation that builds audiences and brand affinity at the same time.<sup>1</sup> The brand grows precisely by widening access, not in spite of it.

The deepest value, however, comes from integration over time. The Aviva Studios model — naming, plus the Factory Academy skills programme, plus a sustained commitment to affordable access — is not a campaign but an ecosystem, and it is integration of this kind that compounds in value year after year.<sup>1</sup> Activation should then close its own loop through measurement, the fifth of the ESA's elements: reach, engagement, brand perception and social outcomes, tracked honestly. What gets measured gets renewed — and what gets renewed is what, in the end, becomes a legacy.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS • PART III — THE PROCESS**

- ▶ Discovery is about the right partner, not the biggest cheque; the discipline to say no is the most valuable one.
- ▶ Structure decides success: separate the naming fee from a funded activation commitment, and write shared value into the contract.
- ▶ Social licence is earned through visible public benefit — and it is also the best insurance when challenged.
- ▶ A name without activation is wasted; integration over time is what compounds into a legacy.

## 04

PART FOUR

# The Sectors

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*Where the opportunity is greatest — arts and culture — and the lessons sport, international markets and emerging sectors can teach.*

**CCP.**

## CHAPTER 13

# Arts and Culture: The New Frontier

If the preceding chapters have built an argument, this is its destination. Arts and culture is the new frontier of naming rights — the sector where the gap between proven value and current investment is widest, and where the opportunity for brands is therefore greatest. Everything this paper has set out converges here. To recap:

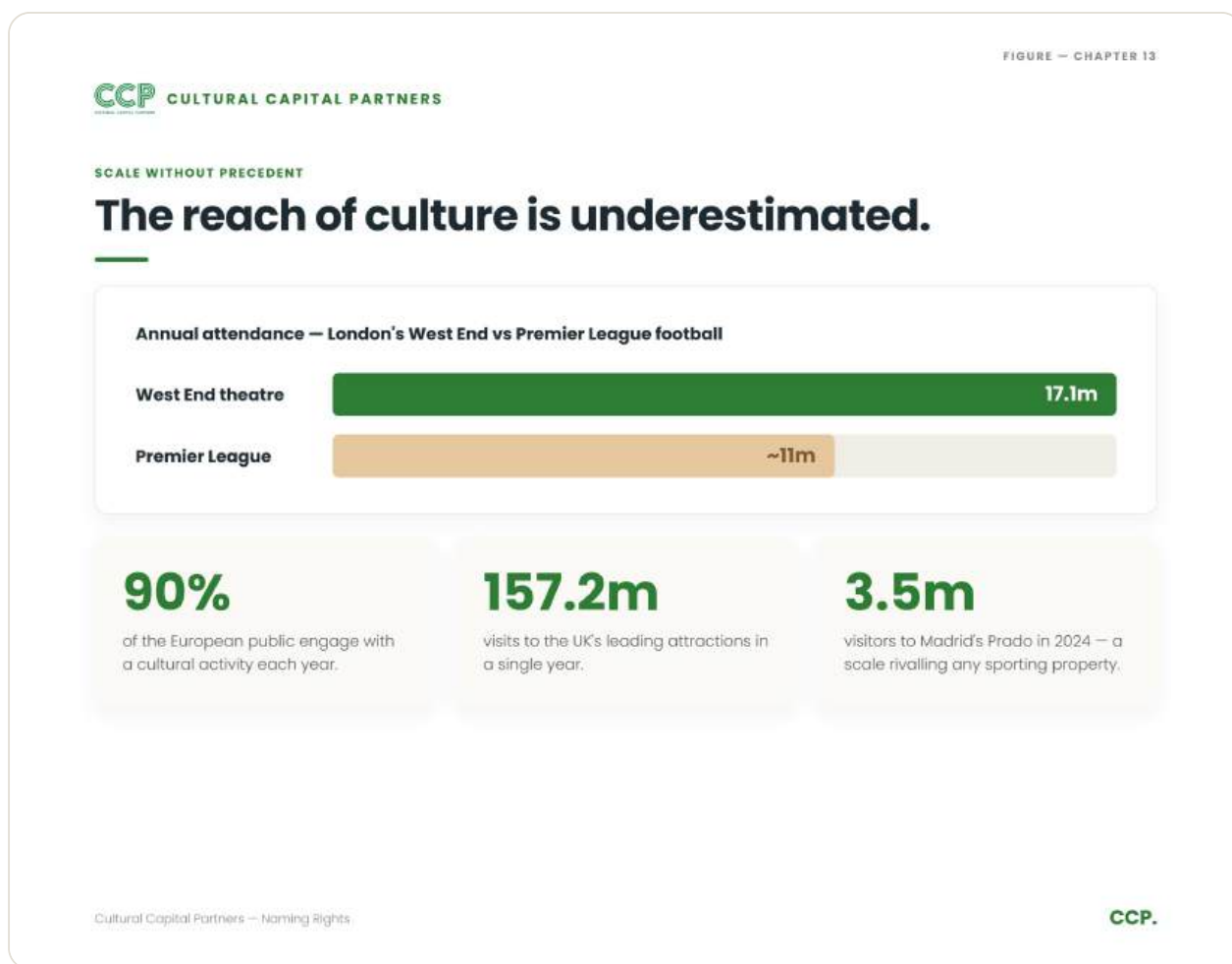
## £1.5–2bn

Untapped commercial naming and partnership value across UK arts and culture — CCP estimate

### Scale without precedent

The reach of culture is extraordinary, and consistently underestimated. Up to 90 per cent of the European public engages with a cultural activity each year.<sup>1</sup> In the United Kingdom, the theatres of London's West End drew some 17.1 million visits against roughly 11 million at Premier League football matches, and the country's leading visitor attractions recorded 157.2 million visits in a single year.<sup>1</sup> Across Europe, institutions from the Louvre to Madrid's Prado — which welcomed 3.5 million visitors in 2024 — operate at a scale that rivals any sporting property.<sup>1</sup>

**The brands that move now will define the category for a generation.**



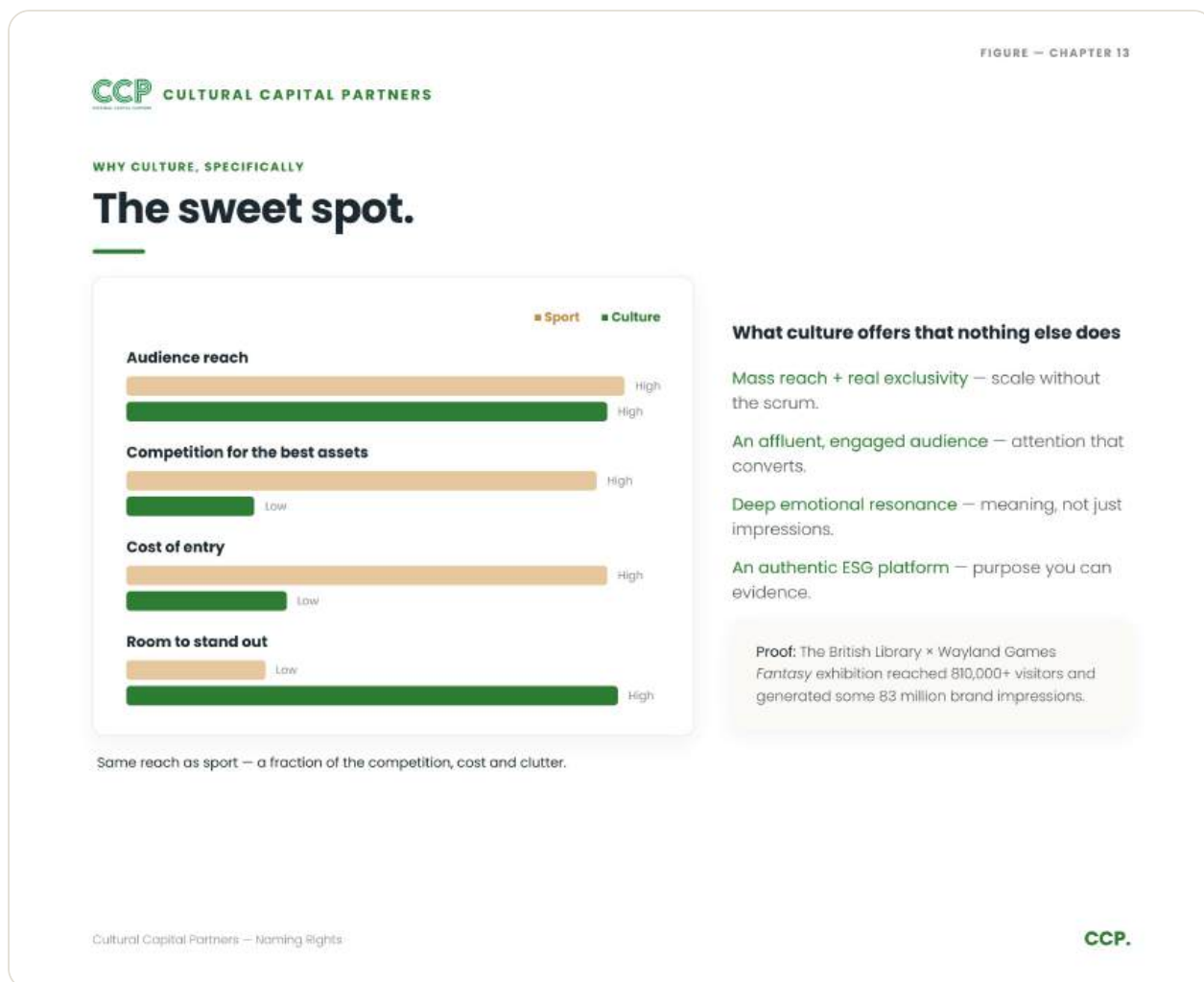
## The investment gap

Yet investment lags far behind reach. All non-sport sponsorship accounts for just 28 per cent of the European market, and arts and culture is only a portion of that.<sup>2</sup> UK philanthropy tells the same story: in 2023/24, higher education raised £1.52 billion while the arts raised £948 million, with roughly 65 per cent of arts giving concentrated in London and the South East.<sup>3</sup> The sector has been systematically under-monetised relative to its reach and its emotional power — which is precisely why the upside is so large for those who move first. Cultural Capital Partners estimates that between £1.5 and £2 billion of commercial naming and partnership value across UK arts and culture currently sits untapped — capable of driving both new revenue for the sector and genuine value for brands.

## Why culture, specifically

For a brand, culture offers a combination found nowhere else: mass reach paired with genuine exclusivity, an affluent and highly engaged audience, deep emotional resonance, and an authentic platform for environmental, social and community commitments. The British Library's Fantasy exhibition with Wayland Games reached more than 810,000 visitors across 80-plus UK locations and generated some 83 million brand impressions.<sup>1</sup> Decades earlier, the Travelex partnership at the National Theatre showed how a brand could widen

access dramatically and earn enduring public goodwill.<sup>1</sup> These are measurable returns, not vague associations.



## The landmark opportunity

Tellingly, the European Sponsorship Association itself identifies naming rights as the part of the cultural-sponsorship landscape with the most room to grow, citing Aviva Studios as one of the first major cultural naming rights partnerships in the United Kingdom.<sup>1</sup> The brands that move now will define the category for a generation. In time, the question will not be why a brand chose to put its name on a concert hall, a gallery or a festival — but why, when the opportunity was this open, so few of its competitors did the same.

## A necessary caveat

None of this argues that naming rights are right for every organisation. In sport and entertainment this is a well-trodden path; in the arts it is still emerging — and it will suit some institutions and not others, just as only a handful of Premier League clubs carry a stadium naming partner: a function of scale, circumstance and readiness, not of failure. Among the more than 900 National Portfolio Organisations in England,<sup>3</sup> a full naming rights



deal will be the right answer for relatively few; a headline or principal partnership for rather more; and for many, the value will sit further along the spectrum, in project, education or community-led support. The argument of this paper is not that every organisation should sell its name. It is that these opportunities exist, are badly under-exploited, and — coupled with the Arts Council's emerging commercial thinking, the approach we take at Cultural Capital Partners, and a growing corporate appetite to invest at multiple levels — represent a genuine and largely untapped source of value for those they do suit.

## CHAPTER 14

# Sports and Entertainment: The Powerhouse

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**T**o understand the opportunity in culture, it helps to study the sector that built the modern naming-rights playbook: Sport is the powerhouse — mature, professionalised and dominant — and it has lessons to teach, both in what to emulate and in what to avoid.

The dominance is real. Sport commands the European sponsorship market, some €24.79 billion, and the headline stadium and arena deals run into the hundreds of millions.<sup>1</sup> Decades of sustained investment have produced sophisticated practices in valuation, activation and measurement — disciplines the cultural sector is only beginning to adopt, and from which it has much to learn.

But dominance carries a cost: saturation. In sport, the best properties are largely already spoken for, prices are high, and differentiation is genuinely hard to achieve, because every competitor is chasing the same handful of passion points. The very maturity that makes sport attractive also makes it expensive and, too often, undifferentiated.

Entertainment and music sit between the two worlds, and they point the way forward. Three's year-round music ecosystem in Ireland, adidas's BUILD festival at Aviva Studios, and Edinburgh International Festival's partnership with The Macallan all show brands using cultural and live experiences to achieve what sport increasingly struggles to deliver: real distinctiveness and emotional proximity to an audience.<sup>2</sup>

There is a deeper point here, too. "The arts" is not one audience but many, and that is a strategic advantage rather than a complication. A brand does not simply buy "culture"; it chooses a form, and each form carries a distinct demographic and mood. Opera and classical music reach an older, affluent, premium audience; contemporary festivals and immersive venues reach Gen Z directly — as adidas found at Aviva Studios, where 63 per cent of a young audience felt more positive about the brand afterwards. Visual-arts exhibitions deliver mass family footfall; literature and museums confer authority and trust; dance and theatre sit between. This is the opposite of sport's problem, where every competitor chases the same handful of passion points. Culture lets a brand target with precision — matching not just a sector but a specific audience, tone and set of values to its objectives.

The lesson for the arts is therefore twofold. Adopt sport's discipline — its rigour in valuation, activation and measurement — without inheriting its saturation. Culture can offer

comparable emotional engagement and comparable reach, but at a fraction of the competitive density and cost. Sport wrote the playbook. Culture has the chance to run it on open ground.

The same research explains why naming rights are valued so differently from one market to the next.<sup>3</sup> As Connell notes:

“

*There is a tendency for rights holders in the UK and Europe to benchmark themselves against the United States, where naming rights often command substantially higher fees. However, the two markets are fundamentally different. In North America, naming rights are frequently the flagship commercial asset available to sponsors. In Europe, they exist alongside front-of-shirt sponsorship, sleeve sponsorship and a much broader portfolio of premium rights. While stadium naming rights continue to deliver many of the benefits brands value most — including long-term visibility, community impact and association with an iconic asset — too often unrealistic pricing puts willing partners out of the market.*

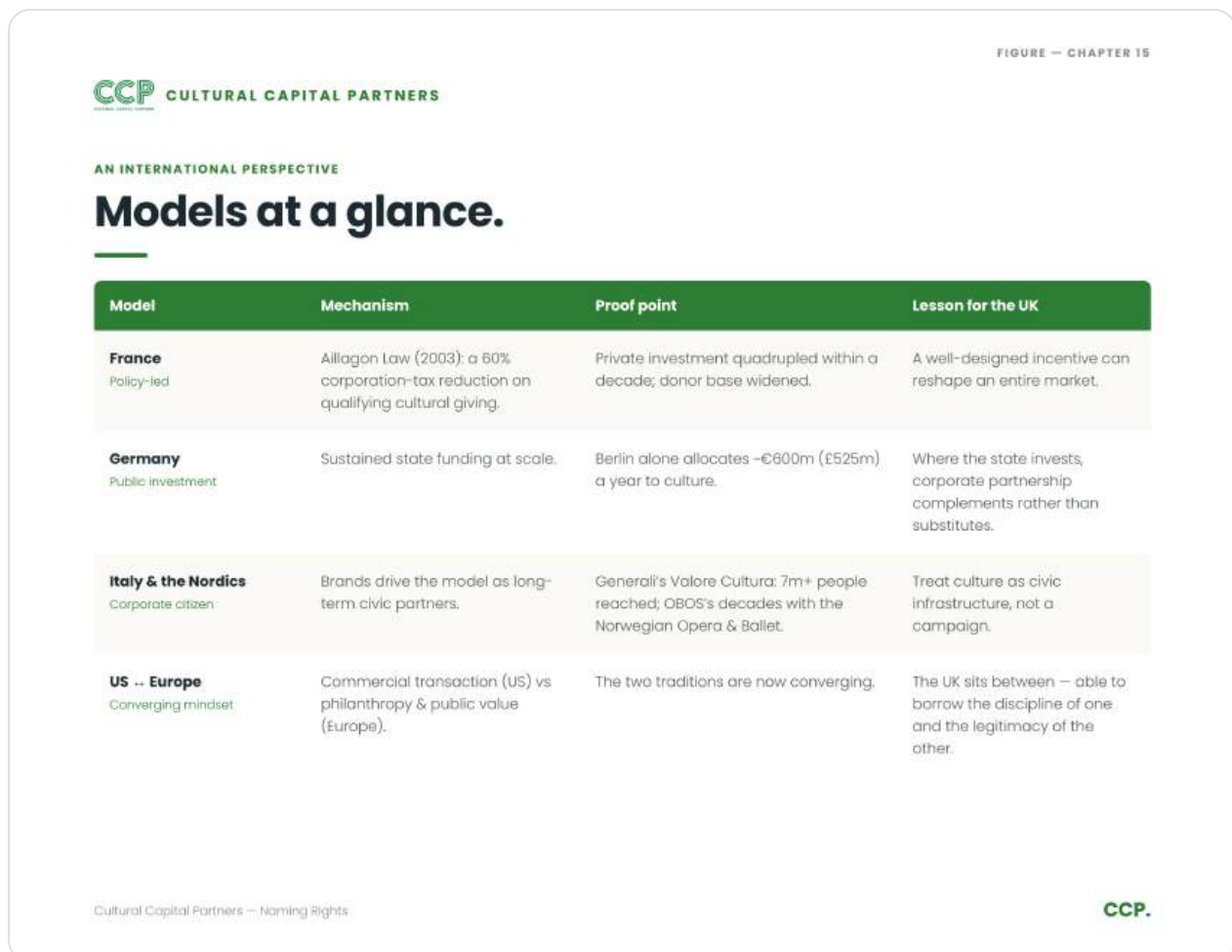
— SEAN CONNELL, THE SPONSOR

That point about the asset hierarchy is the key to reading naming rights across every kind of venue. In a US stadium the name on the building is the flagship commercial asset, so it commands the highest fee; in European football it sits beneath front-of-shirt and sleeve deals, so it prices lower — and benchmarking it against American figures is what puts willing partners out of the market. Follow that logic into culture and the picture inverts in the sector's favour. An arena, a concert hall, an opera house or a gallery carries no shirt, no kit and no broadcast sponsor: the name on the building is very often the single largest commercial asset the venue owns — structurally closer to a US stadium than a European one. The failure mode simply flips. Sport's mistake is to over-price against the wrong benchmark; culture's, so far, has been to under-sell, or not to price the asset at all. The remedy is identical: value it to the evidence, position it as the flagship it is, and neither oversell it nor give it away.

## CHAPTER 15

# An International Perspective: Models, Markets and Mindsets

**N**aming rights and cultural sponsorship do not look the same everywhere. Different countries have evolved different models, shaped by tax law, traditions of public funding, and cultural attitudes towards mixing commerce and art. For a UK practitioner, these international models are both instructive and strategically useful.



## The policy-led model: France

France offers the clearest example of policy shaping behaviour. The Aillagon Law of 2003 introduced a corporation-tax reduction worth up to 60 per cent of qualifying cultural donations, and in the decade that followed, private investment in culture quadrupled while the donor base widened considerably.<sup>1</sup> A well-designed incentive, deliberately applied, reshaped an entire market — a precedent this paper returns to in Chapter 19.

## The public–investment model: Germany

Germany illustrates the power of sustained public funding. Berlin alone allocates around €600 million (£525 million) a year to culture — more than the combined budgets of Arts Council England’s National Portfolio (£458.5 million a year, 2023–26) and the Mayor of London’s culture programme.<sup>1</sup> Where the state invests at this scale, the relationship between brands and institutions takes a different, more complementary shape, with corporate partnership enhancing rather than substituting for public money.

## The corporate–citizen model: Italy and the Nordics

Elsewhere, brands themselves drive the model. In Italy, Generali’s Valore Cultura programme has reached more than seven million people since 2016 and funded the restoration of landmarks including the Procuratie in Venice, reopened to the public after 500 years.<sup>2</sup> In Norway, OBOS’s decades-long partnership with the Norwegian Opera & Ballet treats culture as part of civic infrastructure. Ireland adds further models still, from the An Post Irish Book Awards to Grant Thornton’s founding partnership of the National Concert Hall’s Female Conductor Programme.<sup>2</sup>

Underlying these differences is a difference of mindset. The American tradition treats naming largely as a commercial transaction; the European tradition leans towards philanthropy and public value. The two are now converging — and the United Kingdom sits squarely between them, able to borrow the commercial discipline of one and the civic legitimacy of the other. That hybrid position, and the policy that could unlock it, is the subject of Chapter 19.

## CHAPTER 16

# Emerging Sectors: From Airports to Innovation Districts

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**T**he integrated, purpose-driven model described in this paper is not confined to concert halls and stadiums. It is expanding into new sectors, each with its own audiences, advantages and sensitivities. For brands and rights holders alike, these emerging categories represent the next wave of opportunity.

Transport hubs are a natural fit. Airports and major stations combine vast footfall with long dwell times and a captive, often affluent audience — a rare and valuable combination. Healthcare offers a different proposition again: naming a hospital wing, research institute or treatment centre can build deep community goodwill, though it carries particular ethical sensitivities that demand especially careful governance.

Education is already fertile ground. The strength of philanthropic naming in higher education — the sector that raised £1.52 billion in 2023/24 — shows how readily donors and institutions embrace named buildings, scholarships and research programmes.<sup>1</sup> Innovation districts and technology campuses extend the same logic into the commercial sphere, anchoring emerging places with named landmarks that signal ambition and permanence.

The digital frontier may prove the most significant of all. Immersive and hybrid venues — from Outernet and Lightroom to augmented-reality theatre productions — together with digital concert series and streamed programmes, create entirely new and highly differentiated naming opportunities that are not bound by physical capacity.<sup>2</sup> As audiences increasingly favour experiential, all-encompassing settings, these spaces offer brands a way to be present in culture's fastest-growing formats.

Across all of these, two principles hold. First, the integrated, shared-value model travels: a name without activation and genuine purpose underdelivers everywhere, not only in the arts. Second, each sector carries its own governance and reputational sensitivities — healthcare and education most acutely — which makes the ethical groundwork set out in Chapter 8 not optional but essential. The frontier is wide, but the discipline that succeeds on it is everywhere the same.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS · PART IV — THE SECTORS**

- ▶ Arts and culture is the frontier — the widest gap between proven value and current investment.
- ▶ 'The arts' is many audiences, not one: a precision tool for brands, unlike sport's crowded passion points.
- ▶ Sport wrote the playbook; culture can run it on open ground, at a fraction of the density and cost.
- ▶ The model travels — airports, healthcare, education, digital — but governance must scale with sensitivity.

# 05

PART FIVE

## The Future

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*Purpose, technology and policy — and the case for a new era of long-term cultural partnership.*

CCP.



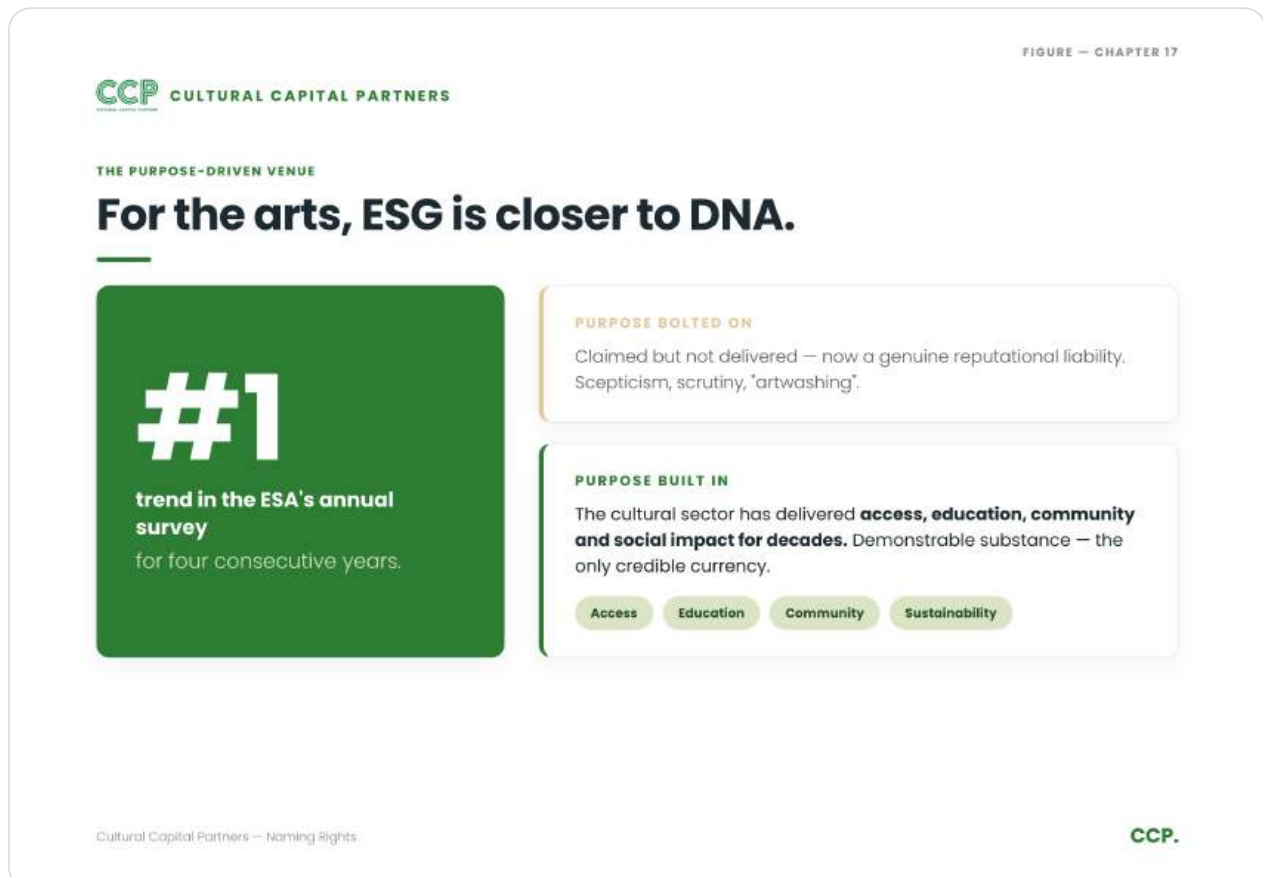
## CHAPTER 17

# The Purpose-Driven Venue: The Rise of ESG

If one trend has come to dominate the future of sponsorship, it is purpose. Environmental, social and governance considerations are no longer peripheral to a partnership; they are central to how brands choose their partners and to how the public judges the result.

The data is striking. Environmental, social and governance concerns have been the number one trend in the European Sponsorship Association's annual survey for four consecutive years.<sup>1</sup> Brands increasingly seek "partnerships with purpose" — and here the arts hold a decisive advantage. The cultural sector has been delivering access, education, community work and social impact for decades. For the arts, ESG is not a bolt-on; it is closer to DNA.<sup>1</sup>

**For the arts, ESG is not a bolt-on; it is closer to DNA.**



This authenticity matters more than ever, because the alternative — purpose claimed but not delivered — has become a genuine reputational liability. The asymmetry is stark. Purpose that is merely asserted is now actively punished: “greenwashing” and “artwashing” scrutiny, consumer scepticism, and the reputational cost of being found out. Purpose that is funded and evidenced does the opposite — it converts scrutiny into credibility. A brand that names a venue and funds real access, skills and sustainability programmes can demonstrate impact rather than merely assert values, and culture is almost uniquely able to provide that evidence: real access numbers, real skills programmes, real participation. In an age of well-founded public scepticism, the ability to show your work is the only credible currency.

The purpose-driven venue is the emerging archetype. Climate Pledge Arena in Seattle made the logic explicit: the naming partner used the rights not to broadcast a corporate name but to broadcast a climate commitment, turning the name of the building itself into a statement of values.<sup>2</sup> It is a model that others are beginning to follow, and one the cultural sector is unusually well placed to enable if the right partner arises.

For the rights holder, this is a powerful proposition to offer. A cultural institution can give a brand something rare and credible: a platform on which to deliver, and to evidence, real ESG outcomes, embedded in the life of a community. For the brand, that is the difference between claiming purpose and living it — and it is fast becoming the defining test of a partnership’s worth.

## CHAPTER 18

# The Smart Venue: Technology and the Future of Engagement

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**T**echnology is reshaping what a venue is, and what a naming partnership can do. The smart venue — connected, data-rich and increasingly immersive — is changing both the value on offer and the ways in which that value can be proven.

Data is the first transformation. Connected venues generate audience insight that allows a partnership to be personalised, targeted and, crucially, measured. The longstanding weakness of sponsorship has always been the difficulty of proving ROI; that problem is now being solved. And demonstrable return de-risks exactly the kind of long-term commitment a naming deal requires, making the case far easier to take to a board.

The second transformation is immersive and digital experience. Venues such as Outernet and Lightroom, alongside augmented-reality theatre productions and streamed and hybrid programming, create naming opportunities that are not bound by physical capacity.<sup>1</sup> A brand can attach itself to a digital concert series or an immersive season that reaches audiences far beyond the walls of any single building.

For technology brands in particular, this is a natural alignment — innovation associating with innovation. But the opportunity is broader than that. As audiences shift towards experiential, all-encompassing settings, the venues that master technology will command the most engaged audiences and, in turn, the most valuable partnerships.<sup>1</sup>

The deeper point is that measurement and experience now reinforce one another. The smart venue makes activation richer and its results clearer at the same time, closing the loop between investment and evidence. That combination — deeper engagement on one side, demonstrable outcomes on the other — is what will make the naming deals of the coming decade both easier to justify and harder to walk away from.

## CHAPTER 19

# Rewarding Long-Term Investment: A Policy for the Future

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**E**verything to this point has been about winning within the market as it stands. This chapter is about changing the market itself — and the single fiscal lever that could do more than any other to bring corporate Britain to the table.

The partnerships described in this paper are hard-won because the conditions around them are difficult. Public subsidy has contracted for more than a decade; the trusts and foundations are oversubscribed; and the pool of committed corporate investors remains far smaller than the sector's ambition. Naming rights and headline partnerships are the most powerful tool we have for changing that — but even the best-run deal is a transaction between two willing parties in a market that government could make very much larger. The question this chapter asks is a simple one: what would it take for the state to make long-term corporate investment in culture the obvious commercial choice, rather than the exception?

**The prize: a tax system that actively rewards long-term commitments to culture.**

## A live moment

For the first time in years, that question has an audience. Baroness Hodge's review of Arts Council England put the tax treatment of cultural investment squarely on the table; in its March 2026 response the government committed to put the evidence for reform to HM Treasury.<sup>1</sup> Hodge's Recommendation 3.7 goes further still, calling for a new incentive — framed, sensibly, to encourage corporate support beyond London, where private funding is heavily concentrated. That recommendation concerns philanthropy, charitable giving; the frontier this chapter maps is the commercial one that sits alongside it. Either way, the direction of travel is set. What is not yet settled — and what matters far more — is the design of the mechanism itself, and that is where the sector's commercial experience, rather than its policy instinct, most needs to be heard.

## The starting point almost everyone gets wrong

Most discussion of tax incentives for culture begins from a false premise: that corporate sponsorship of the arts currently receives no tax relief. It does. In the UK, commercial sponsorship — a naming rights fee, a headline partnership, any arrangement in which the company receives brand value in return — is already treated as an ordinary, deductible business expense under the standard ‘wholly and exclusively’ rule, set against profits in exactly the way marketing spend is.<sup>2</sup> A pound of qualifying sponsorship already carries relief worth the prevailing rate of corporation tax. The gap in the system, therefore, is not the absence of relief. It is the absence of an enhanced relief — a signal strong enough to change corporate behaviour at the margin, and to reward the scale and duration the sector actually needs. That distinction is not pedantry. It is the difference between a proposal the Treasury can dismiss in a sentence and one it has to take seriously.

## **What France actually did — and why we cannot simply copy it**

The example invariably reached for is France's Loi Aillagon of 2003, and it is worth understanding precisely, because it is as often misdescribed as it is admired. Aillagon allows a company to reduce its corporation tax by sixty per cent of the value of a qualifying cultural donation — a direct reduction of the tax owed, not a deduction from taxable profit — subject to a ceiling tied to turnover, with a lower rate applying to the very largest gifts.<sup>3</sup> Its results have been considerable: it helped turn French corporate patronage into a mature, multi-billion-euro pillar of cultural funding.

But the word that matters is donation. Aillagon is a philanthropy instrument. It rewards giving with no, or only incidental, return — and deliberately excludes sponsorship with a genuine commercial return, which France treats, as we do, as a straightforward deductible business cost. A naming rights agreement is the very definition of the latter: the company pays precisely because it receives something of brand value. A straight transplant of Aillagon into the UK would therefore do nothing for the commercial partnerships that are the subject of this paper. It would reward the cheque written for goodwill and ignore the far larger cheque written for a building's name. The lesson from France is not the mechanism; it is the ambition — the proof that a well-designed fiscal signal can move corporate money into culture at a scale voluntary appeals never will.

## **The asymmetry hiding in plain sight**

There is a second, quieter anomaly in UK policy. The country already operates a suite of generous creative-sector tax reliefs — for theatre, for orchestras, for museums and galleries — that reward organisations for the cost of making culture.<sup>4</sup> Yet there is no equivalent recognition for the private capital that keeps the buildings open and the programmes running. We subsidise production and ignore investment. An incentive for long-term corporate support would not be a novel intrusion into a clean system; it would close an obvious gap in one whose underlying principle the Treasury has already accepted.

## What an enhanced incentive could look like

There are two well-established shapes such an incentive could take, both familiar to the Treasury from existing policy. The first is an enhanced deduction: qualifying cultural sponsorship allowed against profits at more than its face value — the principle behind research and development relief, where qualifying spend has at times attracted deductions well above the cash cost. The relief is worth more than the tax value of the money spent, and the uplift is the incentive. The second is an expenditure credit: a fixed, above-the-line credit calculated on qualifying sponsorship, in the manner of the creative-sector reliefs themselves — more visible in a company's accounts, and delivering value even to a firm in a loss-making year. Which vehicle is right is a question for modelling, not manifesto.

## Designing it: duration, scale and safeguards

What matters more than the vehicle is the shape of the incentive — because it is the design, not the headline rate, that decides whether the scheme is a genuine catalyst or an expensive subsidy of activity that would have happened anyway.

The core principle should be that relief is graduated — modest for shorter or smaller arrangements, and rising, materially, with both the length and the size of the commitment. A partnership of a few years earns a light enhancement; a decade-long, multi-million-pound commitment earns considerably more. The apex of that ladder should be reserved for the hardest and most valuable commitment of all: a full naming rights agreement held over ten years or longer. These are the deals that do the most for an institution — underwriting capital works, multi-year access and skills programmes, and the planning stability nothing else provides — and they are the hardest to secure, because they ask the most of a corporate partner. An incentive should bite hardest exactly where the public value is greatest and the commercial barrier highest. For illustration, the ladder might run from a modest enhancement on shorter partnerships, through greater relief at the order of a ten-million-pound, ten-year commitment, to its steepest rate for a naming rights agreement of fifteen to twenty years and twenty million pounds or more. The figures are illustrative; the principle is not.

Around that ladder sit the safeguards that keep the relief honest. Eligibility should be limited to Arts Council portfolio and accredited organisations, which targets the money and forecloses abuse; a ceiling tied to company size controls the cost to the Exchequer; a share of qualifying investment should flow to education, access and community programmes, so the public gains more than a brand on a wall; and, most important, relief should reward new or incremental commitment rather than re-price partnerships that would have happened anyway. Weighted this way — and, following Hodge, tilted beyond London — the incentive rewards genuine partnership rather than mere badging, and reduces abuse rather than inviting it.



## The Treasury test

Any proposal of this kind will be judged by HM Treasury against two questions above all: what does it cost the Exchequer, and what does it actually deliver? The first is a matter of modelling. The second — the harder one — turns on a single concept: additionality, the private investment mobilised that would not otherwise have occurred, net of the deadweight cost of subsidising deals that would have closed anyway. This is the ground on which the case is won or lost, and it is precisely the ground on which market evidence, not policy theory, is decisive. An incentive that demonstrably turns each pound of relief foregone into several pounds of new private investment is not a cost to the Exchequer; it is leverage — and leverage, framed against growth, is a language the Treasury understands. A time-limited pilot with evaluation built in offers a way to test the proposition without an open-ended commitment, which is often the difference between a good idea and an adopted one.

## The commercial dimension others miss

Here is the point at which this analysis parts company with most of what is being written on the subject. The current policy conversation about tax and culture is almost entirely a conversation about philanthropy — about giving, and how to encourage more of it. That work is valuable, but it addresses only one side of the market, and not the side capable of writing the largest cheques. The instrument this chapter describes is about investment — commercial, returns-driven, board-approved corporate spend of the kind that built Aviva Studios and could, with the right signal, build a dozen more.

That is not an academic distinction. Having structured the largest arts naming rights partnership in the UK, and having sat across the table from the brands whose budgets this policy would move, I can say with some confidence what those companies actually respond to — and it is not a marginal adjustment to donation relief. It is certainty, duration, demonstrable brand value, and a business case a finance director will sign. An incentive designed by government talking only to government risks optimising for the philanthropic instinct while leaving the commercial engine untouched.

## The opportunity

The precise design — the rates, the thresholds, how the incentive sits alongside the reliefs already in place — is properly a matter for DCMS and HM Treasury, who alone can weigh it against the wider public finances. What the cultural and commercial sector can offer them is the one thing government cannot readily generate for itself: real evidence of what moves corporate money — how these decisions are actually made inside a business, and what shape of incentive would change them. That is the useful role here: not to prescribe the mechanism, but to help ensure that whatever is designed is built on how the market truly behaves.

The moment to shape it is now, while the mechanism is still unwritten and the questions still open. Designed well — commercially literate, rigorously targeted, and evidenced by real transactions rather than aspiration — a reward for long-term cultural investment could do for corporate Britain what Aillagon did for French philanthropy: not a subsidy but a catalyst, not a cost but the unlock for a scale of private support the sector has never had. That is a prize worth getting right — and it is one the commercial world, not the policy world alone, must help to design.



## CHAPTER 20

# Conclusion: The Future Is a Shared Story

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**T**his paper began with a number — a sponsorship market with the potential to move toward \$200 billion — and an asymmetry: that the greatest opportunity within it lies not in the saturated world of sport but in the relatively untapped frontier of arts and culture. Everything since has been an attempt to show what follows from taking that opportunity seriously.

The throughline has been a single idea. The naming rights partnerships that endure are not transactions but relationships — built on genuine alignment, structured with care, governed rigorously, activated generously, and committed to for the long term. Done this way, they create value for the brand, the institution, the property and the public all at once, rather than for one at the expense of the others.

For each of this paper's three audiences, the implication is clear. Rights holders should value what they own and seek partners they would be proud to defend. Brands should recognise that culture offers reach, resonance and authenticity that the crowded world of sport increasingly cannot. And those who own the buildings and places themselves should see cultural venues for what they truly are: engines of place and of value.

The wider moment is favourable. The market is growing, environmental and social purpose has moved to the centre of brand strategy, technology is making value measurable, and policy is beginning to catch up with the case for long-term commitment. The conditions for a new era of cultural partnership are in place. What is needed now is the conviction to act on them.

In the end, a naming rights partnership done well is not a logo on a building. It is a shared story — of a brand, a place and a community, told over decades. The brands that understand this will not simply sponsor culture. They will help to create it, and they will be remembered for it. That is the future of naming rights, and it is a story written together.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS · PART V — THE FUTURE**

- ▶ For the arts, ESG is closer to DNA; demonstrable substance, not claimed purpose, is the only credible currency.
- ▶ Technology makes value measurable, de-risking the long-term commitment a naming deal requires.
- ▶ Policy should reward duration and scale — incentives change behaviour, as France's Aillagon Law proved.
- ▶ The partnerships that endure are relationships, not transactions: a shared story told over decades.

# Partnerships in practice

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**N**aming rights are not one product but a spectrum, and the evidence for that spectrum is already on the ground — across sport and, increasingly, culture. The framework below sets fees aside (they are mostly private) and captures what actually travels between deals: the model, and the reach. The recurring pattern is that a partnership rarely begins at a full name-on-venue arrangement; more often it starts with access, education or a headline association, and earns its way toward something larger.

## A SPECTRUM OF MODELS

## Partnerships at a glance.

Fees are mostly private; what matters is the model and the reach. Across sport, entertainment and culture, the same spectrum recurs — from full naming rights to principal, headline and education-led partnerships.

| Partner          | Venue / institution                                        | Type                             | Scale & reach                                                                   |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aviva            | Aviva Studios (Factory International), Manchester          | Naming rights                    | UK's largest arts & culture naming rights deal — a landmark 10-year partnership |
| Aviva            | Aviva Arena, Bristol                                       | Naming rights                    | New 20,000-capacity live venue (2026)                                           |
| British Airways  | British Airways ARC & Theatre, Olympia London              | Naming rights / Founding partner | New 3,800-cap music venue; £1.3bn transformation (2026)                         |
| Co-op            | Co-op Live, Manchester                                     | Naming rights                    | UK's largest indoor arena — ~23,500 capacity (2024)                             |
| Emirates         | Emirates Stadium (Arsenal), London                         | Naming rights                    | ~60,700 capacity; two decades of civic embedding                                |
| Etihad           | Etihad Stadium (Manchester City)                           | Naming rights                    | ~53,400 capacity + the Etihad Campus; since 2011                                |
| O2               | The O2, London                                             | Naming rights                    | World's busiest music arena — ~20,000 cap; O2-named since 2007                  |
| O2               | O2 Academy venues (nationwide)                             | Naming rights / portfolio        | O2 Academy network — 20+ music venues, Brixton to Glasgow                       |
| AO               | AO Arena, Manchester                                       | Naming rights                    | ~21,000 cap; among the UK's largest arenas                                      |
| OVO              | OVO Arena Wembley & OVO Hydro, Glasgow                     | Naming rights                    | Two landmark arenas; among the world's busiest                                  |
| Utilita          | Utilita Arena — Birmingham, Newcastle, Sheffield & Cardiff | Naming rights / portfolio        | Multi-venue arena naming across the UK                                          |
| first direct     | first direct arena, Leeds                                  | Naming rights                    | ~13,500 cap; the bank's flagship regional presence                              |
| King Power       | King Power Stadium (Leicester City)                        | Naming rights                    | ~32,000 cap; owner-brand naming since 2011                                      |
| American Express | Amex Stadium (Brighton & Hove Albion)                      | Naming rights                    | ~31,800 cap; long-term community naming                                         |
| bet365           | bet365 Stadium (Stoke City)                                | Naming rights                    | ~30,000 cap; Stoke-on-Trent                                                     |
| Gtech            | Gtech Community Stadium (Brentford)                        | Naming rights                    | ~17,250 cap; 10-year deal (2022)                                                |
| Principality     | Principality Stadium (Welsh Rugby Union), Cardiff          | Naming rights                    | ~73,000-cap national stadium                                                    |
| Barclays         | Sadler's Wells (incl. Sadler's Wells East)                 | Principal partnership            | Dance Pass: 33,000+ sign-ups, 86% new to the venue                              |
| TikTok           | Royal Shakespeare Company                                  | Headline partnership             | £10 tickets, ~40% to state schools                                              |
| Mastercard       | Barbican Outdoor Cinema, London                            | Headline / experiential          | Branded cardholder experience; millions of impressions                          |
| adidas           | Factory International — BUILD festival, Aviva Studios      | Headline / experiential          | Gen Z reach; 63% felt more positive about the brand                             |
| Bloomberg        | Bloomberg Connects (Bloomberg Philanthropies)              | Education & digital access       | Free digital guides across 700+ institutions worldwide                          |
| The Macallan     | Edinburgh International Festival                           | Principal partner                | Platform at one of the world's leading arts festivals                           |

Four in particular repay a closer look — a proven blueprint, the newest deal in the market, the benchmark from sport, and the access-led partnership that shows how social impact becomes a headline platform.

FOUR IN DEPTH

Case studies.

NAMING RIGHTS · THE BLUEPRINT

**Aviva × Aviva Studios**

Manchester · Factory International

The UK's largest arts and culture naming rights deal — a landmark ten-year, fully integrated partnership: naming, plus the Factory Academy skills programme and a lasting commitment to affordable access. Not a campaign but an ecosystem.

NAMING / FOUNDING PARTNER · THE NEWEST

**British Airways × Olympia**

London · AEG Presents

British Airways ARC — a new 3,800-capacity music venue — and the British Airways Theatre, within Olympia's £1.3bn transformation. A multi-year naming and founding partnership that folds in loyalty-member benefits. Opens 2026.

NAMING RIGHTS · THE SPORT BENCHMARK

**Emirates & Etihad**

Arsenal · Manchester City

Two decades of naming rights at ~60,700 and ~53,400 capacity, with Etihad extending across a whole campus. They show naming as long-term civic embedding — the discipline in valuation, activation and measurement that culture can now adopt on open ground.

PRINCIPAL PARTNERSHIP · ACCESS-LED

**Barclays × Sadler's Wells**

London · incl. Sadler's Wells East

A partnership rooted in access and education: the Dance Pass placed 33,000+ £10 tickets, 86% of them with people new to the venue. The template for how a social-impact partnership earns the legitimacy to grow into a headline one.

# About Cultural Capital Partners

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**E**lliott Willis has spent 26 years developing commercial partnerships with rights holders and global brands, as well as scaling startups and working in major corporations like ITV and Endemol. In 2023, after three years working on the project, he secured and brokered the largest naming rights deal for a UK arts and culture venue in the country's history: the Aviva Studios partnership in Manchester — a landmark ten-year, fully integrated brand association, delivered with Manchester City Council and Factory International, that secured the venue's immediate future and set a new benchmark for UK arts sponsorship.

Cultural Capital Partners was established in 2023 to bring that same capability directly to cultural organisations — helping venues, festivals and institutions unlock long-term, values-aligned partnerships of their own.

The rationale is straightforward. Public funding will always be vital to the arts, but with Arts Council England investment reducing for many organisations and public budgets under sustained pressure, new commercial revenue is now essential rather than optional. Well-structured brand partnerships can provide long-term, unrestricted income, greater financial resilience, enhanced programming and audience reach, and support for education, access, sustainability and capital development. Cultural Capital Partners estimates that between £1.5 and £2 billion of commercial partnership value across the sector currently sits untapped.

## A proven, governed process

What separates a defensible arts partnership from a risky one is the work done before going to market. For cultural organisations — and the councils and government bodies that stand behind many of them — this is the road less travelled, and it carries scrutiny at the highest level. CCP follows a phased, governed process that keeps stakeholder alignment, ethical framework, governance and board sign-off at its centre, and reaches the market only with a proposition that is properly valued, board-approved and clear on what can and cannot be sold. It is the model proven at Aviva Studios and now applied across every CCP client in market.

## Work with us

If you are a cultural organisation exploring whether a naming or headline partnership could form part of your long-term funding strategy — or a brand seeking a distinctive, purpose-led presence in culture — Cultural Capital Partners would welcome the conversation.

**Elliot Willis · Cultural Capital Partners ·**  
**[elliott@culturalcapitalpartners.co.uk](mailto:elliott@culturalcapitalpartners.co.uk)**

# Acknowledgements

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**T**his is an independent paper. In writing it I have drawn on published research and data from across the sponsorship and cultural sectors — including IEG, The Sponsor, Nielsen Sports and the European Sponsorship Association (ESA), alongside Baroness Hodge's review of Arts Council England. I am a member of ESA — the essential and inclusive community for all professionals working in sponsorship — and contribute to its work, including through masterclasses. To discover more, visit [sponsorship.org](https://sponsorship.org) or contact the membership team at [membership@sponsorship.org](mailto:membership@sponsorship.org).



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