

# **FESTIVAL OF MUSLIM CULTURES**

## **FESTIVAL GUIDELINES**

**These Guidelines assist Festival partners in developing events**

### **Mission Statement**

The Festival of Muslim Cultures is a celebration of the rich cultural and artistic expressions of Muslim peoples. It aims to advance understanding, promote respect and facilitate interconnectedness

### **Muslim Cultures**

“Muslim Cultures” is a term that was specially chosen for its inclusiveness and for reflecting the Festival’s main emphasis on the rich diversity that cultures of Muslim peoples embody within a fundamental unity. It is this richness, with all its pluralistic expressions, that the Festival aims to celebrate.

The Mission Statement also emphasises the need to foster a better understanding between Muslims and non Muslims (as a two-way process), to promote respect for Muslim cultures and to facilitate a greater connectedness between them and the other world cultures with which they are interrelated.

The events that are being programmed into the Festival year are chosen specifically for their ability to portray diversity and plurality, giving Muslims living in Britain greater pride in their cultures and a true sense of belonging to Britain. These events range from exhibitions, film, literature and the performing arts to seminars on contemporary issues and trade fairs that promote fashion, design and food. This is an exploration of “culture” in the widest sense.

### **What does the Festival organisation do?**

The central Festival organisation, based in London, acts as the catalyst, coordinator and support system for the partners, be they UK Muslim groups, UK arts organisations or colleagues in the wider Muslim world. The coordination role extends to public relations, fundraising, education, youth, cultural and arts programming.

The Festival is aiming to bring the cultural, arts and education organisations of the UK into a closer relationship with Muslim themes and Muslim audiences. The Festival is not a grant-giving body but if it believes an event, created by an outside organisation, is of key importance it will assist in seeking funding or sponsorship for that event.

The Festival is not pursuing the agenda of, nor is it beholden to, any government or pressure group. Integrity, diversity and independence are central to its aims. As a registered charity the Festival is required by law to abide by best practices of transparency, accountability and good governance.

## **Partnerships**

Since the Festival is creating the space within which existing and new efforts to promote the understanding of Muslim cultures come together in order to create a mutually supportive environment, it will work closely with partners.

The Festival's programme will be delivered through a series of partnerships with selected arts, cultural, educational, youth, women's, educational and business organisations.

While the Festival expects to be kept informed about the content of artistic events and programmes, it leaves the selection and shaping of those events to the bodies that own them. Branding is dependent on their meeting the Principles of Partnership stated below.

All the events and programmes are stand-alone, but branded together under the umbrella of "The Festival of Muslim Cultures". As part of the branded partnerships, the Festival also provides the public relations and marketing (handbook and web site) that pulls all the branded regional events together into one national programme. The Festival also offers valuable links between partners, community outreach, central co-ordination and advice.

The networks emerging from the Festival will serve as a legacy that will strengthen relationships between the UK's cultural and educational institutions and the Muslim communities and between young Muslim practitioners and educators of various disciplines and the support that they need in their creative endeavours.

### **What we look for in partners will include:**

- Added value for the Festival of Muslim Cultures
- Ability to contribute to a theme which is part of our aims and ethos
- Sensitivity to the issues within Muslim society and between Muslims and non-Muslims
- Community engagement
- Viability and sustainability, with long-term outcomes
- Realistically deliverable proposals and programmes

### **What we look for in events will include:**

- A celebration of diversity and pluralism
- Inclusiveness (both within Muslim societies and outside)
- Meeting a genuine community need
- Not stridently defining or defending or propagating Islam or any of its interpretations but celebrating its ethical principles, its philosophical underpinnings, its broad spiritual dimensions and its diversity of cultural expressions
- Operating with clarity and transparency
- Being non-factional, non-political and non-sectarian in intent
- Integrity
- Quality
- Appropriateness within the context in which it is proposed to stage them

If any project or created work has the potential to give offence, or where appropriateness could legitimately be challenged, common sense will be followed and advice will be sought from the Festival's Honorary Board and Advisors who will have the right to recommend to the Trustees of the Festival not to endorse any events which it considers to be in breach of its Guidelines (i.e. philosophy, ethos, values, objectives and aims).

### **The legal framework governing partnerships**

The partnership will be based on a Memorandum of Understanding which will provide a legal base so that should there be any disagreement or misunderstanding, the parties can go back to first principles. In the event of a dispute, the matter would be referred to mediation.

All potential partners need to submit a pro-forma proposal to the Festival for the consideration of the Trustees (who may take advice from the Festival's Advisory Committee).

The Festival retains the right to terminate any partnership and withdraw branding if a partner deviates from the principles set out below:

- Partners must adhere to the ethos of the Festival of Muslim Cultures as outlined above
- Events have an appropriateness and are of sufficient quality to be branded
- Logistical or funding support must be sustainable
- All formal contractual, logistical or funding agreements between the Festival's Board of Trustees and partners will be in writing.
- Appropriate risk analysis and exit strategies will be an integral part of any agreement or project.

#### Festival of Muslim Cultures

Postal address: 17A Eccleston Street, London SW1W 9LX  
Web site: [www.muslimcultures.org](http://www.muslimcultures.org) Email: info@ muslimcultures.org

The Festival of Muslim Cultures is a Company Limited by Guarantee registered in England (Number 4981869) and a Registered Charity (Number 1106292)

(registered office: 5 Balfour Place, Mount Street, London W1K 2AU)