



China-Britain
Business Council
英中贸易协会

UK BRAND DESIGN, CULTURAL INNOVATION & INTANGIBLE HERITAGE MISSION

MARCH 2026

LONDON

Advice 建议 | Analysis 解析 | Access 渠道

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The China-Britain Business Council calls for UK consumer and lifestyle brands to join a cultural collaborative mission in 2026, **bringing together UK/China brands, cultural institutions and young designer talents:**

» **June 2026 – UK Brand Design, Cultural Innovation & Intangible Heritage Mission**

Shanghai · Suzhou · Hangzhou

Supports UK brands to explore China's cultural, creative, and design ecosystem, including intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and its impact on premium consumption.

» **November 2026 – UK Young Designer “China Brands Going Global” Mission**

Locations TBC, options include Hong Kong, Quanzhou, Guangzhou etc, based on capacity and client needs

Connects UK design talent with Chinese brands seeking global-ready aesthetics, storytelling and cultural reinterpretation.

This is a first-of-its-kind mission positioning UK participants as cultural collaborators rather than market entrants, enabling brands to translate Chinese cultural insights into commercially relevant design and storytelling assets for global audiences.

The programme builds on renewed UK–China cultural dialogue at government and institutional level, including recent high-level exchanges involving cultural and museum sector delegations.

STRATEGIC RATIONALE

January 2026, UK Prime Minister visited China, accompanied by cultural and museum sector representatives, signalling renewed momentum in UK-China cultural exchange.

Against this backdrop, China's premium consumer market continues to evolve despite global volatility. Brands that succeed today share three traits:

- » A deep understanding of cultural context
- » Authenticity in design and storytelling
- » Meaningful engagement with local creative communities

Today's Chinese consumers, especially Gen Z, increasingly expect brands to:

- » Reflect cultural intelligence, not tokenistic symbols
- » Offer designs with emotional and symbolic resonance
- » Demonstrate respect for traditional craftsmanship

This mission supports UK brands meet those expectations at low cost and low risk, providing cultural insight and creative exposure before committing to major operations.

Decision-makers who will gain the most value from the mission:

- » Creative Directors / Heads of Design
- » Brand Directors / Marketing Directors
- » International / Export Managers
- » Product Development Leaders
- » CSR / ESG Managers (for cultural heritage and community engagement alignment)
- » Other roles that directly influence brand storytelling, category direction, packaging, and market-entry strategy.

STRATEGIC RATIONALE

Why Intangible Cultural Heritage and Cultural Co-Creation Matter

Consumer pull:

- » More Chinese consumers prefer brands that integrate culturally relevant design elements
- » “Guochao” (national heritage x contemporary design) remains a long-term trend
- » ICH elements create trust, authenticity and storytelling depth in branding

Brand advantage:

- » Cultural assets strengthen premium positioning and differentiation
- » Authentic, well-contextualised collaborations perform strongly on social platforms
- » Deep cultural engagement helps brands avoid missteps or superficial localisation

Commercial relevance:

- » Localised capsules consistently outperform core ranges during festival periods
- » Cross-cultural collaborations often receive unpaid media coverage and organic influencer traction

This mission provides the **creative foundation and cultural credibility** to deliver impact.

“Consumers today are driven by values instead of a price tag ... sensitive and innovative cultural branding is key to success.”

-- Charlie Gu, Founder & CEO, *Jingzhi* Media Group



STRATEGIC RATIONALE

Market Feedback on Intangible Cultural Heritage

ICH for brand premium and consumer engagements:

- » [Intangible cultural heritage drives China's retail evolution | JLL](#)
- » [Luxury Gallops Into the Year of the Horse | Vogue](#)
- » ["Intangible cultural heritage +" sparks new consumer trends in China - Xinhua Silk Road](#)
- » [Top Chinese brand collabs of 2025: From Zara x AO Yes to Shushu/Tong x Asics | Jing Daily](#)
- » [Feiyi: Luxury's answer to 'guochao' | Jing Daily](#)
- » [What luxury can learn from China's slow craft movement | Jing Daily](#)

ICH to gain support from local governments:

- » [China makes notable progress in intangible cultural heritage protection - People's Daily Online](#)
- » [Protecting the past for the present - Chinadaily.com.cn](#)

WHAT YOU WILL TAKE HOME

Participating brands receive a practical set of outputs ready for internal use, for example:

- » **Brand-specific design concepts** inspired by ICH (Intangible Cultural Heritage) elements
- » **Mood boards & motif libraries** tailored to your product category
- » **Colour and material direction** aligned with Chinese consumption aesthetics
- » **Storytelling concepts** and naming ideas for product families or ranges
- » **Applied mock-ups** to visualise how designs translate into products or packaging
- » A **Cultural Insight Note** explaining relevance and consumer associations
- » A **follow-up collaboration plan** outlining how to work with designers post-mission

These deliverables can be used for:

- » Seasonal or **limited-edition collections**
- » **Gifting ranges** and festival-focused product lines
- » **Social and content campaigns**
- » **Retail activations** and in-store storytelling
- » **Brand repositioning or narrative refinement** in China market



NETWORKING & STRATEGIC ACCESS

In addition to programme outputs, participants gain curated access to:

- » Certified ICH (Intangible Cultural Heritage) masters and their studios
- » Chinese young designers shaping next-generation aesthetics and cultural expression
- » Local cultural and government bodies involved in creative and heritage development
- » Chinese creative industry leaders across academies, agencies and design studios
- » Retailers and distributors open to culturally differentiated products

These connections create long-term opportunities for:

- » Seasonal or project-based collaborations
- » Pop-ups and experiential activations
- » Influencer content partnerships
- » Licensing and co-creation arrangements
- » Market-entry pathways

This is a rare opportunity to build high-quality and trusted networks before making costly commitments.

MISSION OVERVIEW

UK Brands + Chinese Design, Cultural Innovation & Intangible Cultural Heritage

June 2026 – Shanghai, Suzhou and Hangzhou

Connecting UK brands with Chinese cultural intelligence, design inspiration, ICH experiences, and collaboration opportunities.

Fees:

- » Programme Participation: £1,800+ VAT for CBBC members; £2,000 + VAT for non-members
- » Sponsorship: £3,000 + VAT

CALLING FOR

Organisations and brands working at the intersection of **culture, design and storytelling**, where heritage, creativity and commercial relevance meet.

This mission is particularly suited to participants who:

- » Engage with **cultural, creative or narrative IP**
- » Value **authentic interpretation** over superficial localisation
- » Are exploring China through **inspiration, insight and collaboration**, rather than immediate market entry
- » Seek a **low-risk, concept-led platform** aligned with recent UK–China cultural engagement at government and institutional level

Ideal brand profile:

- » **Premium or design-led positioning**
- » Clear ownership of **creative direction and brand identity**
- » Interest in **China-specific differentiation** informed by culture and heritage
- » Openness to **creative collaboration** with designers, cultural institutions and IP holders
- » Flexibility to operate at **concept, prototype or storytelling stage**



WHO SHOULD JOIN

Cultural & Creative Institutions

- » Museums, galleries and heritage organisations
- » Cultural foundations and archive holders
- » Institutions exploring contemporary interpretation, touring exhibitions, licensing or international collaboration

Creative IP & Storytelling Organisations

- » Gaming studios (console, mobile or indie)
- » Animation, illustration and digital content studios
- » Businesses built around mythology, symbolism, world-building or narrative IP

Design-Led Retail & Curated Platforms

- » Department stores and concept retailers
- » Curated marketplaces and cultural retail platforms
- » Organisations shaping taste, gifting and seasonal storytelling

Design-Led Consumer Brands

- » Fashion, jewellery, homeware, beauty and gifting brands
- » Brands with strong design ownership and cultural sensitivity
- » Businesses interested in **culturally informed differentiation**, not immediate market entry

Visitor Economy & Place Branding Bodies

- » Tourism organisations and destination marketers
- » Cultural tourism operators and experience designers
- » Place-branding teams using heritage and creativity to engage global audiences



MISSION DETAILS

SHANGHAI, SUZHOU AND HANGZHOU 8TH – 12TH JUNE 2026

SHANGHAI

As China's international creative and commercial centre, Shanghai offers unparalleled opportunities for retail brands to tap into a diverse consumer market and vibrant retail landscape. This is where brands validate market relevance and build strategic partnerships.



MISSION DETAILS

SHANGHAI, SUZHOU AND HANGZHOU 8TH – 12TH JUNE 2026

SUZHOU

Located just 30 minutes by bullet train from Shanghai, Suzhou is fast becoming a key destination for lifestyle retail and cultural tourism. With a growing base of affluent consumers and increasing tourist footfall, it offers international brands new opportunities beyond China's first-tier cities.

Suzhou is the national centre for China's most respected ICH crafts, where tradition has been refined for hundreds of years, providing the **cultural depth** that makes China storytelling meaningful.



MISSION DETAILS

SHANGHAI, SUZHOU AND HANGZHOU 8TH – 12TH JUNE 2026

HANGZHOU

Hangzhou is China's digital culture and innovation hub, a critical entry point for understanding **what modern Chinese consumers respond to**. The city is listed as the top 1 on Vogue Business' 2025 New Fashion Capitals in China.

Also home to tech giants (e.g. Alibaba) and innovative startups, it will present UK companies with access to a dynamic retail ecosystem driven by cutting-edge technology and emerging consumer trends.



MISSION DETAILS

PROPOSED ITINERARY

DATE	AM	PM
31 MARCH LONDON	Consumer Masterclass: pre-mission cultural training, including market overview, commercial collaboration landscape, consumer trends, and practical guides on travelling around in China.	
6/7 JUNE	TRAVEL TO SHANGHAI	
8 JUNE – MONDAY SHANGHAI	Mission and market briefing (speakers TBC): - Understanding Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage - Translating Cultural Inspiration into Brand Idea	Partner meeting with studios, regional retailers, buyers or other business partners, based on participants' needs. Welcome dinner
9 JUNE – TUESDAY SHANGHAI	Visit ICH master studios for first-hand exposure Visit M50 Creative Park and Fosun Foundation	Retail Safari to explore real cases of ICH commercialisation and concept stores
10 JUNE – WEDNESDAY SUZHOU	Travel to Suzhou (1.5 hrs by coach/1 hr by train) Visit to Suzhou ICH Protection Centre or Suzhou Art & Crafts Museum, systematic ICH landscape and cross-category craft experiences	Introduction and visits to local studios, retailers and partners. Networking reception/ dinner
11 JUNE – THURSDAY HANGZHOU	Travel to Hangzhou by bullet train (up to 2 hrs)	Guided visit to Alibaba (Tmall and Tmall Global) Visit to independent young designer studios
12 JUNE – FRIDAY HANGZHOU	China Academy of Art – Xiangshan Campus Design Labs: Workshop on ICH and modern China aesthetics	Retail safari in city centre based on needs
13 JUNE – SATURDAY	MISSION COMPLETED, RETURN TO UK	

MISSION DETAILS

SHANGHAI, SUZHOU AND HANGZHOU 8TH – 12TH JUNE 2026

Fees: £1,800 per brand (CBBC members)
£2,000+VAT per brand (non-members)

Included in the Programme:

- » Pre-mission cultural business training in London
- » Pre-mission 1-2-1 calls with delegates to understand objectives and profiles
- » In-country group itinerary and transport (coach)
- » At least 3 matched partner introductions for each organisation*
- » Company profile in official delegation digital brochure
- » Welcome dinner and networking reception(s)

Delegates are expected to participate in the entire programme as listed in the itinerary.

Fees do not include international flights, inter-city train tickets, accommodation, or sustenance.

*Please note that requests for bespoke meetings that go significantly beyond those included in the programme, extra charges may need to be levied, but not without prior consent from the delegates concerned.
Matchmakings of **distributors or buyers** will be delivered at separate commercial rates.

MISSION DETAILS

APPLICATION FORM

APPLICATION FORM

Please return the completed and signed application form to celine.tang@cbbc.org **by Thursday 30th April 2026 to confirm interest.** After this date, a decision will be taken on whether the minimum interest has been met to make this a viable trade mission and deposits will then be taken.

Delegate name: _____ Job title: _____
Company name: _____ Company reg no: _____
UK registered address: _____
Mobile: _____ Email: _____

Application forms without UK registered organisation details will not be accepted.

- I wish to participate in the delegation and will pay the total cost as shown below once the mission has been confirmed viable.
- I understand the terms and conditions of participation and accept the cancellation terms.
- I agree to complete the post-mission questionnaire.

Delegates must be employed by an organisation with registered offices in the UK and are required to pay the full amount of fees by end of September upon receiving the invoice.

**Each delegate needs to cover their own flights (domestic & international) and accommodation costs
NEITHER SHOULD BE BOOKED UNTIL THE MISSION IS CONFIRMED (WHICH REQUIRES MINIMUM OF 5 SIGN-UPS)**

Please send an invoice to the above contact. Signature _____ Date _____

SPONSORSHIP BENEFITS

CALLING FOR:

Sponsors seeking visibility and client acquisition opportunities among UK consumer brands, including but not limited to:

Financial Services & Banks

- » Cross-border payments, FX, trade finance
- » Corporate banking teams targeting UK SME exporters

Logistics, Customs, and Supply Chain Providers

- » Cross-border logistics, warehousing, fulfilment partners

E-commerce & Digital Service Companies

- » Tmall/JD ecosystem solution providers
- » China digital marketing, livestreaming, and branding agencies

Professional Services

- » Legal, IP, tax, and market-entry consultancies
- » ESG/CSR advisory firms working with cultural programmes

Creative & Design Support Agencies

- » Studios offering branding, content, packaging, or localisation work

Ideal sponsor profile:

Companies seeking exposure to UK premium consumer brands exploring China; value being positioned as trusted partners in UK-China creative and commercial collaboration.



SPONSORSHIP BENEFITS

Position Your Organisation at the Centre of UK–China Consumer Innovation

1. Direct Access to a Curated Group of UK Consumer Brands

- » Engage closely with a pool of premium UK brands (fashion, beauty, lifestyle, gifting) exploring China.
- » Meet the people who make decisions about market entry, localisation, and cross-border partnerships.

2. Premium Brand Visibility Across the Entire Mission

Logo inclusion and verbal acknowledgment throughout:

- » Mission deck, printed programme, onsite signage, social media posts
- » Hangzhou, Suzhou, and Shanghai sessions
- » CBBC communications to all participants

3. Thought Leadership Integration

- » Sponsors may contribute a short insight or briefing (subject to relevance), ideal for showcasing expertise in finance, logistics, digital marketing, e-commerce, IP, or market-entry strategy.

4. Curated Networking with Brand Decision-Makers

- » Join selected sessions and receptions to build meaningful, warm connections with brand leaders.
- » CBBC facilitates direct introductions aligned to your service offering.



SPONSORSHIP BENEFITS

Strengthen Your Position in the UK–China Consumer Ecosystem

5. Access to the Broader China Creative & Consumer Network

- » Meet retailers, creative agencies, young designers, Intangible Cultural Heritage partners, and ecosystem stakeholders.
- » Expand your influence beyond the UK delegation into China's cultural and commercial networks.

6. Association with Cultural Exchange & Creative Development

Position your organisation as a supporter of strong CSR/ESG narrative for sponsors wishing to demonstrate impact:

- » Cross-cultural collaboration
- » Creative innovation
- » SME growth and responsible global engagement

7. Priority Consideration for Future CBBC Consumer Initiatives

Enjoy early invitations and preferential access to future:

- » Missions
- » Sector briefings
- » Delegations
- » UK–China consumer industry events for ongoing visibility and relationship-building beyond this mission.





ABOUT CBBC

ABOUT US

OUR EXPERIENCE, NETWORK AND INSIGHTS

CBBC is the leading organisation helping UK companies develop and grow their business with China, and Chinese companies expand and invest in the UK. For more than 70 years we have offered unrivalled experience and insight into the ever-changing opportunities for growth between the UK and China.



OUR EXPERIENCE

We have an established track record and are uniquely positioned to provide clear, impartial advice to help companies thrive in the rapidly evolving Chinese market.



OUR NETWORK

Our China network has extensive coverage both regionally and sectorally with offices in 10 locations, and a team of experienced in-market specialists dedicated to guiding British companies towards commercial success in China.



OUR INSIGHTS

Providing you with the latest local market intelligence and contacts is at the heart of any successful market entry or expansion strategy. Our objective is to help you make informed decisions to enable your business to grow in China.



OUR NETWORK IN CHINA & THE UK



- » Our China head office is in Beijing
- » Our 10 locations in China provide local access, analysis, and advice



- » Our head office is in central London
- » We cover the whole of the UK (including Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland)
- » We have strong in-market connections in the UK with Government, the private sector, and non-profit associations

ABOUT US

OUR PORTFOLIO AND SERVICE SUITES

Our sector teams have in-depth experience of guiding companies to commercial success in both the UK and China, while our service suites are designed to meet your needs throughout your business journey.

Based in both the UK and China, our sector teams understand the sectoral, geographical and cultural aspects of business success, as well as the main business challenges that companies face in both countries. We pride ourselves on the impartial advice we provide, and we operate in the following sectors:



Technology &
innovation



Healthcare &
life sciences



Education &
training



Retail & e-
commerce



Agriculture,
food & drink



Advanced engineering,
manufacturing &
transport



Energy,
environment &
infrastructure



Financial &
professional
services



Creative
industries &
sport

Our service suites are designed to support you at every stage of your operations:



GATEWAY



NAVIGATOR



LAUNCHPAD®

直通英国



ABOUT US

CBBC MEMBERSHIP

Join the UK's leading China business network to benefit from:

ADVICE



Our experience, built over 70 years of supporting thousands of organisations to enter, grow and succeed in China, leaves us expertly positioned to advise you on every step of your China journey.

ANALYSIS



From bespoke reports and policy updates to market insights across eight core sectors, we provide our members with the tools to help them prepare, plan ahead with confidence, and grow.

ACCESS



Access and engagement at the highest levels of influence in the UK and China, and to an unparalleled network of your peers, suppliers, stakeholders and competitors across all sectors. This includes events, roundtables, delegations and VIP visits.



500+ MEMBERS

10 OFFICES IN CHINA

8 SECTOR TEAMS

50+ CHINA EXPERTS (CHINA AND UK)

OUR COMMERCIAL SERVICES

GATEWAY

Gateway, our premier market advisory service, is designed to meet all your individual and bespoke business objectives. Whatever stage you are at in your China or UK journey as a business, Gateway can enable you to achieve your goals both efficiently and cost effectively.



CONSULTANCY

Bespoke market research, identification of local contacts and potential partners, arrangement of meetings and market visits



SUPPLIER & SOURCING SERVICE

Offering UK companies an efficient and cost-effective way to minimise associated risk and expenses when sourcing from China



DIGITAL

Services tailored to companies in the consumer sector including Digital Audit and E-Analytics, aimed at helping you to assess and understand the real data behind the big e-commerce numbers



EVENT MANAGEMENT

The CBBC Events Team has a wealth of experience in running a range of events throughout China, from seminars and conferences to product launches, receptions and dinners



ADVISORY

Advice on intellectual property protection and due diligence (company checks)



HR & RECRUITMENT

Guidance on, and services to support, the employment of staff in China



LOCATION STUDIES

Analysis of pros and cons of locations and sites for office setup, location of manufacturing facilities and sourcing the right partners



PRACTICAL SUPPORT

Practical cultural training courses as well as interpretation, translation and visa support

OUR COMMERCIAL SERVICES

NAVIGATOR

A retainer service designed to sustain and grow your interactions with the market through deploying CBBC's sector and regional specialists, Navigator enables you to conduct essential in-market business activity quickly and at an affordable price.

OUR NAVIGATOR OFFERING



INSIGHTS

Market insights and e-commerce platform audits; sector reports and locations studies; detailed market research and analysis; identification of a range of market initiatives and opportunities offered across all provinces and major cities in China



SALES AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Leveraging our networks and local knowledge; attending client meetings, fostering commercial and strategic partnerships and developing sales and distribution channels on your behalf; partner identification and supplier sourcing



EVENTS, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Planning marketing and strategic communications campaigns; online and offline events; key opinion leader (KOL) and key opinion consumer (KOC) identification



ADMINISTRATIVE AND SECRETARIAL SERVICES

HR and recruitment support; document drafting and regulation; IP support; concierge services; ongoing liaison work

THE ADVANTAGES OF NAVIGATOR

FULLY CUSTOMISED

Engage CBBC's team of specialists according to your specific brief to deliver immediate and improved results for your business

COLLABORATIVE

Work with an expert CBBC team dedicated to serving your business as an extension of your core team

COST EFFECTIVE

Gain affordable access to CBBC's network and resources in line with your budgetary requirements

EASILY ACCESSIBLE

Interact and maintain business with the China market while travel restrictions remain, use to speed-up future resumption and recovery prospects

OUR COMMERCIAL SERVICES



Launchpad enables UK businesses to enter the China market in a low-risk and cost-effective manner. Launchpad has enabled businesses of all sizes to succeed in China, from household consumer brands and prestigious academic institutions to innovative SMEs, trade and investment bodies and local authorities.

PROVEN SUCCESS

More than 200 organisations have successfully used Launchpad to date

COST EFFECTIVE

More cost effective than running either a representative office or full service company

10 LOCATIONS

Locate a Launchpad Manager in any of our 10 offices across China

RECRUITMENT & SELECTION

We will identify somebody with the right skills to work exclusively for your business needs

IMMEDIATE ACCESS

Upon identification of your Launchpad Manager, you will gain access to new business networks

FLEXIBLE & LOW RISK

Cost certainty and a low-risk means of entering the China market or withdrawing if plans change

GROW YOUR NETWORKS FAST

Access CBBC events and resources throughout China and the UK

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

We take care of payroll, expenses management, call-minding services and other related costs

GRADUATION & EASY EXIT

CBBC can assist with all aspects of post-Launchpad development

THE LAUNCHPAD JOURNEY



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