



Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme
2017–2022



Briefing Document - Creative Communities Economic Action Fund

Background

The Creative Ireland Programme commits to collaboration; between central and local government, between culture and industry, between artists and policy makers, and seeks to place creativity at the centre of public policy.

Local authorities are the lead agencies in local development. They play a key role across infrastructure, place-making, enterprise, culture, community development, tourism and the environment. Working collaboratively, the *Creative Communities* pillar in the Creative Ireland Programme seeks to harness the potential to deploy creativity as a strategy for wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development.

The work of Culture and Creativity Teams in the delivery of local *Culture and Creativity Strategies* shifted the recognition amongst local authorities of the potential role of creativity in relation to place-making, local enterprise, and the potential of the arts, culture and creativity as a local policy instrument.

An [interim review of Creative Communities](#) in 2020, recognised the success of the partnership in delivering across local authorities and in supporting wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development. However, it was noted that additional targeting of investment in relation to economic development is required.

EU analysis identifies the creative industries as a growth sector for Europe. It is essential that we increase our investment in this sector to ensure that Ireland benefits from this opportunity. Our challenge is highlighted across a range of economic indicators. The value of Ireland's exports in creative goods is approximately half the level of similarly sized economies. The contribution of creative industries to both Irish GDP and Irish employment lags significantly behind the European average¹.

In addition, there is limited availability of socio-economic data and insights regarding the impact or benefits of the cultural and creative sectors² at local level. This represents a significant inhibiting factor to policy development and decision-making. The **Creative Communities Economic Action Fund** seeks to strategically target the development of the creative economy and investment in related research and insights, to support evidence-based policy and planning, locally and regionally.

¹ Ireland [ranks 19th among 131 economies for innovation in 2021](#). Cultural & creative services exports as a % of total trade are not as high as they could be. Ireland currently #23/30 on the [global digital innovation index](#) see page 32

² See Appendix 1 for definitions

Objective:

To support local authorities lead the development of the creative economy at local/regional level through initiatives and models which **harness** and **demonstrate** the value of culture and creativity in local economic development.

It is envisaged proposals will build on existing expertise, both creative and economic within local authorities and/or partner organisations leading on regional enterprise e.g. WDC and Údarás. Applications must set out how their project and process will seek to identify learnings that can strengthen the contribution of culture and creativity to local economic development.

Eligible project types may encompass the following elements:

a) Data and Insights:

- Developing an evaluation of the project including any economic impacts;
- Strengthening knowledge-sharing and collaboration between local development partners and wider/sectoral expertise (e.g., in higher education or across EU partners) to support the development of the creative economy in a given area;
- Assessing potential economic impacts from additional investment in the creative and cultural sector (or aspects thereof) in support of long-term strategic development;

b) Ecosystems and Integration:

- Addressing specific creative ecosystem gaps and acting on the strengths and opportunities unique to each local authority area, which add value to the work of enterprise leads/agencies, creative hubs and other economic development partners in a local authority area or region (*or a network of local authority areas*);
- Initiatives through which cultural and creative economy partners can strengthen collaboration with other sectors in supporting local or regional economic development strategies or plans;
- Initiatives which enhance strategic support for planning and development of the cultural and creative economy at local level; supporting local authorities (directly or through partnerships) to strengthen the role that culture and creativity can play in the development and long-term resilience of local economies;

c) Strengthening Investment:

- Initiatives which can harness the economic potential of existing cultural and heritage assets (physical and institutional) and/or stimulate culture-led regeneration;
- Strengthening multi-agency and or multi-disciplinary partnerships within the local and/or regional creative economy, including opportunities to leverage additional investment in the public and/or private sector.

The areas above are not intended as mutually exclusive or exhaustive and other initiatives may be considered where they deliver against the objectives and related criteria for the scheme.

Ineligible activities include:

- Direct funding of creative practitioners, start-ups or existing firms.
- Training, mentoring or skills development initiatives.
- Travel or accommodation costs.
- Feasibility studies.

- Capital projects – although the implementation of projects and proposals under the scheme may seek to guide or inform a broad range of potential future investment (e.g., from National, EU or other funding).

Criteria:

A local authority must be the lead partner in all applications. Local authorities may choose to collaborate with other local authorities and/or external partners as appropriate to their application.

Budget:

In order to achieve partnerships of relevant scale, only applications for funding from €50,000 upwards to a maximum of a €75,000 to realise the ambition of this initiative will be evaluated.

Creative Communities Economic Action Fund Application and Evaluation Process

Applications will be reviewed by the Creative Ireland Programme and external assessors as follows:

Criterion	Marks Available
Quality of the proposal in terms of meeting programme objectives	40
Experience and expertise of the team	30
Anticipated value for money	30
Total	100

Appendix 1 – Definition of creativity, creative economies and creative industries

These definitions are intended as working and inclusive definitions rather than exclusive or fixed ones, recognising that culture and creativity are by their nature fluid and evolving.

The Creative Ireland Programme **defines creativity** as a set of innate abilities and learned skills: the capacity of individuals and organisations to transcend accepted ideas and norms and by drawing on imagination to create new ideas that bring additional value to human activity.

Culture and creativity are inextricably linked: artists, designers and creative practitioners across a range of disciplines are central to the evolution of a culture of creativity.

Useful Definitions and references

1. **Creative Economies** - According to research carried out by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the creative economy has no single definition. [further reading here](#). It is an evolving concept which builds on the interplay between human creativity and ideas and intellectual property, knowledge and technology. Essentially it is the knowledge-based economic activities upon which the 'creative industries' are based.

The creative industries – which include advertising, architecture, arts and crafts, design, fashion, film, video, photography, music, performing arts, publishing, research & development, software, computer games, electronic publishing, and TV/radio – are the lifeblood of the creative economy. They are also considered an important source of commercial, social and cultural value. Areas of design include: AR/VR/XR/UX design as well as graphic, product, industrial, interior, landscape, set and textile design and immersive technologies.

The creative economy is the sum of all the parts of the creative industries, including trade, labour and production. Today, the creative industries are among the most dynamic sectors in the world economy.

2. **What is The Creative Economy?** A British Council publication states: *a [new definition](#) was called for; a simple definition of the 'creative economy', rather than 'creative industries', as "...those sectors which specialise in the use of creative talent for commercial purposes"*. [Further reading here](#)
3. **The arts**, as defined in the Arts Act 2003, meaning 'any creative or interpretive expression (whether traditional or contemporary) in whatever form, and including, in particular, visual arts, theatre, literature, music, dance, opera, film, circus and architecture and including any medium when used for those purposes'
4. **The creative industries**, which can be defined as industries and occupations which focus on creativity as a means to deliver commercial success, export growth and resilient employment or Ireland including: advertising and marketing, architecture, crafts, design fashion, film, TV, video, radio and photography, IT, software and computer services, publishing, museums, galleries and libraries, music, performing and visual arts.

5. **Cultural heritage**, including:

- Heritage as considered in the Heritage Act 1995 and the National Heritage Plan 2002
- Museums, archives and public cultural institutions
- Library services and integrated cultural services delivered by local authorities
- Built and natural heritage, including architecture, archaeology, biodiversity and landscapes
- Intangible (or 'living') cultural heritage, including the Irish language, sport, customs and traditions
- Cultural diversity and languages which have become part of Irish life in more recent years