

INTRODUCTION

The NCFA welcomes the *Culture 2025* initiative and commends the Minister and the *Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht* for addressing the urgent need for policy-based decision making.

The development of a National Cultural Policy cannot be rushed, and yet needs to be imminent. Therefore the first requirement of *Culture 2025* is that the Department must accept that the policy needs to be a living document - adaptable and responsive, with mechanisms put in place to facilitate change, as needed.

Whatever policy is unveiled in 2016 must be reviewed against clear goals and metrics, agreed by all stakeholders, and reissued in 2017 and subsequent years. The goals and metrics must be informed by contemporary and complementary methods of research, new research tools, the use of evolving definitions.

Culture is everybody's business. It informs every aspect of all our lives. It is the sum total of the stories we tell about ourselves to ourselves. It reflects and shapes our thinking and our behaviour at a personal and an institutional level. Culture both informs and is the responsibility of every citizen, every institution and every Government Department.

Culture 2025 must clearly state that culture is, first and foremost an intrinsic right and property of every citizen. The subsequent, instrumental values of culture in terms of tourism, economic growth and international reputation are precisely that: subsequent. The instrumental values of culture will only be fully realised when its intrinsic, public nature is recognised at every level of government, and supported and developed by every arm of government.

We note the government's action plan on *Civil Service Renewal* aims to change the culture of the civil service to be more agile, flexible, responsive and open to external ideas, challenge and debate. Making this action plan work for *Culture 2025* is essential for its success at this critical time.

REFRAMING THE DEBATE

International Reputation

Culture 2025 is, rightly, concerned with Ireland's international cultural reputation and its direct and indirect contribution to the economy. In support of this, the policy must explicitly align itself with international best practice and commit to the following:

1. The UNESCO recommendation concerning the *Status of the Artist (1980)* and the suggestions and actions of the 2015 report on same;
2. The *UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*;
3. The *United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child* with particular reference, in the context of *Culture 2025*, to Articles 28, 29, 30 and 31;
4. *Agenda 21 for Culture* - on behalf of the government, local authorities and all relevant funding agencies, taking necessary steps to ensure that all relevant personnel in all relevant departments and funding agencies receive the necessary training.

Diversity and Inclusion

With reference to *UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, a National Cultural Policy must commit itself to diversity and inclusion at the

highest level. It must ensure representation of all groups in society on the *Arts Council, Culture Ireland*, and on the boards of national cultural institutions and organisations. *Culture 2025* must acknowledge that ‘diversity and inclusion’ is not about bringing “others” into “our” culture. It is about recognising, respecting, supporting and celebrating equally the many different cultures that constitute Irish culture in the 21st century.

Supporting the Artist

The *Culture 2025 Discussion Document* has a unique definition of culture that is narrower than the UNESCO definition. There is a risk that the fact of artistic production – the fact of artists’ work and their contribution – may be lost by replacing discussion of art with a discussion of culture.

We want *Culture 2025* to acknowledge that:

1. The artist is central to cultural production as defined in *Culture 2025*, and the well being of the artist is a priority in all discussions and debates;
2. Ireland’s cultural tradition and reputation is the direct result of the imagination, creativity and work done by artists;
3. All policy discussions must be;
 - a. rooted in a realistic commitment to adequate funding
 - b. explore all possible funding options and models
 - c. commit to the funding strategy with the most beneficial impact to the artist.

Copyright

Culture 2025 must acknowledge that copyright is the primary source of wealth (as opposed to income) and one of the principal tradable commodities within the Culture and Creative Industries. Artist copyright must be protected in keeping with the provisions set out in the *Copyright and Related Acts 2000*, and incorporate the *Artists’ Resale Right* into legislation.

Resources

We are concerned that the *Culture 2025 Discussion Document* approaches the resource issue from a negative perspective. The single most important cultural resource, as defined by *Culture 2025*, is creativity. To reflect this, *Culture 2025* must state clearly that:

1. Creativity is an abundant and invaluable resource as evidenced by the continued achievements of our artists at home and abroad;
2. Creativity, arts and culture are not an output, but an essential input into communities, society and the economy;
3. In order to maximise the social and economic impact of creativity, adequate support and investment (direct and indirect) must go towards creative practice and education (at all levels);
4. The *Arts in Education Charter* will be revised and enacted by the end of 2016;
5. That it will guarantee no further cuts to central arts funding and will work to bring central arts funding in line with the European average by 2020;
6. That it will work with The Departments of Social Protection, Finance, and Jobs Enterprise and Innovation to develop strategies prior to budget 2016 that:
 - a. acknowledge and support the unpaid work of artists;
 - b. incentivise, through tax reform and legislation, private and corporate investment and debt financing;
 - c. acknowledge and support the creative input of culture into the wider Creative Industries.

Interdepartmental Co-operation

We support the idea inherent in *Culture 2025* that the policy is relevant and applicable beyond the *Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaelteacht*. The National Cultural Policy must state that culture is an input to every government department and is affected and shaped by the actions of every department. This input includes but is not limited to Education and Skills, Social Protection, Jobs Enterprise and Innovation, Foreign Affairs and Trade, Finance, Children and Youth Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Health, and Transport Tourism and Sport. Each department must be called upon to recognise this and prepare its own statement of cultural action in association with Culture 2025 and put in place the mechanisms for joint cultural action before Budget 2017.

TRANSPARENCY IN FUNDING

Capital Infrastructure

The NCFA acknowledges the significant capital investment undertaken by successive governments in the culture and heritage sector. To protect this and future investment it is imperative that *Culture 2025* redefines cultural infrastructure, in keeping with international best practice, as composed of both “hardware” – buildings, corporate entities etc. – and software – people, artists, creativity, education etc. It follows that costings for intended capital projects must include the associated “software” costs such as staff, artists, education and audience engagement programmes over a ten year period. And that, in keeping with government practice, all cost benefit analysis must include these costs, and that the impact of capital investment be measured in both intrinsic and instrumental values over the same period to establish a true cost benefit relationship.

Creative Industries

The concept and the possibilities of the Creative Industry model are poorly understood at both government level and within the Cultural and Creative Industries themselves. The department must commission and publish independent research prior to Budget 2017 to establish the real value of the Cultural and Creative Industries in terms of contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Gross Value Added (GVA), Foreign Direct Investment, Tourism and Job Creation. The research parameters should be in keeping with international best practice in the Cultural and Creative Industries. In the light of this research, the department’s definition of culture will be widened to produce a more extensive functional cultural policy.

Strategy v Policy

NCFA understands that the *Culture 2025 Discussion Document* is not a strategy document. Therefore, as the next step, we call for the creation of ‘joined up’ voluntary strategy groups, composed of representatives of all relevant stakeholders, including government appointees and elected artists’ representatives, to develop strategic plans for delivery prior to Budget 2017.

CONCLUSION

The NCFA welcomes the opportunity this historic process presents. A fully interrogated and continually revised policy can allow us to create a remarkable legacy for the citizens of Ireland including our artists and the entire creative and cultural sector.

NCFA RESPONSE TO THE CULTURE 2025 DISCUSSION DOCUMENT (DAHG, 2015)

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The National Campaign for the Arts is a broad and inclusive coalition that reflects the scale, reach and diversity of the arts in Ireland today. Its membership has a national reach that includes major festivals, venues, producers and representative organisations.