



The National Campaign for the Arts
www.NCFE.ie
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Executive Summary

We call upon the Department of Finance to increase current direct investment in Arts and Culture through **sustainable investment** particularly in the agencies funded by the Department of Arts Heritage Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht affairs (namely the **Arts Council and the Film Board**) in order to begin the process of repairing the widespread damage suffered by the sector in recent years.

The NCFA calls on the Government to begin a commitment towards **matching EU average GDP spending on the Arts and Culture**. Public funding for the Arts and Culture **represents just 0.11% of GDP and puts Ireland at the bottom of the European league table** compared to an average of 0.6% ¹

We also call for the implementation of the following measures:

- **Retention of the €50 million allocated for Commemorations** to the Department of Arts Heritage Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht affairs, and for that money to be ring-fenced for allocation to The Arts Council and the Film Board.
- **Restoration of €30 million worth of cuts** imposed on the Arts Council and aim to reach at least €180 million annual budget for the Arts Council within the life of the next government
- **Social welfare reform** to allow artists to pursue their careers with dignity
- Implement **tax breaks** to stimulate corporate and philanthropic investment in the arts and to grow the creative industries
- Establish a **separate Lottery fund**, separate and distinct from Arts Council funding for diversification of grant allocation
- Reclassify **Local Authority** Arts spending as **non-discretionary**
- Actively fund creative industries and arts activity via **Local Enterprise Offices and LEADER funds**
- Implement the **Arts in Education Charter**
- Extend **Junior Cycle Review** to include Dance, Drama, and Music
- Introduce **Drama and Dance** as a subject in Secondary Schools
- Shift government education investment policy from a **STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) to **STEAM** focus.
STEM + Art = STEAM

¹ CulturalPolicies.net, *Public Cultural Expenditure in European Countries*, % of total public expenditure/GDP. Figures supplied by Irish Government to Council of Europe.

About NCFA

This submission is made on behalf of Arts and cultural organisations and individuals that form part of the *National Campaign for the Arts (NCFA)*, a national membership organisation which articulates, champions and strengthens the role of the Arts and Culture in society and its contribution to the national economy.

We present detailed evidence, examples, and arguments to support each of the enclosed recommendations and would very much welcome the opportunity to discuss them further.

Statement of Intent

1. The future of the Irish economy relies on being seen as **a centre for creativity** as well as a culture driven by ideas. To achieve this we need to get Ireland off the bottom of the European league table for public investment in the Arts and Culture. At just 0.11% of GDP Ireland is at the bottom compared to an average of 0.6%. Ireland enjoys a legendary reputation around the world for artistic excellence. But government spending on Culture is far from excellent. The NCFA would like to see the Irish figure **reach half the European average 0.3%** within the next 3 years.
2. **Improve the working and living conditions** for Irish artists by developing an *Artist's Charter* addressing taxation and social protection.
3. The arts have a vital role to play in stimulating creative thinking and encouraging curious minds. In a knowledge-based global economy, innovation drives growth and we can better achieve this through education that has a central role for the Arts. This can be achieved by **moving Government policy from STEM to STEAM** (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Maths).
4. The NCFA and its members will work to highlight how inclusive all forms of Art are in Ireland. Arts making, participation and enjoyment is for everyone. **Irish people value the Arts.** ²71% of adults in Ireland agree that the Arts play “an important and valuable role in a modern society such as Ireland.” Surveys show the vast majority of Irish people engage with Arts and Culture. **Arts attendance in Ireland is 13% higher than in Great Britain** and 9% higher than in Northern Ireland. It is time our government matched this commitment by putting the Arts at the heart of education, public policy, and economic thinking.
5. In Order for the Arts to be sustainable in the long term, **a balance of investment and buy-in** is needed from multiple sources . NCFA will work with Government to create the best conditions for Corporate and Philanthropic support for the Arts to thrive.

² *Arts in Irish Life 2014*, The Arts Council

Headline Position

The investment outlined in this paper is essential to the delivery of the government's vision as outlined by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in its draft policy document *Culture 2025*³, a stated aim of which is:

“A well-resourced cultural sector that supports excellence”³

The NCFA looks forward to engaging with the Oireachtas Committee on the continued consultation process in relation to *Culture 2025*. We believe that Ireland's investment in Culture and the Arts defines us as a nation and demonstrates what it is we value. Arts and Culture enrich every aspect of our lives.

A thriving Arts and Cultural sector has a direct impact on:

- our understanding of our national cultural identity
- the growth and productivity of the national economy
- social mobility and aspiration; particularly for children, young people and families
- the skills-base of Ireland's workforce through lifelong learning, both within the formal education sector and outside it
- participation opportunities and the acceleration of the growth of Ireland's world-class creative industries and the wider economy
- individuals and families by fostering positivity, empathy, self-expression and exploration, as well as improved health and wellbeing
- regions and local communities; through encouraging cohesion, creating high-quality public activities, stimulating local growth and the night-time economy and attracting direct business investment into areas outside Dublin
- tourism, trade, and export
- diplomacy and Ireland's world standing.

Overview

The Arts work at the heart of communities and are an engine for wellbeing and cohesion. It also powers economic growth. Innovators and entrepreneurs are attracted to creative, cultural, beautiful places. This is a reason why multinational companies are driven to invest in Ireland and in Dublin in particular.

Whilst we understand that the Government has various priorities, we strongly believe that the continued cuts to Arts and Culture have been deeply counter-productive over the past number of years. We demand decency, fairness and cross-departmental communication to address issues of working and living conditions of artists.

³ Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs draft policy *Culture 2025*.

We support Arts Council action on its Strategic Review Group and Departmental action on the development of a national cultural policy: *Culture 2025*. However, alongside this, we condemn the impact on smaller organisations and individuals of massively reduced funding to the sector.

Investment in the Arts sector gives us leverage to attract philanthropy and grow income from other sources while providing the stability necessary to innovate and take risks while stimulating local growth in the process.

NCFA recommendations in relation to Budget 2017

Each of the following recommendations will make a difference to the national cultural ecology, but the implementation of the two main recommendations below underpins and is essential to their success.

We want a **non-physical cultural infrastructure** that allows every region to celebrate and grow cultural and creative talent, and to support the creation of new creative clusters. The investment in physical infrastructure through the Access programme and the current Arts and Culture Capital Scheme, while broadly welcomed, has not resulted in the creative clusters that it could, due to a lack of ongoing investment in the Arts community itself as opposed to simply the built infrastructure. We need **investment in the work of Arts practitioners** nationally and regionally in order to prevent further hemorrhaging of our creative best to other sectors and overseas.

1. Departmental Financial Targets

We call upon the Department of Finance to increase current direct investment in Arts and Culture thereby beginning the process of repairing the widespread damage suffered by the sector in recent years.

- **Retention of the €50 million allocated for Commemorations** to the Department of Arts Heritage Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht affairs, and for that money to be ring-fenced for allocation to The Arts Council and the Film Board.
- **An immediate reinvestment of the €30 million** loss to the Arts Council directly for 2017 would ensure the growth of the national cultural ecology. We believe that investment through the Arts Council is the most effective and efficient way of re-igniting the sector. This initial investment will accelerate economic growth and enable cultural organisations to become commercial contributors to their communities in the long-term.

The NCFA call on the Government to commit to working towards matching the EU average GDP spend on the Arts.

Public funding for the Arts and Culture represents just 0.11% of GDP and puts Ireland at the bottom of European league tables compared to an average of 0.6%.

2. Creative industries and the economy

Our Creative Industries are thriving and are delivering sustainable jobs and considerable exports. Despite the considerable potential of the Cultural Industry sector, estimated to be responsible for over 3% of the EU's gross domestic product and jobs, they remain undervalued and unrecognised, especially in terms of their ability to access start-up capital and financing.

Public investment in the Arts and Culture, coupled with an education and learning system that values Arts and creativity, are critical to the success of these industries.

We recommend tax efficiencies be implemented to maximise the potential of the creative industries

3. Lottery Funding

Lottery funding should be separate to core government spend on the Arts via the Council. As in the UK, the implementation of two separate sources of funding could serve very different purposes – with grant-in-aid providing the backbone of the sector and Lottery funding filling the gaps - such as supporting capital, training, and special projects.

We recommend the separation of Lottery funding from general Department of Arts funding in order to allow broader and alternative sources of funding to be accessible to the sector

4. Local Authority investment

Local Authorities are core partners in Arts and Culture. Many significant and effective projects, people and organisations are financially supported by Local Authorities.

The NCFA support the Arts Act's inclusion of the provision 'to prepare and implement plans for the development of the Arts within its functional area and shall, in so doing, take account of policies of the Government in relation to the Arts.'

We condemn the widespread lack of collaboration and planning within local authorities between Arts and other departments to resolve ongoing issues of provision and access.

From a [Red C national poll](#) conducted by the NCFA, we were able to show that the Irish public is deeply supportive of the Arts and expect more be spent on Arts locally. The Arts Council reported a total net expenditure on the Arts by local authorities of EUR 28.5 million in 2011 – a reduction of 27% on the 2010 spend of EUR 39.3 million.

We recommend that government begin re-investment in Local Authorities over the next five years.

The Arts budget is currently listed as ‘discretionary’ spend in local authorities, which means it is under constant pressure from other departments.

We recommend that expenditure on the Arts be reassigned as non-discretionary to ring fence local cultural spend

We believe that Culture is a vital element in the regional growth agenda and that cultural organisations can, and do, make a significant contribution to local enterprise and are not being supported as they should be through Local Enterprise Offices and LEADER funds.

We recommend that Local Enterprise Boards actively include the arts and creative industries in their support schemes and that a percentage of regional LEADER Funding is ring fenced for artistic activities

5. Young people, education, and learning

We need the next generation of creative young people to be engaged citizens, to imagine solutions to our problems and to be the flexible, innovative workforce that the creative, digital and wider businesses need. We know access to the Arts and Culture builds much needed cultural capital and that early family exposure and engagement with the Arts gives young people the best possible life chances and the best chance of social mobility.

Government investment of public money in the Arts and education comes with the same responsibility to open opportunities for all citizens to learn to live in a world that embraces fairness, decency, and respect for difference.

Schools and teachers are our essential partners in the delivery of cultural learning and are a critical part of the national cultural ecology; often providing the only access to the Arts to young people who do not have

this access at home. Indeed, simple drawing is normally the only unpaid access that Primary School students have throughout their 8 years in school to the creative Arts.

We are sorely lacking in European terms, in that Drama and Dance, in particular, are not offered at second level. Given the extraordinary and confidence building transformative effect on teenagers that drama/dance can have, it is unfortunate that there is no provision for it in our education system.

We support the action by National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and initiatives such as the [current consultation on Junior Cycle Art, Craft and Design Review](#). However, we condemn the lack of action on primary school teacher's call for more training and support in these areas.

We call for action on the Arts in Education Charter

We recommend that the Junior Cycle Review be extended to include Dance, Drama, and Music

We recommend that Drama and Dance is introduced as a subject in Secondary Schools

Current Government policies focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) as the core subjects for tertiary education. There is a growing body of research showing that in this educational matrix the exclusion of the Arts means that creativity, the most important element in educating the next generation of self-starters, is lost.

We support the recent allocation of research funding to the Arts via the Irish Research Council as an effort to think STEAM (Science/Technology/Engineering/Arts/Maths), not STEM. However, we condemn the impact of policies that have seen creative and performing Arts students struggle and be forced to drop out of third level having secured places because of short-termism in the withdrawal of grants and services in the last 5 years.

We recommend that government educative investment shift from a simple STEM (Science/Technology/Engineering/Maths) approach to education the broader STEAM focus (including the Arts)

6. Digital infrastructure and broadcasting

For the Arts and creative industries to thrive we need an excellent digital infrastructure and strong national publicly funded broadcasting partners. Continued superfast broadband rollout in rural areas will enable smaller creative businesses to grow. Public service broadcasters provide a platform for excellence, showcasing both the cultural and creative work of

artists and participants working in their own homes and communities as well as the best of our funded national artists and organisations. Broadcasters have an important role in working in partnership with the sector and in amplifying the impact of public investment in Culture.

ANNEX A: The current funding picture

Sadly the picture from 2015 to 2016 remains the same. A complex funding ecology supports the Arts and Cultural sector including national public subsidy (chiefly grant-in-aid via the Arts Council and occasional direct funding from the Department of Arts), funding from local authorities, philanthropy and earned income from commercial endeavour. Each essential funding source serves to attract, leverage and enable the others, but public investment underpins all - giving organisations the stability to take risks.

The sector has faced massive overall financial cuts over the last few years. Grant-in-aid for the Arts distributed through the Arts Council fell by over €30 million in cash terms from 2009/10 to 2013/14. This equates to more than a third of core national Arts funding being lost.

In the period 2010 to 2011 Local Authorities cut funding to arts by 27%.⁴

⁴ Arts Council of Ireland

ANNEX B: Contributors to this paper

This paper was drafted by colleagues from across the National Campaign for the Arts membership; which involves hundreds of Irish Arts and Cultural professionals and organisations representing over 20,000 individuals working directly in the sector. It is submitted by NCFA Committee members on behalf of the membership of the NCFA:

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