



Pre-Budget Submission 2019

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Executive Summary

NCFA calls upon Government to increase **Current Expenditure** in Arts and Culture through the **Arts Council** as part of their commitment to doubling investment in the Arts over **7 years**. This investment will have direct impact on the work of artists and importantly this investment will maintain the arm's length principle which underpins the Arts Council's funding.

NCFA asks Government to publish a roadmap outlining how and when the stated objective of **doubling investment in the Arts** is to be achieved on the **current expenditure** programmes which impact the livelihoods and output of the arts community. These clearly outlined policy objectives have been a feature of NCFA submissions for several years, and remain a consistent focus for us.

NCFA is **concerned** that much of the new Government cultural investment through Project Ireland 2040, Global Ireland and Creative Ireland is on capital projects and promotion, with **little investment in artists and their work**. We call on the Taoiseach to follow up his statement that "**you can't have theatres without actors**" and make **assurances** that increases in current expenditure will follow the recently announced capital investment.

Following the recent and welcome announcements around capital investment as part of **Project Ireland 2040**, The National Campaign for the Arts (NCFA) calls on Government to invest in the chronically under-resourced **human infrastructure** dimension of the Arts sector. We need **investment in the work of artists** nationally and regionally to present our creative best to other sectors and to the world.

NCFA recognises the progress that has been achieved to date on certain issues –including the adoption of a new pilot Social Welfare scheme. It now strongly advocates for a clear roadmap setting out Government's short to medium-term plans to achieve the existing commitments to Arts and Culture.

We call on Government to implement the following measures:

- **Increase funding to the Arts Council by €13.2 million in 2019**, bringing funding back up to the 2008 level of €82 million, with a view to doubling investment in the Arts Council to a total of €130 million over the next six years
- Publish a detailed **road map** for how overall investment in the Arts and Culture will be doubled over the next six years
- Implement new **tax incentives** to stimulate corporate and philanthropic investment in the Arts
- Classify local authority arts spending as a mandatory requirement and encourage funding of creative industries and arts activity via **Local Enterprise Offices and LEADER funds**
- Establish a dedicated **research and development fund** for European cultural projects so artists can fulfil the ambitions of the Global Ireland plan
- Classify investment in **online infrastructure as capital spending** to support artists and cultural organisations develop their digital resources
- Continue **social welfare reform** to allow all arts workers to pursue their careers with dignity
- Shift the focus of Government education investment policy from **STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) to **STEAM** (STEM + Art = STEAM)
- Expand the **Creative Schools** programme nationally in 2019 and ensure it is mainstreamed beyond the life of the Creative Ireland initiative.
- Fund a feasibility study into **Drama and Theatre Studies** as a Leaving Cert subject.

About NCFA

This submission is made on behalf of Arts and Cultural organisations and individuals that make up the National Campaign for the Arts (NCFA).

NCFA is a volunteer-led, grassroots movement that makes the case for the Arts in Ireland. We work to ensure that the Arts are on national and local government agendas and are recognised as a vital part of contemporary Irish life.

The Arts in Ireland

1. The future of the Irish economy relies on being seen as **a centre for creativity** as well as a culture driven by ideas. The Arts are the window through which the world sees us and our country.
2. Arts and Culture function as a robust social infrastructure and underpins individual **wellbeing**. The Arts are of **intrinsic value** to individuals and to society: the artist brings essential qualities of awareness, emotion, truth and creativity to everyday life.
3. **Participation** in Arts and Culture is instrumental in developing individual and collective creativity – with enormous implications for our society and our economy.
4. 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.
5. Arts making, participation and enjoyment is for everyone. **Irish people value the Arts**¹. 71% 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 Government matched this commitment by putting the Arts at the heart of education, public policy, and economic thinking.
6. 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.
7. To ensure a healthy cultural sector, NCFA will continue to work with Government to **improve the working and living conditions** of arts workers addressing taxation and social protection.

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

“A well-resourced cultural sector that supports excellence”²

¹ [The Arts in Irish Life 2014](#), The Arts Council of Ireland

² Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs draft policy [Culture 2025](#)

NCFA recommendations for Budget 2019

1. Departmental Financial Targets

- ***An increase of €13.2 million to the Arts Council for 2019 will ensure the growth of the national cultural ecology.***

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. An increase of €13.2 million will bring funding back to 2008 levels and ensure that arts activity can take place in every town and village across the country.

We believe that investment through the Arts Council is the most effective and efficient way of re-igniting the sector through providing direct support to artists and arts organisations. This initial investment will accelerate economic growth and enable artists and cultural organisations to become commercial contributors to their communities in the long-term.

- ***We call on Government to publish a road map to show clearly how investment in the Arts and Culture will be doubled over the next six years.***

The proposal to double investment in Arts and Culture by Government is hugely welcomed, delivering necessary investment to a starved sector. For this level of investment to have real impact, a clear road map of how this will be done is necessary.

2. Adherence to Arm's Length Principle

- ***NCFA re-states the need for the Arm's Length principle to be upheld and assured.***

An integral element of the artistic process and good governance in the cultural sector necessary for freedom in creation and curation of work. NCFA re-states the need for this principle to be upheld and assured, alongside the requirement for transparency in all funding allocation including Creative Ireland and Local Authority spending. This principle is at the heart of how the Arts Council operates so funding the Arts Council appropriately is the best way to achieve this.

3. Tax Incentives for Culture

- ***We recommend tax incentives be implemented to maximise the potential of the the Arts and Creative Industries***

The Arts and Creative Industries are thriving and are delivering sustainable jobs and considerable exports. Despite the considerable potential of the Arts and Creative Industries, 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.

NCFA calls on Government to implement tax incentives to encourage investment in the creative industries and philanthropic support for the cultural sector.

4. Local Authority Investment

- ***We recommend that expenditure on the Arts by Local Authorities be classified as mandatory and non-discretionary to ring-fence local cultural spend.***
- ***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.***

Local Authorities are core partners in Arts and Culture. Many significant and effective projects, artists and organisations are financially supported by Local Authorities. Under the Arts Act, Local Authorities are required to have an Arts Plan but are not required to have a dedicated Arts budget. NCFA calls on Government to amend the Arts Act to ensure that Local Authorities across the country provide dedicated funding for local arts activity.

NCFA supports 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 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 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.³

The Arts budget is currently listed as 'discretionary' spend in local authorities, which means it is under constant pressure from other departments. We believe that Culture is a vital element in the regional growth agenda, that artists and cultural organisations make a significant contribution to local enterprise and that they are not being supported as they should be through Local Enterprise Offices and LEADER funds.

³ NCFA Red C National Poll <http://ncfa.ie/ncfa-red-c-survey-may-2014/>

5. Research and Development for European Projects

- ***NCFAs calls on Government to establish a dedicated fund to enable prospective applicants for Creative Europe funding to effectively devise and prepare large-scale projects to the level of excellence required for success.***

There is currently a small amount of funding available from Creative Europe Desk Ireland to foster networks, but it does not enable arts organisations to buy the time required to research and develop large multi-stakeholder projects.⁴

Given the pressure on an already stretched sector to generate applications for national funds, potential applicants do not have the resources to build proposals, and arguably, this is why Ireland has underperformed in Creative Europe funding rounds to date.⁵

Irish Research Council and Science Foundation Ireland have research awards to support academics to build successful applications for EU funding. Similar investment is required to enable the Arts and Culture sector to secure Creative Europe funding.

The aims of the recently announced Global Ireland initiative will benefit hugely from such support.

6. Digital Infrastructure

- ***We call on capital funding allocations to include spend on online support and online infrastructure to ensure arts organisations can develop a comprehensive digital presence.***

For the Arts and creative industries to thrive we need an excellent digital infrastructure. To compete in a digital age and to expand influence and output, artists of all genres need an online visibility and output.

European directives in Culture are including digital infrastructure and Arts in a Digital age in all their funding and role out of new initiatives, this European model is a useful one to implement in the Irish context and as in most cases the building of a hub or an app is a one-off spend, it makes the most sense to include it in capital spend. Initiatives in other countries have demonstrated that for tax purposes spend on Digital infrastructure can be designated Capital Expenditure.

7. Social Welfare Reform

- ***Following the pilot, NCFAs calls on Government to expand social welfare access to include other artforms, and to cover artists who work as employees, as well as self-employed artists.***

NCFAs welcomes the pilot social welfare initiative announced in 2017. However, the reach of the pilot is limited insofar as it only extends to self-employed artists in two specific communities (literature and visual art), leaving the majority of working artists without access.

NCFAs recommends that social welfare access is expanded to include other artforms, and to cover artists who work as employees, as well as self-employed artists. Systems such as that of the Netherlands should be used as a model for the sustainability of those working in the sector; i.e., practicing artists are guaranteed a basic income for up to 4 years within a 10 year period.⁶

⁴ See <https://www.creativeeuropeireland.eu/>

⁵ Sources https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/5_coop2_demand_by_country_applications_graph.pdf and https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/7_coop1_demand_by_country_organisations_graph.pdf

⁶ Source <http://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/fxNypjBMvfEPTXNGHrt4/full>

8. Children, Young People, Education and Learning

- **We recommend that Government shift educational investment from STEM to STEAM**

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

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.

- **NCCA calls on Government to expand the Creative Youth programme nationally in 2019 and for it to be mainstreamed beyond the life of the Creative Ireland initiative.**

After years of a dearth of research on this area we welcome the publication of the ESRI/Arts Council research into the cultural participation of children and young people which finds that that children who participate in arts activities learn and develop better than those who don't have this access.⁷

In addition, we welcome the implementation of some recommendations of the Arts and Education Charter through the vehicle of Creative Ireland's investment in children. The recent Creative Youth programme administered by the Arts Council will assist schools and teachers in delivery of cultural learning. In the knowledge that access to the Arts for all can only happen universally through curriculum we call for the expansion of this programme nationally in 2019 and for it to be mainstreamed beyond the life of the Creative Ireland initiative.

As equal citizens, children and young people should have the opportunity to experience art every day and not just in the school context. Despite the stated commitment to art and culture for children there have been no additional resources allocated to artists through the Arts Council to deliver on this commitment. Again, we call on the the Department of Finance to increase **Current Expenditure** in Arts and Culture through the **Arts Council** as part of their commitment to doubling investment in the Arts over **7 years**.

While acknowledging that children deserve arts participation now in its own right, we also look to its impact on the future generations of creative young people. We assert the importance of the arts in building engaged, resilient citizens, who can imagine flexible and innovative solutions to our social, creative and digital challenges in public and private service in the future. 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.

- **We call on Government to fund a feasibility study into Drama and Theatre Studies as a Leaving Cert subject.**

Given the extraordinary and confidence building transformative effect on teenagers that drama/dance can have, it is unfortunate that there is little provision for it in our education system. We welcome the inclusion of the Artistic Performance short course in Junior Cycle and support its wider roll out in secondary schools. However, we are still lagging behind our colleague in Northern Ireland in not providing a Drama and Theatre Studies course for Leaving Cert. We call for funding for the NCCA to carry out a feasibility study on this to inform its development.

⁷[Children engaged in arts go on to have better 'academic self-image' and more positive attitudes to school - landmark Arts Council/ESRI study](#)

Appendix A: The Current Funding Picture

Sadly, the picture from 2017 to 2018 remains the same as over the last decade. 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 where possible. Each 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%⁸.

⁸ The Arts Council of Ireland

Appendix 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 Steering Committee members on behalf of the membership of NCFA:

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