

Making Great Art Work

Leading the Development of the Arts in Ireland

Arts Council Strategy (2016–2025)



THE ARTISTS
WHEN WE TALK ABOUT
THEIR VISIONS
AND NOT AS
MISOGYNE
OR PARAN
OUR
FRUNDED SOCIETY
that it
AS
OUR VISIONS
OF THE FUTURE
else.
anything



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The work of artists inspires and reflects the rhythm of the everyday as well as momentous events in public life. The arts shape and challenge us, give us pleasure, help us to know who we are and where we are going: their distinctive, creative power is an essential feature of our consciousness and conversation. At home and abroad the arts are the hallmark of our creativity as a people.

In ten years' time, we want Ireland's international standing as a leader in the arts to be strengthened by our commitment to new generations of ambitious and innovative artists. The vitality of the arts across the country and in our diverse communities will inform national cultural policy and influence the wider work of central and local government.

Over the decade 2016–2025, we intend that the centrality of the arts to Irish life will have been strengthened by our advocacy, by our support of artists throughout their careers, by the involvement of many agencies in cultural provision, by the impact of the arts on the creative economy, and by the depth and breadth of people's engagement with the arts as a valued feature of their lives.

Introduction

Making Great Art Work establishes the coordinates by which the Arts Council will lead the development of the arts in the decade 2016–2025. As expert body, strategic partner, statutory adviser and advocate for the arts, we are clear about the need for change and renewal, realistic about the many challenges we face, and confident about the strengths of the arts. That confidence is founded on three things:

1. the quality and power of work made by artists and arts organisations in Ireland
2. the high levels of engagement in the arts by the Irish public
3. the commitment and investment of many partners and stakeholders who share the conviction that the arts enrich the lives of individuals, of communities and of society.

Our strategy distinguishes between immediate difficulties arising from the recent financial and economic crisis and more enduring challenges that require patient developmental action over a decade. We see in those challenges exciting possibilities for the arts.

Our commitment to renewal is not about a restoration of previous models, but about selective and well-planned resourcing of excellent practice, inclusive of fresh and dynamic approaches to public engagement.

Our strategy identifies the artist and public engagement as its two governing and inter-dependent priorities and further selects particular agendas within those domains. For us, being strategic involves being selective. Our new investment framework will require change by all involved in the funding relationships that we broker on behalf of the public.

Our investment, advocacy and other actions will be informed by spatial planning and by demographic information. This is because people and places are central to policy and provision in the arts. For that reason too we will strengthen our partnership with local government via formal agreements. We will also seek new partnerships to harness the connections between the arts and some key areas of our wider society and economy.

Change and renewal are the focus of this strategy. We will work with our partners to achieve change in the arts sector but we know that the change must begin with ourselves: with what we choose to do and how we choose to do it.

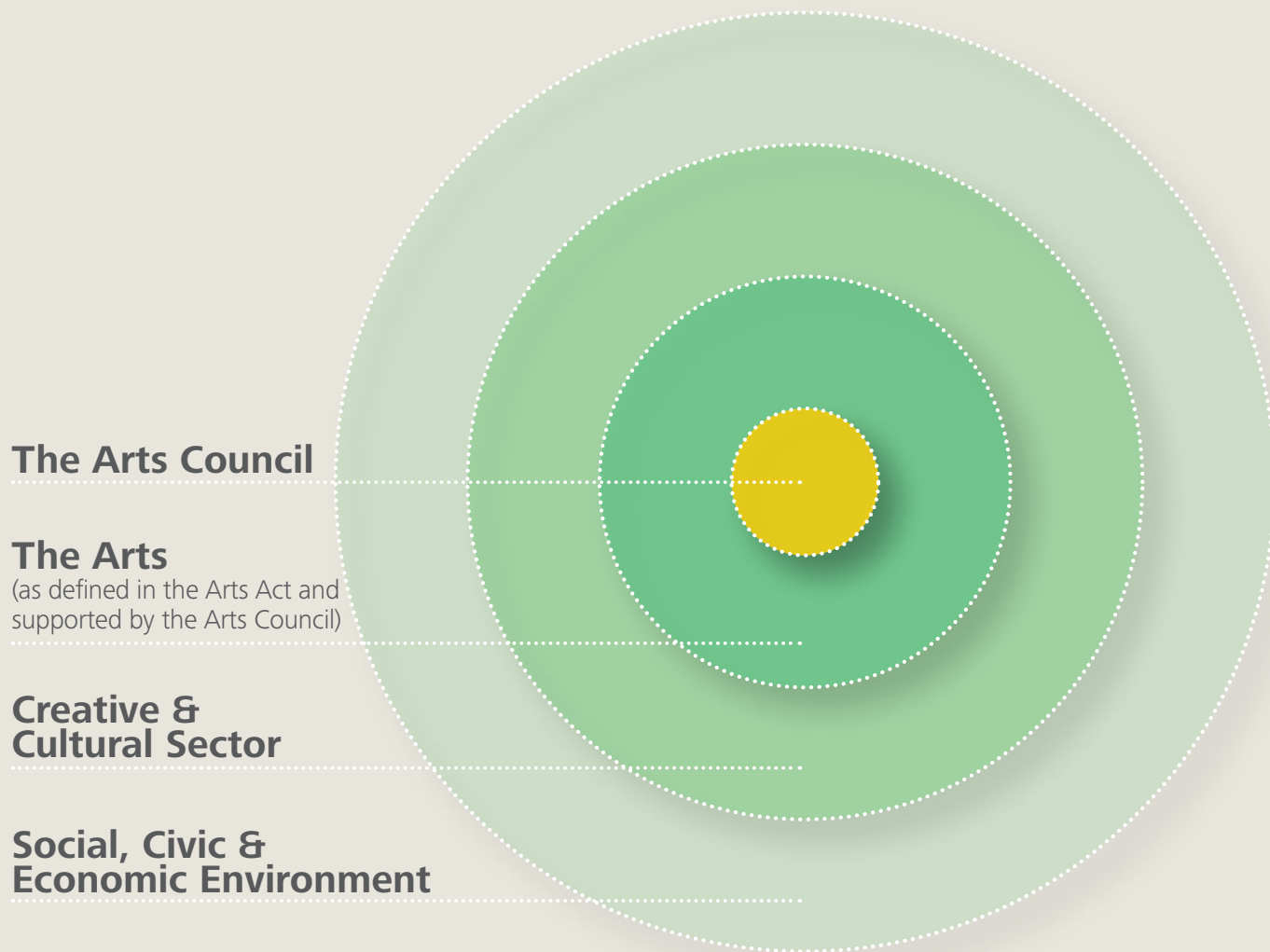
While **Making Great Art Work** plots the coordinates for the development of the arts in the decade 2016–2025, more detailed plans will be required every three years to guide that development. Three-year planning cycles within a decade-long strategic framework will enable the achievement of medium-term objectives and long-term goals.

Art gives a
muscle
to society
that it
doesn't
get from
anything else.

Olafur Eliasson

Making Great Art Work focuses on the remit and responsibilities of the Arts Council set within the broader contexts of culture and civil society. Some features of those wider contexts will be especially significant for the realisation of our strategy.

The arts are inextricably part of social and cultural change and the Arts Council will be alert to opportunities and responsibilities that arise as a result of changing contexts.



The Arts Council

The Arts
(as defined in the Arts Act and supported by the Arts Council)

Creative & Cultural Sector

Social, Civic & Economic Environment

Our Remit

As the arts and the State have evolved, so too has the role of the Arts Council. The 1951 Arts Act established the Arts Council and charged it with stimulating public interest; with promoting knowledge, appreciation and practice; and with assisting in improving standards in the arts. The 1973 Act developed that role and facilitated the achievements of the following decades, particularly increased public access and engagement.

The 2003 Arts Act reiterated the three key purposes of the Arts Council and re-calibrated the relationship between it and Government. It underlined the autonomy of the Council as the expert body for funding and promoting the arts, steering their development, and offering advice on arts and cultural matters.

Our Values

As a statutory public body the Arts Council operates within a framework of legal and regulatory obligations and a range of codes of good practice. In addition we are guided by a set of values that includes:

Freedom of thought and of expression

which is essential to the development of new ideas and new work

Commitment to excellence

in all aspects of our own work and of that of artists, arts organisations, and others we support

Integrity, accountability, transparency

in all of our decision-making and especially in our investment of public monies

Respect for diversity

of artistic practice, of public engagement, and of social and cultural traditions

Collegiality

communicating and working respectfully with partners, stakeholders and the whole arts sector

Our Vision

We are inspired by the prospect of an Ireland

- where the arts are **valued** as central to civic life, as a hallmark of local and national identity, and as sign and signature of our creativity as a people
- where the arts are **practiced and enjoyed** widely in our communities, public spaces (real and virtual) and in dedicated venues and centres across the country
- where artists and practitioners whose exceptional talent and commitment lead them to work professionally in the arts can have **productive and rewarding** careers
- where local and national politicians, decision-makers and officials in a wide range of departments and agencies recognise the distinctive **societal value** of the arts and provide for them accordingly
- where the Arts Council as the national **development agency** for the arts is resourced adequately to address the full breadth of its remit

Our Mission

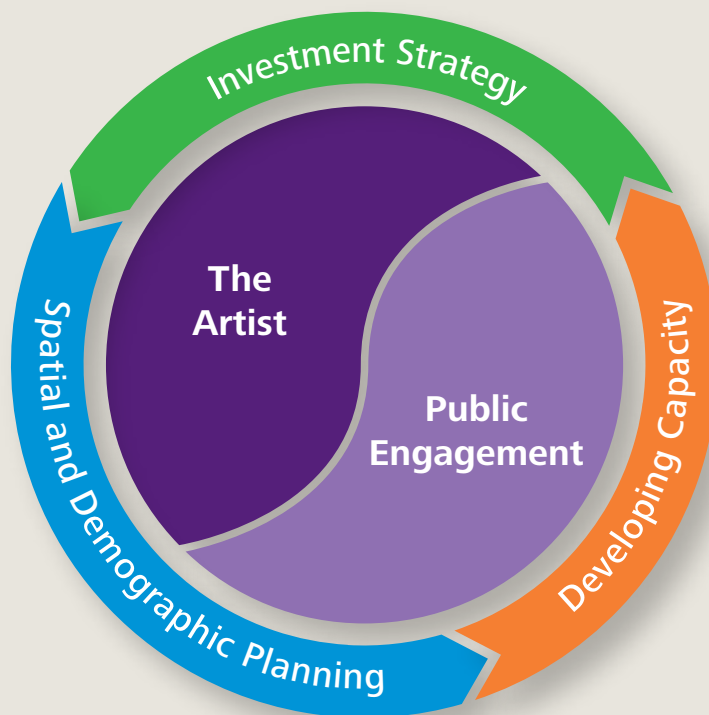
Our mission is to lead the development of the arts in Ireland.

We do this in four ways:

1. We **advocate** the importance and value of the arts and promote their practice and development.
2. We **advise** government and others on the arts as required by the Arts Act.
3. We **invest** public monies allocated to us by government in supporting artists and arts organisations to make work of excellence and in other actions consistent with our remit.
4. We **work in partnership** with the Department of the Arts and with other government departments as well as with local government and with agencies and organisations within and beyond the cultural sector.

Our Priorities and Goals

Making Great Art Work sets out five priority areas, each with a distinct goal. There are two policy areas that we identify as priorities: 'The Artist' and 'Public Engagement'. In addition we designate three areas of our planning and decision-making as priorities. These are: 'Investment Strategy', 'Spatial and Demographic Planning', and 'Developing Capacity'.



The Artist

GOAL Artists are supported to make excellent work which is enjoyed and valued

Investment Strategy

GOAL Public monies are invested effectively to realise our priorities

Public Engagement

GOAL More people will enjoy high-quality arts experiences

Spatial and Demographic Planning

GOAL Well-planned arts provision benefits people across Ireland

Developing Capacity

GOAL The Arts Council and the arts sector have the knowledge, skills and inventiveness to realise this strategy

THE WORK OF ARTISTS
ILLUMINATES
THE PRESENT,
NOURISHES OUR
UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE PAST
& INSPIRES
OUR VISIONS
OF THE FUTURE



The Artist

GOAL Artists are supported to make excellent work which is enjoyed and valued

Why this goal?

- ▶ The work of artists illuminates the present, nourishes our understandings of the past, and inspires our visions of the future.
- ▶ Because we invest public monies, we attend closely in our decision-making to facilitating public enjoyment of artists' work and to its wider societal value.
- ▶ It is a key responsibility of the Arts Council to support the making of high-quality art and one of our most important functions is exercising judgment about artistic quality.
- ▶ Our mission to develop the arts informs our commitment to emerging artists of promise and to all artists – creative and interpretive – whose quality of practice merits investment.
- ▶ We acknowledge that artists work as lone practitioners and as collaborators in a wide range of contexts, from arts environments, to social settings, to the creative and cultural industries.
- ▶ It is an abiding concern of the Arts Council that the generally low level of remuneration of many artists constitutes a significant hidden subsidy of the arts.

What will we do to achieve this goal?

- ▶ We will advocate strongly the distinctive and important role of the artist in society and in national cultural policy.
- ▶ We will advise central and local government on legislative and regulatory provision and on other actions that would support artists to have productive and economically viable careers.
- ▶ We will ensure our investment strategy and our strategic partnerships create an environment in which artists can make work of ambition and quality, and be remunerated appropriately.
- ▶ We will monitor our funding to ensure there is a good balance between supports for established artists and organisations and for new and emerging artists and organisations.
- ▶ We will attend especially to the conditions which facilitate the making of work – from conception to production to public presentation – and to the many contexts in which artists make work.
- ▶ We will review regularly our range of supports, our criteria and guidelines, and our funding agreements to ensure they address the achievement of this goal.

The Artist

How will we know we have advanced this goal?

- ▶ We will track the effects of our advocacy and advice concerning artists. Through formal liaison with the Department of Arts and with local government we will trace the progress of actions that address this goal.
- ▶ We will set out in our annual investment strategy the range and nature of our supports for artists of different disciplines and at different points on their career path.
- ▶ We will publish a detailed definition and description of our criteria for support and investment, including those to do with artistic quality.
- ▶ We will ensure our funding agreements result in arts organisations being important sources of detailed information on how artists are being supported and on the public response to their work.
- ▶ We will monitor regularly the changing living and working conditions of artists and will be informed by data and information from relevant resource organisations.

The Artist

Objective 1

Ensure artists are supported at key stages in the life cycle of their careers

Supporting Actions

- We will identify the different kinds of support needed by artists as they seek to sustain productive and economically viable careers from emergence, to becoming established, through mid-career, and into their later working lives.
- We will ensure that our own investment practices, our joint-funding arrangements with partners, and our funding agreements with organisations combine to provide a support structure that is well balanced in addressing the different stages of an artist's career.

Objective 2

Ensure a supportive working environment that addresses key points in the creative cycle by which art is made

Supporting Actions

- We will work with our partners – especially in local government – to provide a supportive working environment for artists at all points in the cycle of research and experiment, development and production, presentation and showing, by which great art is fully realised.
- We will ensure our investment and other actions take account of the needs of different disciplines and practices, of work that is inter-disciplinary, and of the range of settings in which artists and public engage.

The Artist

Objective 3

Advance the living and working conditions of artists

Supporting Actions

- We will place emphasis on the fair and equitable remuneration of artists in our overall investment strategy and its funding programmes and schemes, and in our partnerships and working relationships.
- We will make demonstrated commitment to this objective central to our funding agreements with arts organisations.
- We will make information on the living and working conditions of artists an important feature of our advice and advocacy programmes as well as of our partnerships.

Objective 4

Recognise the value of international practice and relationships and support those who pursue such opportunities

Supporting Actions

- We will advise that supports for working nationally and internationally should be better aligned, given that many artists and arts organisations operate in an international context or have the ambition to do so. We will adjust our own policies accordingly.

The Artist

Objective 5

Value and support artists working in a broad range of contexts

Supporting Actions

- We will reflect in our artform policies, our investment strategy and our other actions the range of practices and variety of settings in which artists make work and engage with the public.
- We will foster links and exchanges between those who work in the funded arts sector and those who work in different fields of the creative and cultural sector.
- We will advocate and value the distinctive role of amateur arts practice, its important contribution to the vitality of the arts and of certain artforms in particular, and its many social benefits.



FOR YOURSELF IT'S NO GOOD MAKING ART WHEN SOMEBODY SEES IT. IT LIVES

Alice Maher



Public Engagement

GOAL More people will enjoy high-quality arts experiences

Why this goal?

- ▶ The public is central to our statutory remit and to our vision for the arts.
- ▶ The more people who engage in the arts and the greater their social diversity, the more significant are the societal benefits deriving from Arts Council investment.

What will we do to achieve this goal?

- ▶ We will make public engagement a priority of our funding agreements with arts organisations and we will incentivise developmental actions in this field.
- ▶ We will advocate, advise, invest and collaborate so that the arts are enjoyed by the general public and by those to whom our strategy gives particular priority.
- ▶ We will support actions to develop new audiences and also to deepen the engagement of those who already participate.
- ▶ We will ensure our policies, plans, and partnerships are informed by spatial and demographic knowledge.
- ▶ We will support capacity building and professional development in the field of public engagement.
- ▶ We will champion the value of amateur and voluntary participation in the arts.

How will we know we have advanced this goal?

- ▶ We will continue to invest in research and information programmes that increase our knowledge of public engagement and assist us in setting objectives.
- ▶ We will ensure that programmes addressing participation by particular sections of the population are documented and evaluated.
- ▶ Our funding agreements, where appropriate, will allow us to review the actions of organisations in respect of public engagement.
- ▶ We will develop a framework for our advocacy of amateur and voluntary practice and participation.

Public Engagement

Objective 6

Promote and develop good practice in audience development and public engagement

Supporting Actions

- We will ensure our funding agreements with arts organisations require their demonstrated commitment to growing and diversifying their audiences and to deepening public engagement.
- We will establish a framework to support research, resource development and professional training in public engagement, including audience development.

Objective 7

Create opportunities for increased engagement in the arts by particular communities

Supporting Actions

- We will work with key partners and relevant stakeholders to establish strategic actions that address this agenda in a sustainable fashion.
- We will invest in artists and arts organisations with a commitment to high-quality collaborative, community-focused arts practice.
- We will invest with partners in supporting high-quality arts work in Gaeltacht communities.
- We will make community-engaged arts practice a key focus of our relationship with local government.
- We will incorporate our cultural diversity policy into the mainstream of our decision-making.

Public Engagement

Objective 8

Plan and provide for children and young people

Supporting Actions

- We will advocate for the centrality of the arts in formal education at all levels and for the provision of quality vocational training in the arts.
- We will work with the Departments of Arts and of Education to achieve full implementation of the Arts in Education Charter.
- We will invest in artists, arts organisations and key programmes dedicated to developing high quality work in arts-in-education and youth arts, and we will support the provision of excellent arts experiences for young people in the public domain.
- We will make provision for children and young people a key focus of our relationship with local government.
- We will incorporate our commitment to young people into the mainstream of our decision-making and, where appropriate, into our funding agreements with arts organisations.

Objective 9

Champion and encourage amateur and voluntary practice

Supporting Actions

- We will highlight the cultural importance and social value of amateur arts practice in our advice and advocacy programmes.
- We will acknowledge the particular significance of amateur practice in certain artforms or genres.
- We will recognise the valuable work of volunteers especially in venues and festivals throughout the country and we will incentivise good practice in that regard by organisations we fund.

**WE MUST TALK ABOUT
THE ARTS NOT AS
SOMETHING SEPARATE
FROM OURSELVES BUT
AS AN INTEGRAL
PART OF OUR LIVES**



Investment Strategy



Public monies are invested effectively to realise Arts Council priorities

Why this goal?

- An investment strategy guides us and informs others about how our financial planning and budgetary measures help us to achieve our strategic objectives.
- An investment strategy assists planning: by the Arts Council in our relationship with government and partners; and by the arts sector in its relationship with us.
- An investment strategy sets out the basis for change, which will include alterations to established investment patterns, budget allocations and funding relationships.
- An investment strategy clarifies the financial basis of partnerships and joint funding relationships with a range of stakeholders.
- An investment strategy ensures our investments:
 - are sustainable in number and scope and proportionate to projected resources
 - are made on the basis of clear criteria and by transparent processes
 - leverage additional financial resources, private and public
 - incentivise entrepreneurial and collaborative business actions
 - produce demonstrable public benefits.

What will we do to achieve this goal?

- We will develop an overall investment strategy consistent with our ten-year strategy.
- We will publish three-year plans and annual investment strategies that outline budgetary policy, planning and provision.
- Our investment strategy will inform new or revised funding programmes, schemes and initiatives.
- Our investment strategy will be reflected in our strategic partnerships.
- Our investment strategy will attend to the economic model of organisations we support; we will encourage the development of fundraising and sponsorship programmes.
- We will improve our monitoring of the outcomes and impacts of our investment.

Investment Strategy

How will we know we have advanced this goal?

- ▶ Our annual investment strategy and our annual report, published at either end of the budgetary process, will demonstrate how our financial decisions and allocations are consistent with our strategic objectives and with the detail of our three-year plans.
- ▶ There will be a range of formal funding agreements with partners and arts organisations to give detailed effect to aspects of our strategy and plans.
- ▶ We will report on the outcomes and impacts of our investment.

Investment Strategy

Objective 10

Make clear the principles and criteria that guide our investment strategy and inform our funding decisions

Supporting Actions

- We will set out the financial assumptions and parameters of our annual investment strategy so as to make clear how strategic changes will be achieved.
- We will publish a briefing document on five core considerations which inform our overall investment framework and strategy, our budget-setting, and our funding decisions. Those five considerations are:
(1) Artistic Quality; (2) Artform Development;
(3) Public Engagement; (4) Partnerships and Resources;
(5) Business Model.
- We will review regularly all aspects of our investment strategy from the framing of our annual budget, through the criteria of our funding programmes, awards and schemes, to the detail of funding agreements, so as to ensure the objectives of our overall strategy and three-year plans are being addressed.

Objective 11

Focus our investment on artistic activity

Supporting Actions

- We will direct our investment at supporting high-quality art and public engagement with the arts.
- We will contribute to fixed costs when they are essential to the achievement of our goals and priorities as development agency for the arts.

Investment Strategy

Objective 12

Establish funding agreements with organisations and partners

Supporting Actions

- We will develop funding agreements as the basis of recurring relationships with arts organisations. The agreements will be directed at realising our strategy while respecting the nature, purpose, and independence of each organisation.
- We will ensure that a demonstrable commitment to provide good working conditions and fair remuneration to artists is a key element of Arts Council funding agreements with organisations.
- We will have formal agreements with local authorities and with other strategic partners to assist planning and clarify shared and separate responsibilities and priorities.
- We will introduce multi-annual funding to a number of organisations and so foster planning and strategic development in the arts.
- We will expect most organisations to develop and sustain fundraising strategies and programmes as part of their commitment to having a broad income base.

Objective 13

Support the work of independent artists and incentivise experiment

Supporting Actions

- We will frame our budgets, track our spending patterns, and design our funding agreements to ensure proportionate investment is made in the work of independent and emerging artists and groups.
- We will ensure our funding programmes and processes support ambitious, original and experimental work across a variety of scales.

Investment Strategy

Objective 14

Improve measurement of the outcomes of our investment

Supporting Actions

- We will develop our internal processes, and work with others to measure better the effects of our investment, so as to understand its outcomes and impacts across a range of criteria.
- We will use the evidence of our measurement to inform our advocacy, advice, and wider communications.

Culture is
self-administered.

You cannot
take people along
and give them an injection
or a shot of
a new mental process.

It is a gradual process
of education and self-education.



Spatial and Demographic Planning

GOAL Well-planned arts provision benefits people across Ireland

Why this goal?

- There is a distinctive relationship between people, places and culture. Spatial and demographic principles and information will inform the plans by which we implement our strategy.
- Spatial planning – incorporating demographic knowledge – provides important intelligence for collaborative action and shared investment by local and national stakeholders.
- Arts planning must be alert to changing spatial and demographic patterns as well as to economic factors.
- The sustainable, countrywide development of the arts requires changes to how local, regional and national responsibility for arts provision is exercised.

What will we do to achieve this goal?

- We will advise government about the spatial and demographic considerations which should inform national cultural policy, including capital development.
- We will continue to develop our strategic partnership with local government and with individual local authorities.
- We will include spatial and demographic measures within the 'public engagement' criteria that inform our investment strategy and funding decisions.
- We will work with others to ensure a robust evidence base for arts planning and investment, drawing on spatial and demographic knowledge and analysis.

How will we know we have advanced this goal?

- The spatial and demographic basis of our planning will be clear from our advice and advocacy documents and from our public communications.
- Our strategic plans, investment strategies and annual reports will represent the projections and outcomes of our work in spatial and demographic terms, complementing arts and financial perspectives.
- Our partnership with local government – rooted in formal agreements – will result in changes to established patterns of national, regional and local support and investment.
- Our own data and information programmes will be complemented by high-quality, up-to-date spatial and demographic information drawn from key public sources.

Spatial and Demographic Planning

Objective 15

Ensure our policy and strategy are informed by the national planning framework and by good spatial and demographic analysis

Supporting Actions

- We will be well-informed about the national planning framework and, where appropriate, we will contribute to its evolution and application.
- We will combine our arts-specific data and information with spatial and demographic information from key public sources to provide a robust evidence base for our planning, partnerships, and investments.

Objective 16

Develop our key strategic partnership with local government

Supporting Actions

- We will progress the formal 'framework for collaboration' agreed between the Arts Council and the County and City Management Association.
- We will use that framework to inform individual agreements between the Arts Council and local authorities countrywide.
- We will make our agreements with individual local authorities in the context of regional planning and of the national responsibilities particular to the Arts Council.

Spatial and Demographic Planning

Objective 17

Ensure investment in arts infrastructure is strategic and sustainable

Supporting Actions

- We will develop and implement a clear strategy for selective and sustainable investment in the infrastructure for the arts (built and organisational). It will be informed by our role as national development agency, by our strategic priorities, by spatial considerations, by the commitment of our funding partners, and by projected resources.
- We will make this objective key to our partnership with local government so as to optimise our shared investment in the arts at local and regional level.
- We will advise that government capital funds contribute to maintaining and operating the existing built infrastructure, so focusing our current investment on artistic activity.

Objective 18

Advise and advocate to ensure that national, regional and local capital provision are co-ordinated and sustainable

Supporting Actions

- We will seek to influence decision-making on capital development in the arts to ensure that it is well-planned from a spatial perspective and that future annual operating and programme costs are calculated and provided for.

**THE ARTS HAVE A
CRUCIAL IMPACT
ON OUR ECONOMY
& ARE AN IMPORTANT
CATALYST FOR
LEARNING, DISCOVERY,
& ACHIEVEMENT.**

Paul G. Allen



Developing Capacity

**GOAL**

The Arts Council and the arts sector have the knowledge, skills and inventiveness to realise this strategy

Why this goal?

- ▶ The Arts Council must continually renew and develop expertise in a range of fields as it leads the development of the arts. This will require us to change and renew our practice, just as we will ask others to change theirs.
- ▶ The workforce and resources of the Arts Council and of the arts sector must be skilled, dynamic and adaptable to meet the challenges and opportunities of new media and technologies, new social and cultural behaviours, new demographic realities, and new expectations concerning value-for-money.
- ▶ Our strategic priorities will change our working relationships within and beyond the arts. They will also require us to create partnerships and alliances between the arts and wider society and the economy.

What will we do to achieve this goal?

- ▶ We will become more engaged in actively championing the distinctive value and importance of the arts.
- ▶ We will ensure, at a time of significant cultural change, that we have the breadth of expertise and depth of knowledge to make us effective as the development agency for the arts.
- ▶ We will review and change, as necessary, all aspects of how we address our remit, manage our relationships, and conduct our business.
- ▶ We will make the professional development of the arts sector a focus of our investment and of our joint actions with partners and stakeholders.

Developing Capacity

How will we know we have advanced this goal?

- ▶ The Arts Council will be more visibly active in promoting the arts and in advocating their social value and economic benefit.
- ▶ There will be changes to our organisational arrangements, systems and procedures in order to implement the objectives of our strategy.
- ▶ Our overall strategy, our three-year plans, our investment strategies, our internal corporate plans, and our annual reports will be linked by a consistency of purpose and a shared set of objectives to plan for, work towards, and report on.
- ▶ We will have established a number of methods and models to augment our expertise with intelligence and advice from different fields.
- ▶ There will be a range of programmes and schemes to address capacity-building and professional development in the arts sector.

Developing Capacity

Objective 19

Ensure the Arts Council delivers this strategy expertly, effectively and efficiently

Supporting Actions

- We will review continuously and change, as necessary, our governance, structures, procedures and systems, ensuring that at all times they reflect our stated values.
- We will develop a progressive workforce plan (encompassing staff and advisers) as part of each three-year plan designed to implement this strategy.
- We will enhance our expertise in a number of key, related areas: (i) corporate planning; (ii) project management; (iii) performance management and reporting.
- We will develop our capacity in the fields of research, of data and information and of communications, so as to demonstrate the outputs and outcomes of our investment strategy and to inform our advice and advocacy.
- We will ensure that we are well-informed on the intersections of our work with key social and economic fields.
- We will ensure our ICT system is optimal in addressing our responsibilities to the public, to government and to the arts sector.

Objective 20

Ensure the Arts Council is active and inventive in its promotion of the arts

Supporting Actions

- We will develop a strategy to address our statutory function to promote the arts and to demonstrate their distinctive value across a range of measures: cultural, social and economic.
- We will dedicate resources, forge partnerships and work with the arts sector to promote and champion the arts across many platforms.
- We will harness public sources and commit our own resources to support actions in research and information that will underpin our advocacy and wider communications.
- We will underline the importance and increasing impact of the arts on the creative industries, enterprise, cultural tourism, foreign direct investment and other key aspects of the Irish economy.

Developing Capacity

Objective 21

Ensure the arts sector is skilled, resourceful and committed to its own renewal

Supporting Actions

- We will support and incentivise good governance and leadership of arts organisations, including due attention to succession planning.
- We will look to arts organisations to be collaborative and innovative in their business and management practices and to build a broad base of income sources: public, private, and earned.
- We will work with others in and beyond the arts to create a professional development framework that includes training, mentoring, exchanges and placements designed to support progression routes within disciplines and also pathways across and beyond the arts.
- We will reflect the particular significance for the arts of digital knowledge and skills by collaborating to build digital capacity in the arts sector. Our supports will focus on new ways of making work and on new possibilities for public engagement.

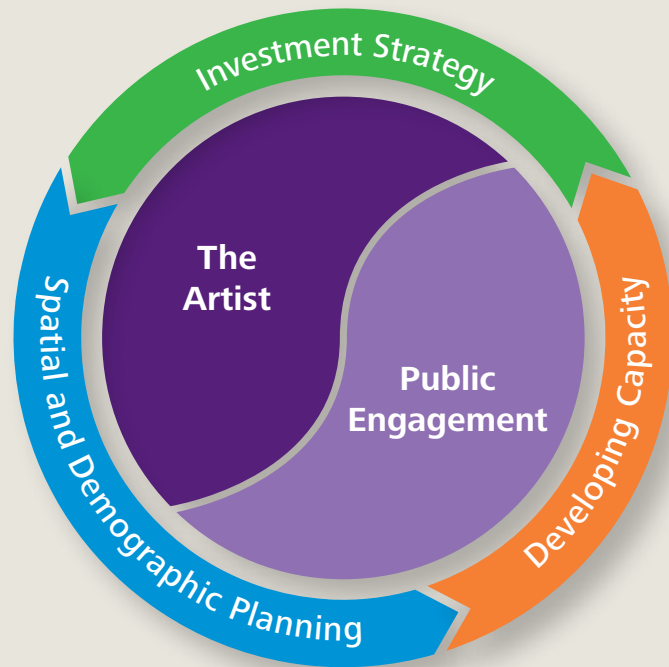
President, poet, and former Minister for the Arts in his closing remarks at the
Poet Laureate and National Poets Event, (Sligo, 13 June 2015)

Our culture remains as
the greatest source of
our achievement as well
as the most promising
space for our renewal
and our reimagining...

Michael D Higgins

Our Priorities and Goals

Making Great Art Work sets out five priority areas, each with a distinct goal. There are two policy areas that we identify as priorities: 'The Artist' and 'Public Engagement'. In addition we designate three areas of our planning and decision-making as priorities. These are: 'Investment Strategy', 'Spatial and Demographic Planning', and 'Developing Capacity'.



The Artist

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Public Engagement

GOAL More people will enjoy high-quality arts experiences

Investment Strategy

GOAL Public monies are invested effectively to realise our priorities

Spatial and Demographic Planning

GOAL Well-planned arts provision benefits people across Ireland

Developing Capacity

GOAL The Arts Council and the arts sector have the knowledge, skills and inventiveness to realise this strategy

Our Objectives

- 1 Ensure artists are supported at key stages in the life cycle of their careers
- 2 Ensure a supportive working environment that addresses key points in the creative cycle by which art is made
- 3 Advance the living and working conditions of artists
- 4 Recognise the value of international practice and relationships and support those who pursue such opportunities
- 5 Value and support artists working in a broad range of contexts
- 6 Promote and develop good practice in audience development and public engagement
- 7 Create opportunities for increased engagement in the arts by particular communities
- 8 Plan and provide for children and young people
- 9 Champion and encourage amateur and voluntary practice
- 10 Make clear the principles and criteria that guide our investment strategy and inform our funding decisions
- 11 Focus our investment on artistic activity
- 12 Establish funding agreements with organisations and partners
- 13 Support the work of independent artists and incentivise experiment
- 14 Improve measurement of the outcomes of our investment
- 15 Ensure our policy and strategy are informed by the national planning framework and by good spatial and demographic analysis
- 16 Develop our key strategic partnership with local government
- 17 Ensure investment in arts infrastructure is strategic and sustainable
- 18 Advise and advocate to ensure that national, regional and local capital provision are co-ordinated and sustainable
- 19 Ensure the Arts Council delivers this strategy expertly, effectively and efficiently
- 20 Ensure the Arts Council is active and inventive in its promotion of the arts
- 21 Ensure the arts sector is skilled, resourceful and committed to its own renewal

Our Remit

As the arts and the state have evolved, so too has the role of the Arts Council.

The 1951 Arts Act established the Arts Council and charged it with stimulating public interest; with promoting knowledge, appreciation and practice; and with assisting in improving standards in the arts. The 1973 Act developed that role and facilitated the achievements of the following decades, particularly increased public access and engagement. The 2003 Arts Act reiterated the three key purposes of the Arts Council and re-calibrated the relationship between it and Government. It underlined the autonomy of the Council as the expert body for funding and promoting the arts, steering their development, and offering advice on arts and cultural matters.

Our Mission

Our mission is to lead the development of the arts in Ireland.

We do this in four ways:

1. We **advocate** the importance and value of the arts and promote their practice and development.
2. We **advise** government and others on the arts as required by the Arts Act.
3. We **invest** public monies allocated to us by government in supporting artists and arts organisations to make work of excellence and in other actions consistent with our remit.
4. We **work in partnership** with the Department of the Arts and with other government departments as well as with local government and with agencies and organisations within and beyond the cultural sector.

Our Vision

We are inspired by the prospect of an Ireland

- where the arts are **valued** as central to civic life, as a hallmark of local and national identity, and as sign and signature of our creativity as a people
- where the arts are **practiced and enjoyed** widely in our communities, public spaces (real and virtual) and in dedicated venues and centres across the country
- where artists and practitioners whose exceptional talent and commitment lead them to work professionally in the arts can have **productive and rewarding** careers
- where local and national politicians, decision-makers and officials in a wide range of departments and agencies recognise the distinctive **societal value** of the arts and provide for them accordingly
- where the Arts Council as the national **development agency** for the arts is resourced adequately to address the full breadth of its remit

