



# **STRATEGY 2006-2010**

**MARCH 2006**

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## 1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Culture Ireland was established by the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism, John O'Donoghue TD, on 23 February 2005 as Ireland's national agency to promote and advance the arts in an international context, under the provisions of the Arts Act 2003.
- 1.2 The Board of Culture Ireland has, at the Minister's request, prepared this Strategy for the future development of the agency. A detailed business plan will be prepared as soon as key executive staff are in place.
- 1.3 This is Culture Ireland's first statement of policy, and aims to set out our goals and strategies in a comprehensive way. Some of the more ambitious and complex projects will need to be developed and delivered over the longer term rather than just the next five years; we have included them in this document in order to articulate an overall vision and sense of direction for the new agency.

## 2. **THE WIDER CONTEXT**

- 2.1 In developing this Strategy we have considered key trends and drivers of change in the external environment, including the following:
- The international cultural field is increasingly competitive, as many other countries commit substantial resources, restructure their networks and develop cutting-edge promotional strategies. Not only states, but regions and nations like Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland are now serious players. Cities now also play a major role in international cultural relations – not least as European Cities of Culture.
  - With low-cost air travel and freedom of movement, the borders between the national and international are breaking down, facilitating mobility for both artists and audiences. Many young Europeans are increasingly international in outlook, growing up in one country, studying in a second and working in a third, and with their own distinct set of emerging cultural understandings.
  - Cultural globalisation has created many new opportunities for artistic exchange, collaboration and networking. Awareness is also growing of the value of cultural diversity. At the same time, certain globalising trends have contributed to widespread feelings of dislocation and fears of loss of identity and values. Following 9/11 and the bombings in Madrid and London, cultural alienation has become a political and security issue, and dialogue with Islamic cultures has taken on a new urgency.
  - Across Europe, anxieties about cultural identity, values, multiculturalism and migration have become more visible. Future prospects for EU enlargement and integration, particularly in relation to Turkey, depend on engaging with these concerns. At the same time, cultural diversity has the potential to be a key driver of Europe's competitiveness in the creative arena.
  - Information, Communication and Technology networks have created far-reaching opportunities for greater cultural interaction. Digital / satellite broadcasting and internet streaming allow delivery of cultural products and services to global audiences, including in remote locations.

- The web is further accelerating the domination of the English language, offering Irish arts and educational services an ever-expanding platform. While creating particular challenges for the Irish language, at the same time it offers global and web-based opportunities for Irish language arts.
- Technological change is also empowering new modes of creativity, including music video, installation art and games software design, in which Ireland is an international leader.

## 2.2 Some external factors which relate to Ireland include the following:

- As one of the most globalised trading economies in the world, the Government now seeks to position Ireland as a “knowledge society”, grounded in innovation, creativity and intellectual capital, in keeping with the EU’s “Lisbon” competitiveness agenda.
- There is growing international recognition of the excellence of work created by many Irish artists and arts organisations.
- Relations on the island of Ireland and between Ireland and Britain have been transformed by the peace process and the Good Friday Agreement.
- Long before globalisation was formally recognised, the Irish diaspora existed as a globally dispersed cultural presence. As well as being a key audience and market for Irish arts and culture, the diaspora has produced major artists.
- Ireland is now home to the diasporas of other nations; multicultural living and intercultural understanding have become key policy challenges and also day-to-day issues for the citizen.
- One of Ireland's great assets in intercultural relations has traditionally been its missionary network. Much of the missionaries' work forged deep links which have endured. The network is still a key resource, particularly in terms of deep knowledge of other cultures, but it is gradually dwindling as the missionaries retire and in most cases are not replaced.

## 2.3 As some traditional strengths - like our missionary network - begin to fade, Ireland needs to invest in new strategies to build deep, long-lasting relationships with other countries and peoples. We believe that artistic and cultural interaction offers one of the most effective and powerful means to achieve that goal.

### 3. MISSION AND GOALS

#### 3.1 Mission Statement

*Culture Ireland's purpose is to promote and advance Irish arts in a global context, helping to create international opportunities for Irish artists and cultural practitioners and leading to a deeper mutual understanding between Irish and other cultures and communities.*

#### Goals

3.2 We will pursue this mission through the following high-level goals:

<i>A</i>	<i>Enhance support for the international presence of Irish artists and arts organisations</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>Develop new and diverse international audiences and markets for Irish arts</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>Enrich Ireland's cultural life, knowledge base and audience awareness through outward and inward flows of creative work and ideas</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>Bring Irish experience and ideas to bear on global cultural challenges</i>
<i>E</i>	<i>Generate awareness, goodwill and influence for Ireland</i>

<b><i>F</i></b>	<b><i>Bring culture into the mainstream as a dimension of the Government's international strategy</i></b>
<b><i>G</i></b>	<b><i>Develop organic synergies between international arts, cultural tourism and sport, building on the integrated remit of the Department</i></b>

### **Arts in a Cultural Context**

- 3.3 We will support artists and cultural practitioners working across the full range of artforms, while also situating arts-based work within a broader cultural context. This will enable Culture Ireland to:
- recognise the political, social and human impact of the arts and the ideas they communicate;
  - engage with contemporary cultural issues of global significance;
  - work with bodies whose remit is not solely arts-based, including National Cultural Institutions and cultural industries;
  - promote Ireland's contemporary arts and also its artistic and cultural heritage;
  - collaborate with the national cultural agencies of other countries, virtually all of which have a broad cultural remit;
  - enhance Ireland's contribution to multilateral organisations with a cultural policy remit, for example the EU, UNESCO and the Council of Europe;
  - recognise the close links between arts, culture and education in an international context, including the key role of educational initiatives at primary, secondary and tertiary level in developing new international audiences and communities of Irish cultural interest.

## 4. VALUES

Culture Ireland's work will be informed by the following core values and principles:

### Independence

- 4.1 In our governance and decision-making we will respect and protect the integrity of the artistic process, independent curation and programming, free expression and exchange of work and ideas, and the potential of art to challenge, question and provoke. Equally, we will respect and seek to understand the local contexts in which work takes place.

### Partnership

- 4.2 We believe a partnership-based approach to international cultural relations will be most effective in building mutual understanding and creating sustainable benefit for all involved. This will require a spirit of honesty, openness and respectful listening, concerned as much with process as with outcome. In practical terms it will involve support for long-term collaborations and for both outward and inward flows of activity. We will rely on the partnership and sustained input of artists and cultural practitioners to ensure that our programmes are practical and responsive to real-world needs. We are also committed to developing multilateral partnerships, recognising that the global arts community now works organically in a multilateral way, and that many of today's cultural challenges require a multilateral response.

### Pluralism

- 4.3 We are committed to engaging with Ireland's new communities and reflecting the plurality of contemporary Irish culture, language and identity in the global representation of Ireland. The quality and credibility of Ireland's intercultural work abroad will be dependent on our response to cultural diversity and multiculturalism at home. We will also respect the complexity of cultural and historical identities on the island of Ireland. We will seek to support a diverse range of arts practice with a balance between established and emerging artists and companies.



## 5. STRATEGIES

- 5.1 To begin to realise our mission and goals, Culture Ireland will pursue the following strategies:

<b>1</b>	<b><i>Provide a flexible range of international funding supports for artists and cultural practitioners</i></b>
<b>2</b>	<b><i>Support Irish participation in key international showcases, festivals and promotional events</i></b>
<b>3</b>	<b><i>Develop and enhance promotional, information and research resources</i></b>
<b>4</b>	<b><i>Strengthen Ireland's cultural networks abroad</i></b>
<b>5</b>	<b><i>Advise and assist the Minister for Arts, and coordinate with other stakeholders across Government</i></b>
<b>6</b>	<b><i>Strengthen cultural relationships on the island of Ireland and between Ireland and Britain</i></b>
<b>7</b>	<b><i>Encourage diverse cultural communities in Ireland to participate in international artistic exchange and dialogue</i></b>
<b>8</b>	<b><i>Explore issues of European cultural identity, diversity and commonality</i></b>
<b>9</b>	<b><i>Contribute to intercultural dialogue</i></b>

- 5.2 The implementation of these strategies will depend on addressing the resource and organisational issues outlined in Section 7. Some of the more ambitious projects will need to be developed over the longer term, beyond the five-year horizon of this document.

5.3 **Strategy 1: Provide a flexible range of international funding supports for artists and cultural practitioners**

1A	Ensure clarity of criteria and consistency of funding decisions
1B	Ensure the open-access grants programme is responsive to the needs of different artforms, e.g. by drawing on recent research on touring supports
1C	Improve efficiency of decision-making procedures
1D	Ensure ease of application, with burden of assessment, reporting and accountability proportionate to the scale of grant
1E	Work with other funders to ensure complementarity of grant programmes
1F	Publicise the funding programme to maximise awareness among potential applicants
1G	Integrate the range of available supports for artist-initiated projects: financial, informational, promotional and representational

5.4 **Strategy 2: Support Irish participation in key international showcases, festivals and promotional events**

2A	Research, and strengthen Irish participation in, key promotional, showcase and networking events
2B	Encourage coordination and sharing of information and expertise across artforms
2C	Engage partners to curate and manage Irish representation at major festivals
2D	Provide visible and active support on the ground during these events
2E	Ensure effective PR and branding presence
2F	Facilitate media partnerships to add value to major events
2G	Support international presentation of artform-specific showcases where appropriate
2H	Support inward showcases and networking to coincide with leading Irish festivals, inviting leading international programmers and promoters
2I	Facilitate cultural strand for inward foreign media visits
2J	Maximise cultural showcase potential of St Patrick's Day events abroad

### 5.5 **Strategy 3: Develop and enhance promotional, information and research resources**

<b>3A</b>	Support the production of high-quality showcase material, such as visual arts monographs, CDs and DVDs for performing artists, artform-specific handbooks, information brochures on artists and companies
<b>3B</b>	In partnership with the Arts Council, invest in online international arts database, including information on artists and companies and restricted-access material, as a key promotional and brokerage resource for programmers, promoters and Irish Embassies
<b>3C</b>	Develop media showcasing, identifying a network of radio and TV stations abroad and supporting the supply of promotional and programme material
<b>3D</b>	Invest in high-quality web presence for Culture Ireland offering originated content and portal to other online resources
<b>3E</b>	Provide printed information on Culture Ireland and its programmes
<b>3F</b>	In partnership with the Arts Council, offer general information pack on international arts resources and services to Irish Embassies
<b>3G</b>	Co-commission strategic research with state bodies and other partners

### 5.6 **Strategy 4: Strengthen Ireland's cultural networks abroad**

<b>4A</b>	Coordinate closely with the Department of Foreign Affairs, including the core resource represented by the Department's Embassy network
<b>4B</b>	As a priority, assess, in consultation with the Department of Foreign Affairs, the feasibility of engaging Irish arts professionals as dedicated Cultural Attachés in selected priority locations
<b>4C</b>	Explore with the Department of Foreign Affairs the possibility of appointing locally-recruited personnel for cultural promotion in other selected Embassies
<b>4D</b>	Ensure consistent information flow and service provision between Culture Ireland and Irish Embassies
<b>4E</b>	Provide regular training and information seminars for cultural officers from all Embassies
<b>4F</b>	Engage with Government-supported cultural centres abroad and with Irish cultural foundations and associations
<b>4G</b>	Coordinate with the Department of Foreign Affairs' Irish Studies programme to ensure an integrated range of supports, focusing in particular on opportunities for artistic performance, residencies and publicly-accessible events, and promoting integration of non-verbal artforms (music, dance etc) into Irish Studies programmes
<b>4H</b>	In partnership with the Arts Council, support artists' participation in transnational cultural networks and associations

**5.7 Strategy 5: Advise and assist the Minister for Arts, and coordinate with other stakeholders across Government**

<b>5A</b>	Advise the Minister for Arts on international arts and cultural affairs, contributing cultural analysis to the Government's international strategic planning
<b>5B</b>	Explore proactively future opportunities for major emblematic events, exchange programmes, festivals and Expos, taking account of strategic, artistic, planning and funding needs, and overseeing curation and management of such events as required
<b>5C</b>	Participate in coordination, planning and information networks with Departments and State Agencies with international or cultural remits
<b>5D</b>	Coordinate with State Agencies under the aegis of the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism to develop operational synergies with cultural tourism and sport
<b>5E</b>	Ensure close coordination with the Arts Council, including on grant programmes and funding for key international service providers
<b>5F</b>	Work with National Cultural Institutions in developing major exhibitions, including on a multilateral basis
<b>5G</b>	Assist the development of trade and economic relationships through deeper cross-cultural understanding and higher public awareness of Ireland, coordinating with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland and other bodies
<b>5H</b>	Strengthen links between arts and education in an international context, coordinating with the Department of Education and Science, Education Ireland and other relevant bodies
<b>5I</b>	Coordinate with the Department of Foreign Affairs' Cultural Division and its ongoing Cultural Programme
<b>5J</b>	Assist the Departments of Arts and Foreign Affairs in developing clear guidelines for intergovernmental Cultural Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding, and advise on the utility of specific proposals
<b>5K</b>	Apply the experience gained in programme activity to enrich Ireland's policy contribution to multilateral cultural organisations and other international fora
<b>5L</b>	Support artistic and cultural contributions to the strengthening of civil society, including freedom of expression, conflict resolution, protection of cultural diversity, sustainable development and urban and rural regeneration

5.8 **Strategy 6: Strengthen cultural relationships on the island of Ireland and between Ireland and Britain**

<b>6A</b>	Develop opportunities for joint international promotion of the arts on an island-of-Ireland basis
<b>6B</b>	Encourage North-South artistic collaborations with a view to international presentation
<b>6C</b>	Promote Irish-British cultural interaction and dialogue on issues of common concern
<b>6D</b>	Build on our deep cultural, linguistic, social, economic and political links with England, Scotland and Wales
<b>6E</b>	Develop relationships with relevant agencies, e.g. British Council, Ulster-Scots Agency, Arts Councils of Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England

5.9 **Strategy 7: Encourage diverse cultural communities in Ireland to participate in international artistic exchange and dialogue**

<b>7A</b>	Draw on these diverse communities as a resource for artistic representation of Ireland abroad and for intercultural dialogue projects
<b>7B</b>	Support inward visits by artists, companies and cultural animators from countries of origin of new communities

5.10 **Strategy 8: Explore issues of European cultural identity, diversity and commonality**

<b>8A</b>	Support Irish and international partners to organise projects, events and publications
<b>8B</b>	Assist international partners in building their capacity to sustain their cultural diversity (e.g. sharing Irish expertise in documentation of traditional arts and folklore)
<b>8C</b>	Work with the international cultural agencies of other European countries and with multilateral partners in Europe

### 5.11 **Strategy 9: Contribute to intercultural dialogue**

<b>9A</b>	Draw on Ireland's distinctive experience, including cultural and religious conflict and conflict resolution; our cultural plurality, with arts in English-language, Irish-language and traditional idioms; the experience of the Irish diaspora as a globalised nation; the intercultural resources and expertise of the Chester Beatty Library and other National Cultural Institutions; and Ireland's rapidly increasing cultural diversity
<b>9B</b>	Support Irish and international partners to organise projects, events and publications
<b>9C</b>	Work with relevant multilateral partners and with other organisations engaged in intercultural dialogue such as churches, faith communities and independent artistic networks

## 6. **GEOGRAPHIC PRIORITIES**

- 6.1 Culture Ireland has a global remit which respects artists' creative and geographic freedom, and will continue to offer a range of funding and information supports on a global basis.
- 6.2 International experience nevertheless suggests that setting clear geographic priorities is necessary for a proactive approach to international arts promotion so as to maximise the impact of available resources. Based on a strategic analysis of political, economic, artistic and cultural factors, we have identified three priority regions for the period 2006-2010 (in no specific order of priority):

***Europe, with special reference to the development of cultural links with recently joined EU Member States and Candidate States***

***China, India, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam (priority countries within the Government's Asia Strategy)***

***US, Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa (countries with major Irish diaspora and English-language communities, most of which are also global centres for the arts)***

- 6.3 We recognise that Ireland's cultural links other regions (Africa, Latin America, Middle East and Russia) are underdeveloped, and propose to support projects which will strengthen these networks over the coming years with a view to larger-scale activity in the post-2010 period.
- 6.4 Prioritising recently-joined EU Member States and Asia will also help to develop cultural relationships with some of the fastest growing new communities in Ireland, in line with Strategy 7 (*Encourage diverse cultural communities in Ireland to participate in international artistic exchange and*

- dialogue*). Flows of work and artists to and from these countries will deepen intercultural understanding at home as well as abroad.
- 6.5 The choice of Europe as a priority region also harmonises with Strategy 8 (*Explore issues of European cultural identity, diversity and commonality*). For example, the opening of formal EU accession negotiations with Turkey offers a key opportunity to develop closer Irish-Turkish relations over the next decade; cultural engagement offers one of the most effective means to achieve this, connecting also with Strategy 9 (*Contribute to intercultural dialogue*). More generally, Strategy 9 will facilitate the development over time of artistic contacts and cultural dialogue with Islamic communities in Ireland, Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and Asia.



## 7. **DELIVERY**

7.1 In this document Culture Ireland has set out ambitious goals and strategies. Not all of these can be implemented in the first five years. We have given careful consideration to the resource implications for the delivery of this Strategy, and will seek as our top priority to secure the human and financial resources which are necessary and essential to its success.

7.2 With adequate core funding from Government in place, we will:

**A. Build the organisational capacity of Culture Ireland to achieve its objectives**

Recruit a Director and additional executive staff with appropriate expertise at the earliest opportunity
Prepare a detailed business and implementation plan as soon as key staff are in place
Develop appropriate structures to advise on funding decisions for specific artforms or to oversee specific projects

**B. Establish partnerships to provide services and deliver projects**

Engage with existing agencies, arts organisations and practitioners who have the expertise to provide services and deliver projects in a given field
Provide outline briefs and negotiate detailed project or service specifications
Facilitate coordination and sharing of information and expertise across artforms
Ensure that service agreements assist partners to do what they do best while being responsive to the objectives and priorities of Culture Ireland

7.2 Culture Ireland will establish mechanisms to evaluate, review and report on its strategy and performance.

7.3 Partners could include organisations such as:

- Statutory bodies with a relevant remit (e.g. Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon, Bord Scannán na hÉireann, Heritage Council, Tourism Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Crafts Council of Ireland);

- National Cultural Institutions;
- Other state agencies with an international remit (e.g. Enterprise Ireland, Education Ireland);
- Relevant agencies with a North-South or Northern Ireland-based remit (e.g. Foras na Gaeilge, British Council, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Ulster-Scots Agency);
- Artform service and resource organisations;
- Irish and international festivals, curators, promoters and venues;
- Local and regional authorities in Ireland and abroad;
- Irish cultural centres and foundations (e.g. Irish Cultural Centre Paris);
- Other national cultural agencies, in particular those of EU partners;
- Multilateral cultural organisations;
- Irish and international educational institutions;
- Irish and international media organisations;
- Irish cultural associations and support organisations abroad;
- Organisations engaged in intercultural dialogue, including churches and faith communities.

## 8. **CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 This document has set out a strategic policy framework for the future growth of Culture Ireland. Though the challenges are enormous, and call for sustained work over many years, the hard-won international expertise already acquired by many Irish artists and cultural organisations offers a powerful foundation to build on. Drawing together the skills, experience and imagination of our partners, we look forward to creating new opportunities for artistic expression and cultural discovery on the global stage.