

# **REVIEW OF ARTS CENTRES AND VENUES**



## **Report**

**prepared for**

**The Arts Council and the  
County and City Management Association**

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**CHL**

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## **REVIEW OF ARTS CENTRES AND VENUES**

### ***Executive Summary***

#### **1. Introduction**

This review of arts centres and venues in Ireland was commissioned jointly by the Arts Council and the County & City Management Association (CCMA) and conducted by CHL Consulting Company between January and June, 2018. The context for the review is the formal agreement between the Arts Council and CCMA to work together more strategically in developing the arts in Ireland.<sup>1</sup> A priority for the partnership is to develop a co-ordinated, spatially-informed strategy to support and develop the infrastructure for the arts. This review of the nationwide infrastructure of arts centres and venues will inform the preparation of that strategy.

It is important to note that, for the purposes of this review, arts centres and venues are defined as year-round, multi-disciplinary spaces which support a range of professional art forms. For convenience, these are referred to hereinafter as MAVs (Multi-Disciplinary Arts Venues). The terms “venues” and “arts centres and venues” are used interchangeably.

#### **2. Arts Venue Infrastructure in Ireland**

- 1) The sources of data used in preparing an overview of the current infrastructure are summarised in the box overleaf.
- 2) There is a very broad variety and large number of venues involved in offering arts programmes in Ireland and most offer a number of different art forms. However, a high proportion of these cater primarily to a local audience and a significant minority operate on a part-time or seasonal basis only.

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<sup>1</sup> The Arts Council & CCMA: ‘A Framework for Collaboration 2016-2025’.

### Principal Data Sources Used in this Study

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1) AIRO Audit of Venues:          | 138 year-round venues, used in profiling the sector in Chapter 2. 102 of these venues regularly offer more than one art form and 24 of the rest occasionally do so. The remaining 12 have the facilities to do so. |
| 2) Local Authority Funded Venues: | Group of 105 year-round venues for which funding information was compiled by the Arts Council, and this information is used in the analysis of funding. See list in Appendix 9.                                    |
| 3) Arts Council Funded Venues:    | Group of 49 MAVs funded by the Arts Council. Information on this group is drawn on in the analysis of funding.   |

Group 3 is a subset of Group 2 which, in turn, is a subset of Group 1. A list of all 138 venues is provided in Appendix 8.

Separately, venues and local authorities were surveyed as part of the consultative work for this study. A summary of the findings of this qualitative research is provided in Chapter 4, with details of the survey results contained in Appendices 6 and 7.

- 3) Despite the large number of arts venues in the country, the number that can be considered multi-disciplinary, year-round venues is considerably smaller. While the first-stage AIRO Survey identified 488 arts venues - or venues that include some degree of arts programming - their second stage survey was based on 138 year-round (full-time) arts venues of which 102 regularly offer more than one art form.
- 4) The larger, multi-disciplinary year-round arts venues represent a considerable investment in infrastructure by the Arts Council and Local Authorities as well as a strategic opportunity to reach broad consumer groups across the country, given

their geographic distribution. Between 2000 and 2016, a total of €143.3 million was invested in venues.

- 5) Over many decades, Local Authorities have delivered considerable support to the development and sustenance of arts infrastructure in Ireland. This engagement has generated a significant level of knowledge and expertise among Local Authorities which will be a key enabling factor in the future development of arts centres and venues.
- 6) Public sector funders don't always fund the same facilities as each other - with facilities playing differing roles for different public bodies - and there is a lack of a co-ordinated approach to venue funding among funders.
- 7) The scale of funding provided to individual venues varies considerably from one venue to another (when measured as a proportion of overall income).
- 8) There is a lack of clarity regarding the overall level of revenue funding provided to venues, as many are subsidised on an in-kind basis, especially by Local Authorities who, in many instances, take on staff costs and other operating overheads within their own budgets.
- 9) The degree to which individual venues rely on particular sources of income (e.g. earned income vs. grants) ranges very widely.
- 10) Arts Council funding is used primarily for programming activities. However, there is a very blurred line between what constitutes programming and what constitutes core (overhead) costs as there is an inevitable overlap between the two.
- 11) All stakeholders would benefit from an accurate and comprehensive national database of arts venues and their funders to support ongoing monitoring and analysis of arts infrastructure.
- 12) There were 2,881 staff directly employed at 138 year-round venues in 2016. There is a considerable reliance on volunteers and low paid workers among arts venues. Only slightly more than one-fifth of staff across 138 venues are employed full-time.



- 13) In addition to their direct employment, arts centres and venues generate significant indirect employment opportunities for artists and production personnel across all art forms.

### **3. Policy Review**

- 1) The arts sector operates in a complex and competitive policy environment, impacted by numerous plans, policies and frameworks. Seeking alignment is vital in order to ensure key partners have shared terms of reference, to justify support and to facilitate access to resources.
- 2) National policy includes enhancing amenity and heritage, and recognises the role of high quality infrastructure in that regard. The National Development Plan 2018-2027 and the National Planning Framework can provide a foundation on which to establish a shared understanding for the sustainable, equitable funding of MAV's.
- 3) The importance of creativity, culture and innovation are highlighted as central to the country's long-term development. The arts are now being reframed within the broader landscape of culture and creativity, as outlined by the draft policy of the DCHG, *Culture 2025 - A Framework Policy to 2025*, being implemented by Creative Ireland.
- 4) The Arts Act (2003) is the statutory basis for all arts policies and establishes The Arts Council as the authority on the arts with a mandate to develop public awareness and interest.
- 5) Local Authorities take their legislative lead from the Local Government Act (2001) and are mandated to create arts development plans within their areas. Not all have a current arts plan, but every LA has published a Culture and Creativity Plan, in keeping with the Creative Ireland programme.
- 6) The recognition of the role of the arts in both of the Acts above has given rise to the policy context in which the Arts Council and the CCMA developed 'A Framework for Collaboration', acknowledging the dual responsibility of both. County framework agreements for 2018-2025, currently in draft form, offer a basis on which common and sustainable approaches to MAVs can be agreed.

- 7) There is an alignment between venues' role in civic engagement, as required by Local Authorities, and the Arts Council's strategic priority of public engagement, which is grounded in 'A Framework for Collaboration'.
- 8) The development of a new Venues Strategy (akin to the Strategy for Public Libraries 2018-2022) would underline the valuable contribution of the venue network to promoting arts and culture, economic development, heritage and tourism, place-making, and job creation.
- 9) Under the National Development Plan 2018-2027, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht has allocated a modest €40 million to '*secure existing investment in arts and culture infrastructure nationwide, and ensure a regional balance*'. It is possible that additional funding may be obtained from the Rural and Urban Regeneration and Development Funds.

#### **4. Summary of Findings from Surveys and Consultations**

- 1) Increased co-ordination of activities and supports, including a shared vision and a common understanding of what venues are, is required between LAs and the Arts Council to support the development of a vibrant and sustainable arts sector in Ireland.
- 2) Public funding is critical for the viability of arts venues - more regular and longer-term funding is required. There is insufficient funding available across all areas, a short-term approach to funding, and intermittent availability of capital funding. These factors result in a difficulty in planning strategically for both programming and infrastructure investment, varying infrastructure quality, an inability to hire sufficient staff with the right skills, and an over-reliance on commercial programming to boost income.
- 3) There is significant criticism with regard to funding mechanisms, more so with regard to Arts Council mechanisms (specifically in terms of timing and requirement for detail), but also with regard to the variable and subjective nature of LA mechanisms.
- 4) Costs associated with infrastructure, operations and programming at venues cannot be neatly segregated.
- 5) Other, non-financial, supports also play a critical role for many arts venues. These include staffing, maintenance, professional advice and absorbing overheads. However, there is a high degree of variability and a lack of clear reporting across the country with regard to these supports.
- 6) Community 'ownership' is essential - both for economic viability as well as to fulfil the vision of most arts venues.
- 7) The venues are highly creative in fulfilling their missions, and in addressing the challenges of commercial viability and audience-building. Most offer broad programmes to attract broad and diverse audiences.

- 8) With the right supports, there is an opportunity for arts venues to play expanded roles at a local, regional and national level - given their geographic spread and broad community reach. They are well-positioned to be the mechanism for arts strategy delivery, to co-operate in creative production and touring, and to share resources and learning.
- 9) In particular, larger arts venues and clusters of arts venues have the opportunity to play a bigger role in creative production, supporting international touring and sharing expertise.
- 10) MAVs play an important role in supporting artists and the development of a creative community. Likewise, artists are often catalysts for further growth and development for MAVs.
- 11) Audience research further confirms the wide range of venue types used across the country.
- 12) Levels of audience participation, as a proportion of population, are relatively consistent nationwide.
- 13) While infrastructure is not a motivator for audience participation, venues can make some improvements that might encourage more frequent participation by niche audiences such as people with disabilities.

## **5. Summary of Findings from Case Studies & Comparators**

- 1) The Local Authorities and the Arts Council have a key role to play in resolving issues with regard to funding and co-ordination that would enable venues to play a larger and more constructive role in the cultivation and promotion of the arts in Ireland.
- 2) Working in partnership, and in clusters, across venues and administrative boundaries has creative and practical benefits.
- 3) International comparators provide an example of how a large venue can sell its expertise in community engagement and venue management in order to generate additional income.
- 4) Rural venues have particular challenges. These can be partially addressed through greater collaboration with other, larger, venues (see previous point), more off-site activity and the provision of a wider range of services for the local community.
- 5) International examples shows that it is possible to create structures, between a national Arts Council and regional/municipal authorities, that provide for a more devolved model of funding (e.g. Sweden, Germany).
- 6) Regularly funded organisations are a major feature of funding programmes elsewhere, which brings greater stability to the sector. As shown in England and Wales, it is possible to introduce multi-annual planning for regularly funded organisations on the basis of indicative levels of funding, with the proviso that actual funding may not meet the levels indicated, depending on the resources made available each year by government.
- 7) Banding organisations into funding levels can simplify funding expectations and decisions. However, the introduction of bands may not necessarily change the application assessment process, nor will it be predictive of specific grant amounts awarded to individual organisations, given the high degree of variance in their individual circumstances.

## **6. Conclusions**

- 1) Based on the findings of the AIRO audit of 138 venues, there are at least 102 MAVs distributed around the country. The majority of the remaining 36 offer one art form regularly and other art forms occasionally. (See also Box on page ii.)
- 2) Both the set of 138 venues included in the AIRO audit and the set of 49 MAVs funded by the Arts Council's venue programme, comprise very diverse groups. They differ widely in terms of age, scale, design, location, facilities, productive capacity, programming and staffing. They are not amenable to simple classification and there is no ready typology that could be applied to funding arrangements. As the analysis of current funding by the Arts Council and Local Authorities shows, this diversity among centres means that there are no consistent metrics that can be applied to the levels of support received by venues.
- 3) The geographic distribution of venues shows that there is access to MAVs in every county, with most counties having more than one. The picture is further improved if the much larger grouping of part-time, occasional, community and other venues is also taken into account. It is not evident that there is a need to build more venues in the short to medium term - the priority should be to make best use of the existing infrastructure.
- 4) Venues contribute to all five priority areas of *Making Great Art Work*, and are of particular importance in relation to three: the artist, public engagement, and spatial and demographic planning.
- 5) MAVs deliver a diverse and extensive set of outputs across a wide range of art forms. They are embedded in their communities, engaging with a range of audience types, and play a key role in delivering Arts Council strategy. There are also considerable strengths among MAVs – knowledge, experience, expertise, technical resources, etc.
- 6) However, the infrastructure of MAVs is not being currently being optimised and strengths are not distributed equally. One effective route to optimising the infrastructure would be to foster longer-term collaborative initiatives between MAVs. This will require appropriate policies and financial resourcing to create sustainable initiatives.

- 7) The collaborative concept could be extended to the establishment of county clusters of smaller local and rural venues, some of which could be hubbed around leading MAVs. This would raise their capabilities and levels of delivery, providing access to greater levels of expertise.
- 8) Public access to the arts is very important, and a priority goal of the Arts Council's Strategy. Delivering on this goal will mean giving consideration to the development of new venues in areas of high population growth, especially new towns. A broad guideline could be adopted so that when a defined population size threshold is breached in any area, this would trigger research into the most appropriate response. Before embarking on the provision of a new venue, best use should be made of the existing network. The need for a new venue in any particular area of significant population growth should be assessed very carefully.
- 9) The CLG model under which most MAVs operate appears to be the most suitable. However, there is a need to balance operational constraints with measures that enable boards to prioritise the artistic output of their venues, e.g. by ensuring that recurring overhead costs are fully covered, that there is a longer term view on funding, and that Directors are protected by indemnity insurance.
- 10) There is a need to strengthen the existing grant assessment approach, while still ensuring a model that can accommodate the diversity of venues, and that can be flexible in response to both need and opportunity.
- 11) In view of the wide diversity among MAVs, great care should be taken in attempting to prescribe funding models that go beyond a framework level. There must be scope in a model to accommodate diversity and be flexible in response to both need and opportunity. This flexibility should inform the selection and application of assessment criteria for funding.
- 12) There is potential to develop a framework within which venue funding is structured for the benefit of the major stakeholders. A framework based on defined levels of contribution to operating costs could be introduced to support and promote a truly

collaborative infrastructure of MAVs - and this is considered in the recommendations.

- 13) Gaps in the insufficiency of public capital funding can be mitigated, to some degree, by providing better continuity of funding to ensure a much better standard of continuous maintenance and upgrading of capital assets in the sector.

## **7. Recommendations: Outline Framework for a Venue Strategy**

A series of recommendations arise from the findings and conclusions of the review. These are summarised under four headings in the Box overleaf:



Area	Recommendation
<b>Policy</b>	<p>7.1.1 Develop a full venues strategy, including the recognition of venues as strategic infrastructure and ensuring an effective alignment of Local Authority arts plans, culture and creativity plans, and development plans.</p> <p>7.1.2 Ensure a continuity of policy among Government Departments with respect to the arts and arts venues, this initiative would be led most effectively by the Department of Culture, Heritage &amp; the Gaeltacht.</p> <p>7.1.3 Establish a consistent approach among public sector bodies and agencies with regard to arts policy priorities, planning and delivery.</p> <p>7.1.4 Agree what criteria are appropriate to measure the economic, social and artistic contribution of the venues - the key measures regarding Quality of Life and Place identified in the National Framework should be included.</p>
<b>Venue Clusters and Networks</b>	<p>7.2.1 Establish and energise active venue clusters and networks.</p> <p>7.2.2 The clusters should engage with arts offices, libraries, major festivals, and other arts-related organisations. In particular, joint programming, residencies, artistic development and partnerships between arts offices and arts organisations should be considered.</p> <p>7.2.3 Continuous professional development and peer learning should be embedded in the cluster agenda covering both staff and boards, ensuring they are operating with up-to-date skills in arts, business and governance.</p>
<b>Revenue Funding</b>	<p>7.3.1 Funding for venues should be restructured into two venue categories: local and county.</p> <p>7.3.2 Venue funding by the Arts Council and Local Authorities (LAs) should evolve towards a more consistent and balanced structure within the context of the framework agreements between the AC and LAs, and should be related to the category of venue and productive capacity.</p> <p>7.3.3 The priority in funding venues should be on enhancing their productive capacity, that is, extending the ability of the infrastructure to support the development/making of work in different art forms and providing facilities and career opportunities for artists.</p> <p>7.3.4 Indicative funding agreements with a 5-year horizon should be considered - this term could be aligned with the terms of the Local Authority Councils.</p> <p>7.3.5 The process of venue grant application assessment should be reviewed with the possibility of introducing greater alignment between Arts Council and Local Authority processes.</p>
<b>Capital Funding</b>	<p>7.4.1 DCHG capital funding for maintenance and upgrades should be made available on a continuous basis. Upgrades should include a strand for increasing productive capacity in line with demographic and spatial criteria.</p> <p>7.4.2 Advantage should be taken of the funding opportunities offered by the Rural and Urban Regeneration and Development Funds to secure additional capital funding for arts venues.</p> <p>7.4.3 New venues should only be built on the basis of a comprehensive and rigorous analysis of sustainability; the first priority is to invest in the productive capacity of existing venues.</p>

The first steps that might be taken towards implementation of these recommendations are as follows:

- 1) The Arts Council and CCMA to review the proposed Framework, with a view to refining it as appropriate.
- 2) The Arts Council and CCMA to establish an Implementation Group which should define and scope out the objectives, structure, manner of collaboration and range of activities and deliverables for the networks and clusters. The models should be sufficiently flexible to accommodate the diversity inherent in the venues sector, while at the same time setting clear expectations that are consistent with the goals of the Arts Council's strategy (*'Making Great Art Work'*), and with the objectives of the Local Authorities. The membership of the Implementation Group should be drawn from the Arts Council, the Management Liaison Group, and the CCMA/Arts Council working group, and should include a number of representatives of the venues sector.
- 3) The proposed Implementation Group to establish the respective expectations for venues at local and county level, as well as the demographic and spatial criteria for the latter group.
- 4) The Implementation Group to identify into which group each venue falls based on its work and productive capacity.
- 5) An initial pilot cluster programme should be set up with the goal of developing and refining the proposed cluster model. The emphasis in the cluster should be on increasing the productive capacity of the participating venues. The pilot and subsequent roll-out of the cluster programme will depend on funding being made available to support it.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Context and Purpose of the Review

This review of arts centres and venues in Ireland was commissioned jointly by the Arts Council and the County & City Management Association (CCMA). The context for the review is the formal agreement between the Arts Council and CCMA to work together more strategically in developing the arts in Ireland.<sup>2</sup> A priority for the partnership is to develop a co-ordinated, spatially-informed strategy to support and develop the infrastructure for the arts. This review of the nationwide infrastructure of arts centres and venues will inform the preparation of that strategy.

The review is also underpinned by the Arts Council's Strategy, 2016-2025: *'Making Great Art Work'*. In particular, the first 3-year action plan implementing this strategy identifies the following actions:

- *'Review our existing funding relationships with venues from 2017 in partnership with Local Government.'*
- *'Introduce a new investment approach for venues from 2018 using the following criteria: spatial and demographic analysis, quality of artistic programming, levels of public engagement and partnerships, and economic sustainability.'*

It is important to note that, for the purposes of this review, arts centres and venues are defined as year-round, multi-disciplinary spaces which support a range of professional art forms. For convenience, these are referred to hereinafter as MAVs (Multi-Disciplinary Arts Venues). The terms "venues" and "arts centres and venues" are used interchangeably.

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<sup>2</sup> The Arts Council & CCMA: *'A Framework for Collaboration 2016-2025'*.

## **1.2 Objectives**

The Terms of Reference for the review are provided in Appendix 1. They specify the following objectives and deliverables:

- Describe and reflect government policy on the arts and align proposals within this context.
- Provide case studies of models of practice from Ireland and internationally, that illustrate proposals for future support and development.
- Identify models of best practice and outline where there is a deficit in provision and accessibility to the arts.
- Outline the resources required for the different types of arts centres and venues described and the scale of support each requires.
- Recommend intervention strategies and propose actions to maximize the likely available resources (infrastructural, human and financial), giving consideration to flexible and scalable models of provision for arts centres.
- Make proposals as to how Local Government / Arts Council might best plan to support the sector in a co-ordinated way, providing a rationale for such support so that resources can be shared on merit and in a transparent, fair and equitable manner, and consider the need to address any imbalance in support structures.
- Provide models of development for funding structures to transition from existing models in a planned way that ensures the stability of arts provision nationally.
- Consider and review existing models of governance of arts centres and venues and propose recommendations in the light of new legislation, codes of practice and recommended best practice.

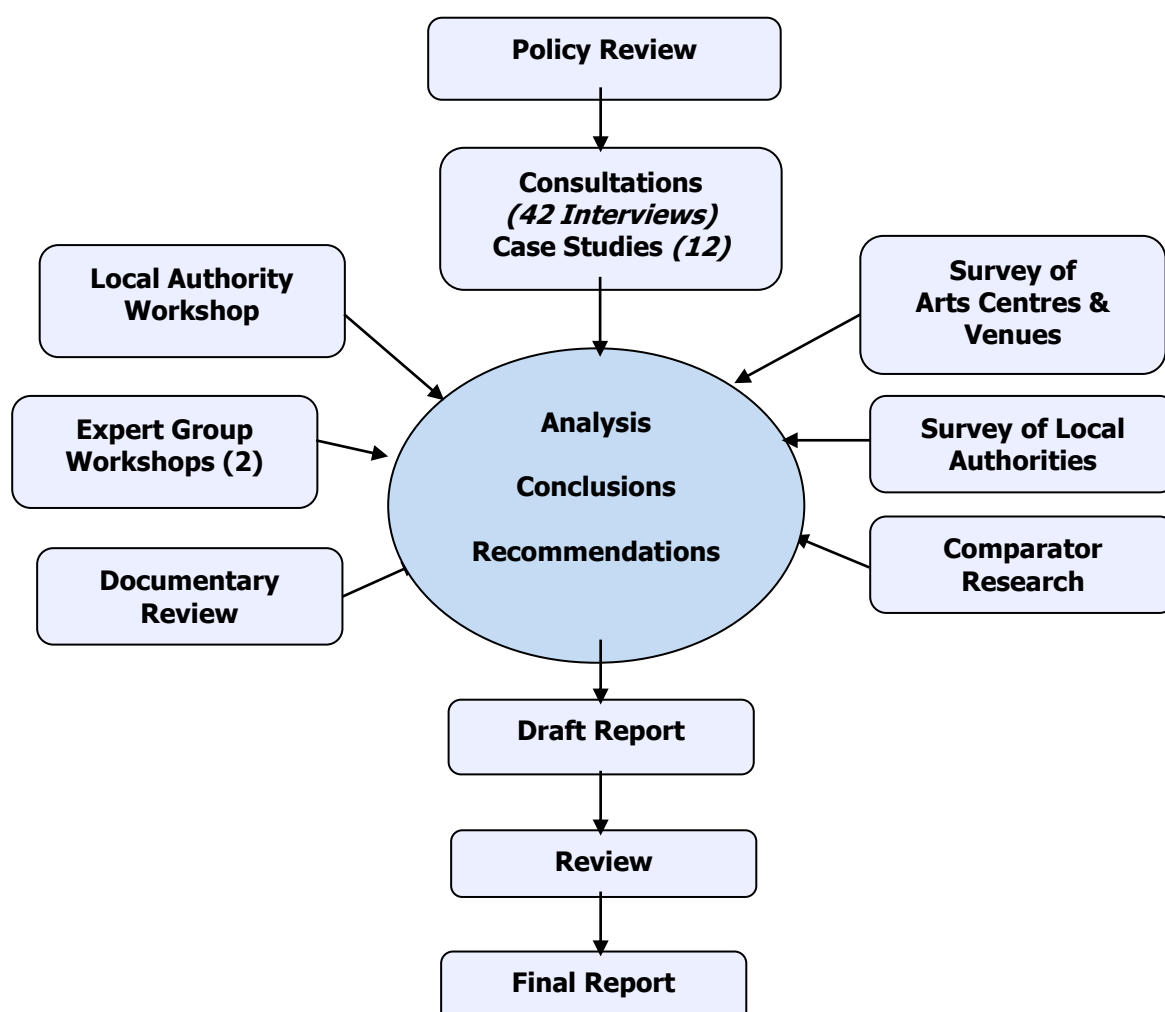
## **1.3 Review Process**

The study team conducted the bulk of its work on the review during 2018. The team met with the Arts Council/CCMA Working Group for the review at intervals during this period

to discuss progress and specific issues arising from the research and consultations. The work programme included:

- workshop with 33 representatives of the Local Authorities
- two workshops with the Expert Group established to debate and advise on issues arising from the research
- a survey of arts centres and venues
- a survey of Local Authorities
- an extensive programme of consultations
- case studies of a sample of arts centres and venues
- detailed research on relevant policies, comparators and previous reports, surveys and studies in this field.
- Stakeholder engagement to test the framework of recommendations

The process of the study is depicted in the following chart (Figure 1):

**Figure 1: Review Process**

## 1.4 Acknowledgements

CHL wishes to acknowledge the assistance given by many parties to this review, notably the 41 venue operators and 29 Local Authority respondents in the survey of arts centres and venues who contributed greatly to the basis of understanding for the research team. We would also like to thank the many individuals and organisations who participated in the extensive consultative programme, the Local Authority representatives who attended the workshop and framework review, members of the sectoral expert group, and the venues and Local Authorities who agreed to participate in the case study review.

We acknowledge gratefully the helpful cooperation of the CCMA Management Liaison Group for facilitating the process of engagement with the Local Authorities. Finally, we would like to thank the members of the Arts Council's Working Group, senior

management and the venues' executive team for their guidance, inputs and ready availability throughout the review process. Members of the Working Group and Management Liaison Group are listed in Appendix 2.

## **2. ARTS VENUE INFRASTRUCTURE IN IRELAND**

The present position regarding the provision and funding of arts centres and venues in Ireland is considered in this Chapter. The principal features of the existing provision are outlined, followed by a more detailed review of funding arrangements.

### **2.1 Overview**

As part of the Framework for Collaboration agreed between the Arts Council and CCMA, a number of priorities were agreed - one of which was a comprehensive audit of arts venues in Ireland which was undertaken by AIRO<sup>3</sup>. Drawing on data supplied by Local Authorities in 2016, this survey identified a total of 488 venues involved in the presentation of arts to the public. However, the list included a very wide variety of spaces, many of which are used only partially or occasionally for the arts. Indeed, only 45% of the 488 venues described themselves as dedicated arts venues.

In the second stage of their audit, AIRO focused on a smaller number of 138 year-round venues for more in-depth research. As the audit of these venues provides the most consistent and detailed set of data on venues, the analysis in this chapter is based on this group. However, because the AIRO audit does not go into sufficient detail on revenue funding, we have drawn on other sources to strengthen the analysis of funding arrangements in Section 2.6. A summary of the data sources used is provided in Box 1.

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<sup>3</sup> All-Island Research Observatory (AIRO): *Audit of Arts Facilities & Venues*, Arts Council, 2016.



### **Box 1: Principal Data Sources Used in this Study**

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1) AIRO Audit of Venues:          | 138 year-round venues, used in profiling the sector in Chapter 2. 102 of these venues regularly offer more than one art form and 24 of the rest occasionally do so. The remaining 12 have the facilities to do so. |
| 2) Local Authority Funded Venues: | Group of 105 year-round venues for which funding information was compiled by the Arts Council, and this information is used in the analysis of funding. See list in Appendix 9.                                    |
| 3) Arts Council Funded Venues:    | Group of 49 MAVs funded by the Arts Council. Information on this group is drawn on in the analysis of funding.   |

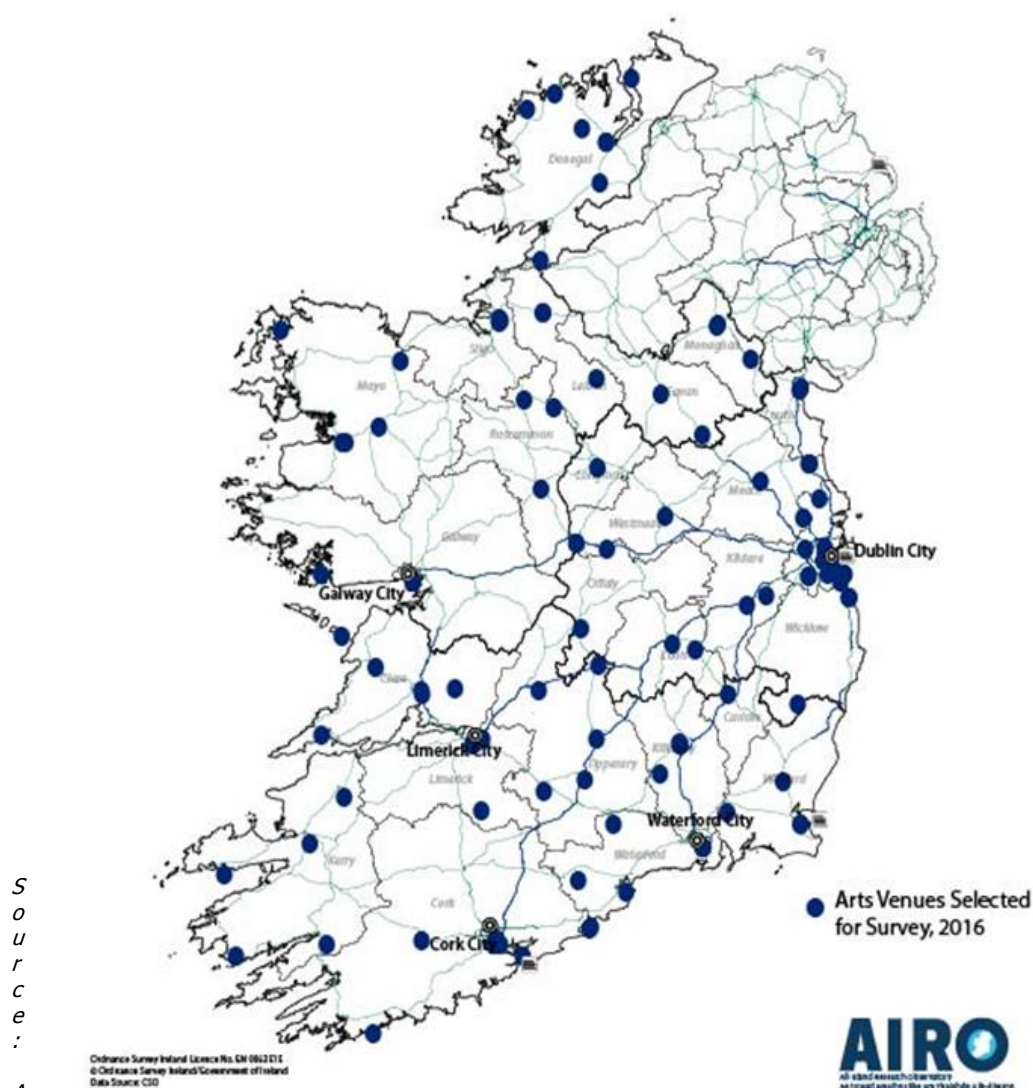
Group 3 is a subset of Group 2 which, in turn, is a subset of Group 1. A list of all 138 venues is provided in Appendix 8.

Separately, venues and local authorities were surveyed as part of the consultative work for this study. A summary of the findings of this qualitative research is provided in Chapter 4, with details of the survey results contained in Appendices 6 and 7.

The distribution of the 138 venues is shown on Figure 2. This indicates what appears to be a reasonable geographic spread although it is clear that some counties are much better served than others. This point is underlined by the chart in Figure 3 which shows the rate of provision of arts venues per 100,000 people across the regions and counties. The overall national provision is 2.9 venues per 100,000 persons, with the county figures ranging from 0.6 in Co. Galway to 12.5 in Co. Leitrim. However, this is a very crude measure as it does not take into account the nature, scale, facilities and productive capacity of different venues. Moreover, the assessment of distribution in Figure 3 is defined by county and city boundaries rather than by the actual accessibility of venues to

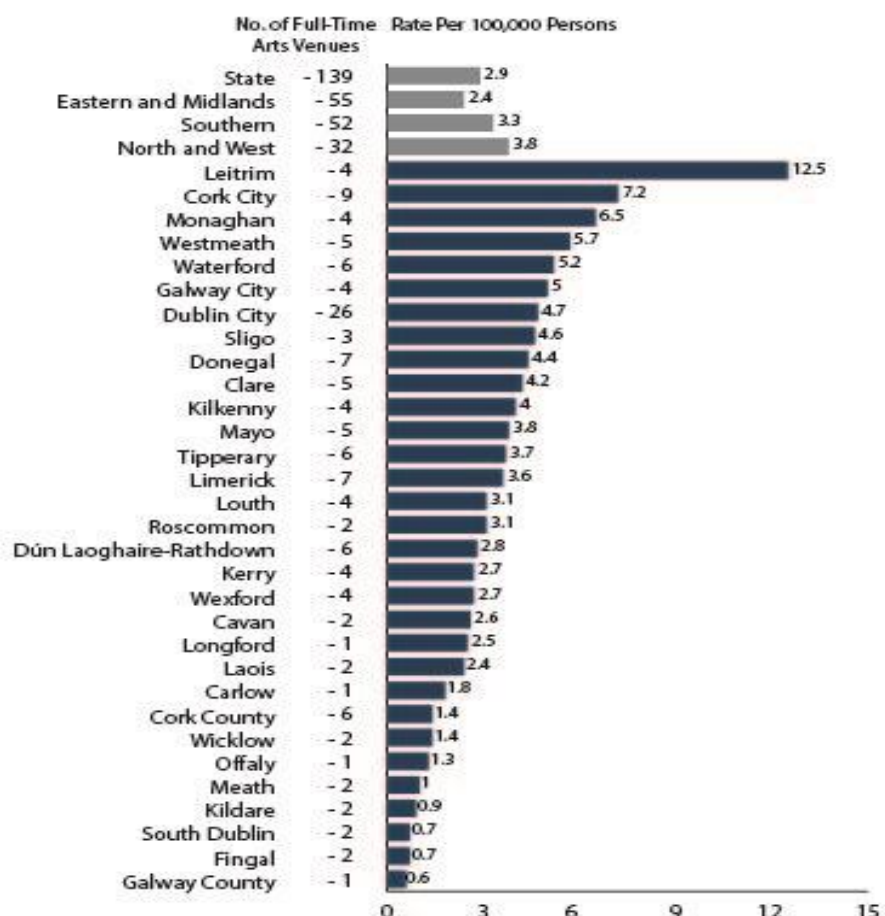
people residing in their effective catchment areas. The latter would be a more pertinent measure as people undoubtedly cross county boundaries to attend events at arts venues.

**Figure 2: Distribution of 138 Venues Surveyed as Part of AIRO Audit, 2016**



AIRO Audit of Arts Facilities & Venues, 2016

**Figure 3: Rate of Provision of Full-Time Arts Venues per 100,000 persons,**  
**2**



*Note:* This chart is based on a total of 139 venues - the 138 included in the analysis is Chapter 2, plus one more added by AIRO.

*Source:* AIRO

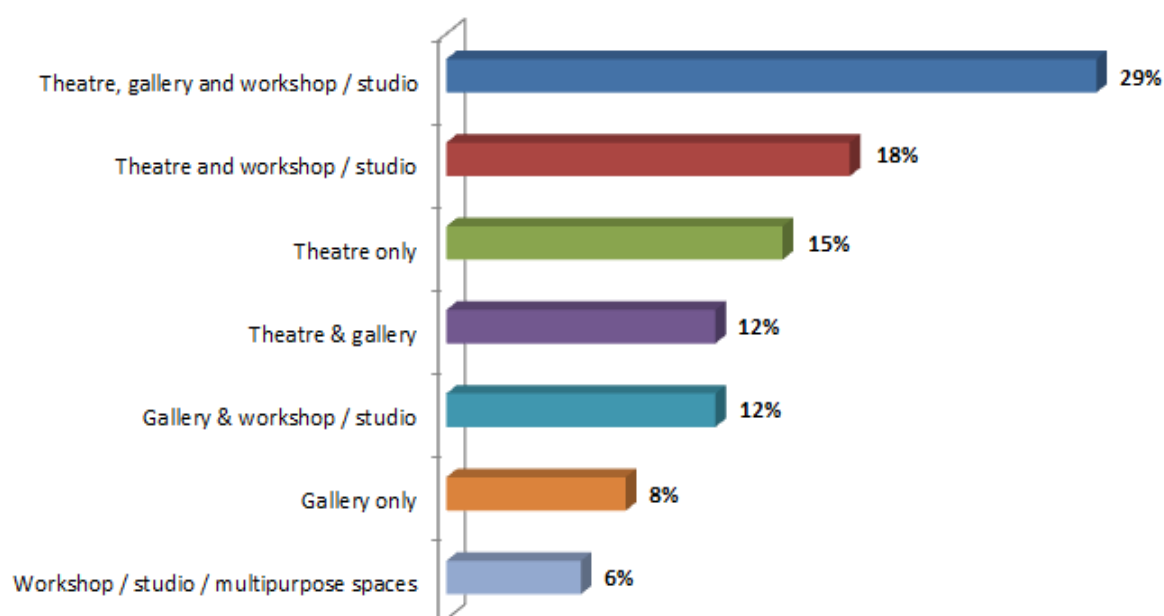
Bearing the above points in mind, the chart in Figure 3 is not a reliable guide to public access to the arts. It also does not take into account what is being provided by and through the much larger group of venues that were excluded from the second stage of the AIRO Audit. These venues contribute to enabling greater public access to the arts across the country, and this cannot be discounted when considering overall provision. They are certainly on the radar of Local Authorities, who, as the findings of our survey highlight (see Section 4.2), support a substantial number of venues.

## 2.2 Venue Facilities

The set of 138 venues included in the detailed AIRO audit comprises a very diverse group. They differ widely in terms of, inter alia, age, scale, design, location, staffing and facilities. They therefore offer different programmes and audience experiences, and they are not amenable to a simple classification. It is, however, possible to broadly group venues with respect to the principal arts spaces that they offer, and this is done in Figure 4.

**Figure 4: Distribution of Year-Round Venues by Dedicated Arts Spaces Offered**

The data in Figure 4 show that theatres are the most commonly offered arts spaces in



year-round venues. Three-quarters (74%) of the 138 venues have theatres - in fact the proportion is probably higher as the workshop / studio spaces may include performance spaces. Visual art spaces are widespread but not to the same extent as performance spaces. Just over 60% of the 138 venues stated that they have galleries.

The majority of venues have a degree of flexibility in the use of their spaces, and can reconfigure seating and other features to accommodate different art forms. Moreover, in addition to the 'dedicated' performance, gallery and workshop / studio spaces, 74 of the 138 venues (54%) stated that they had '*other spaces for presenting art*'.

The scale of dedicated performance and gallery space differs widely across the venues surveyed. As shown in Table 2.1, the average capacity of their theatres is 230 seats, with a median (central) value of 200. However, the capacity range extends from 46 seats to 1,038 seats. Gallery spaces are similarly varied - the average gallery floor space is 117m<sup>2</sup>, with a much lower median value of 88m<sup>2</sup>, which suggests that a majority of gallery spaces are below the statistical average. The size range is very wide.

**Table 2.1: Scale of Theatre and Gallery Spaces in Arts Venues**

	Theatres		Galleries
	Main	Studio	(floor area)
Average	230 seats	96 seats	117m <sup>2</sup>
Median	200 seats	72 seats	88m <sup>2</sup>

Source: derived from AIRO survey

## 2.3 Art Forms

The main art forms offered by these 138 venues are listed in Table 2.2. Taking both regularly and occasionally offered art forms into account, the most frequently occurring are theatre (75% of venues), visual arts (74%) and music (73%). These are followed by traditional arts (65%), film (61%), literature (60%) and dance (57%). Over two-thirds of the venues produce in-house professional work, and three-quarters (103) offer specific supports for artists in the venue. The most commonly offered supports are residencies, workspaces and commissions.

**Table 2.2: Art Forms Offered by Year-Round Venues**

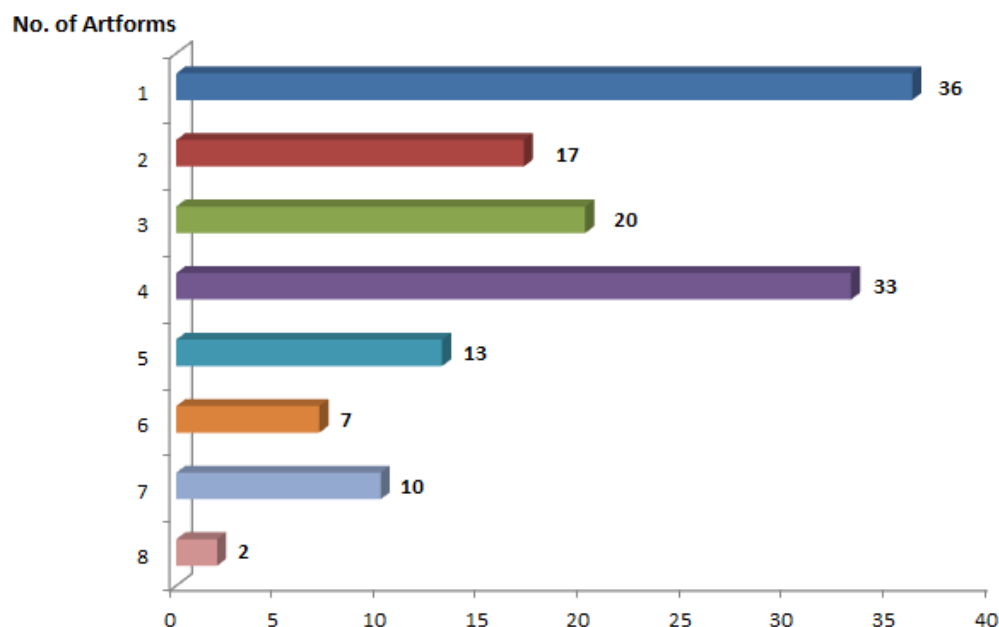
Art Form	Regularly	Occasionally	Total	% Venues
Theatre	83	21	104	75.4
Visual Arts	86	16	102	73.9
Music	75	25	100	72.5
Traditional Arts	47	43	90	65.2

Film	51	33	84	60.9
Literature	32	51	83	60.1
Dance	38	40	78	56.5
Mixed/Interdisciplinary	28	48	76	55.1
Opera	6	26	32	23.2
Street Art & Spectacle	3	20	23	16.7
Circus	1	19	20	14.5
Architecture	4	14	18	13.0

*Source: AIRO Audit of Arts Facilities & Venues, 2016*

The majority of the 138 venues surveyed by AIRO offer a number of art forms. As illustrated in Figure 5, 102 venues regularly offer two or more, with the overall average being 3. (The average among those offering more than one art form is 4.) The most common combinations reflect the ranking in Table 2.2.

Arts venues are adaptable and creative both in their efforts to reach audiences and in their need to generate sufficient income to remain viable. As a result, as shown in Figure 5, a high proportion of venues regularly offer more than one discipline, and virtually all offer more than one discipline on an occasional basis at least. In other words, a primarily visual arts venue will host theatre, dance and other disciplines from time to time; and it is common to find theatres hosting visual arts exhibitions. These venues are spread throughout the country.

**Figure 5: Number of Art Forms Regularly Offered by Year-Round Venues**

Source: derived from AIRO Audit of Arts Facilities & Venues, 2016

## 2.4 Venue Networks

There are five venue networks active in Ireland - Nasc, Nomad, Strollers, Shortworks and Imeall - all of which have been established since 2006. Their membership and functions are shown in Table 2.3. The largest network is The Strollers which currently has 10 members; Nasc and Nomad each have 8 members while Shortworks and Imeall have 4 apiece. The primary purpose of these networks is the development and presentation of touring productions. Other points to note are:

- The principal emphasis is on the performing arts, although Strollers and Shortworks are explicit in their wish to cover all artforms.
- Nasc and Strollers have a broad national distribution, while Nomad and Imeall have a defined regional composition.
- There is a degree of overlap in membership between the different networks with 5 venues being members of at least two networks, and a further 2 being members of three networks.

- The level of activity in networks is limited - perhaps just one major touring production a year in most cases. However, informal, ongoing networking between key personnel is a benefit in all cases.



**Table 2.3: Venue Networks in Ireland**

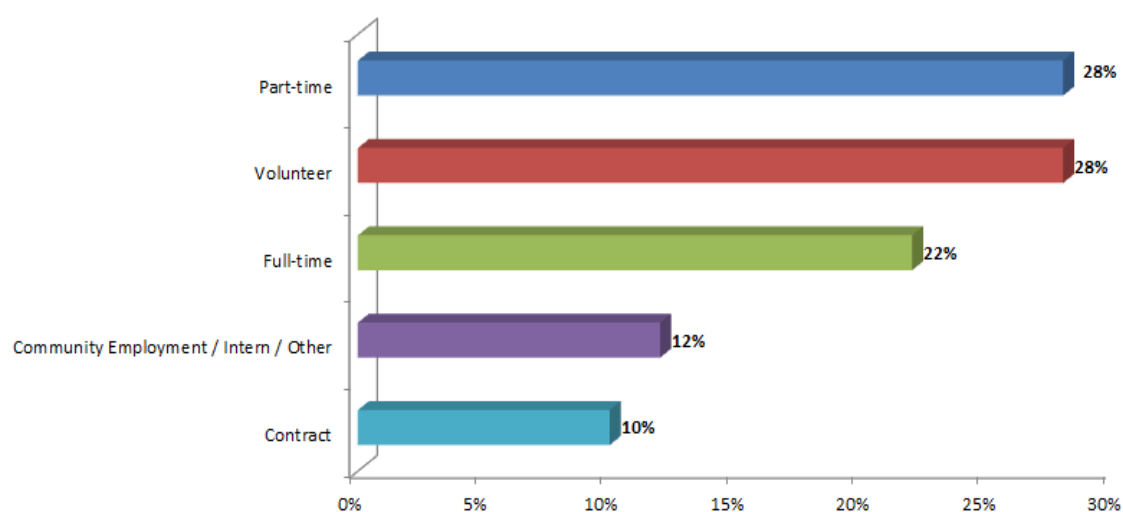
Name	Members	Function
<b>Nasc (est. 2006)</b>	An Grianán, Backstage, Dunamais, Glór, Lime Tree, Pavilion, Siamsa Tíre, Town Hall (Galway)	<p><i>"To harness the buying power, high quality venue infrastructure, professional expertise, art form knowledge, contacts, loyalty and support of the members to present high quality work".</i></p> <p>Primary focus is on touring programmes; also offers a bursary (€10,000) for the development of work to tour the network.</p>
<b>Nomad (est. 2006)</b>	An Grianán, Backstage, Riverbank, Ramor, Hawk's Well, Roscommon Arts Centre, Mullingar Arts Centre, Droichead	<p><i>'To further the development of the performing arts in the North Midlands region, and extend the parameters of regional, national and international performances available to venues and their audiences'.</i></p>
<b>Strollers</b>	Draíocht, Hawk's Well, Linenhall, Riverbank, Siamsa Tíre, Solstice, Source, Visual, Watergate, Belltable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to develop a touring network of performance venues across Ireland</li> <li>- to partner, commission and co-produce work for touring (all artforms)</li> <li>- to receive touring works (all artforms)</li> <li>- to sustain and develop audiences</li> <li>- to develop relationships with artists and production companies</li> </ul> <p>Strollers also offer a bursary (c. €10,000) for the development of touring productions.</p>
<b>Shortworks</b>	Draíocht, Riverbank, Linenhall, The Ark	<p>A network of multidisciplinary venues that programme year round across artforms for children aged 2-12. The focus is on the development and touring of productions.</p>
<b>Imeall</b>	Axis, Civic, Draíocht, Mermaid	<p>A network of modern, fully-equipped performing arts venues in Dublin - essentially connected by the M50/M11. Its functions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- presentation of new and artistically challenging work</li> <li>- development of audiences for live performance</li> <li>- development of high quality touring theatre</li> <li>- development of relationships with artists and production companies</li> <li>- sharing of experience and projects with other networks</li> <li>- sharing of information and resources.</li> </ul>

## 2.5 Staffing

The chart in Figure 6 shows the distribution of staff at year-round venues by category of employment. The chart illustrates how dependent the sector is on voluntary, part-time and subsidised work with only 22% of staff across the 138 venues being employed full-time.

**Figure 6: Category of Employment at Year-round Arts Venues**

*Source: AIRO Audit of Arts Facilities & Venues, 2016*



In total, there were 2,881 staff directly employed at the 138 year-round venues in 2016. Only 634 of these were employed on a full-time basis. Some 60% of staff were employed full-time, part-time or on contract. The remaining 40% were engaged as volunteers, or on employment schemes or internships, or some other form of temporary or unpaid arrangements.

The overall employment impact of arts centres and venues is much greater than their direct employment, as they effectively generate employment opportunities for artists and production personnel across all art forms.

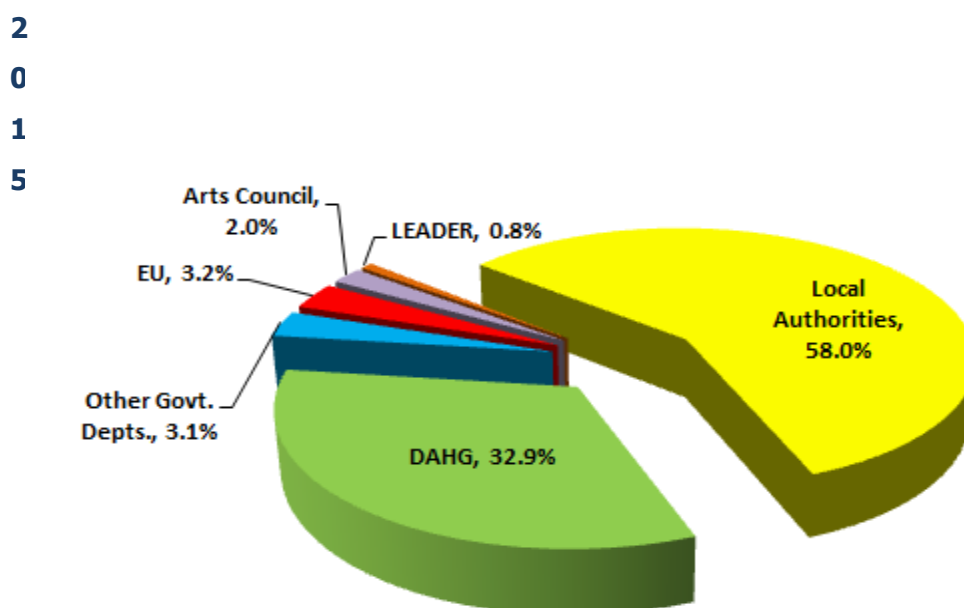
## 2.6 The Funding of Arts Venues

### 2.6.1 Capital Funding

According to the AIRO audit of 138 year-round venues, 2016, a total of €143.3 million was invested in new and existing venues during the period 2000 - 2016. A summary analysis of this funding is provided in Table 2.4. The distribution of venues that received more than €500,000 in capital funding is shown in Figure 7. The larger MAVs are frequently significant public buildings, as illustrated in Figure 8.

**Figure 7: Venues in Receipt of more than €500,000 in Public Capital Funds, 2000-2015**



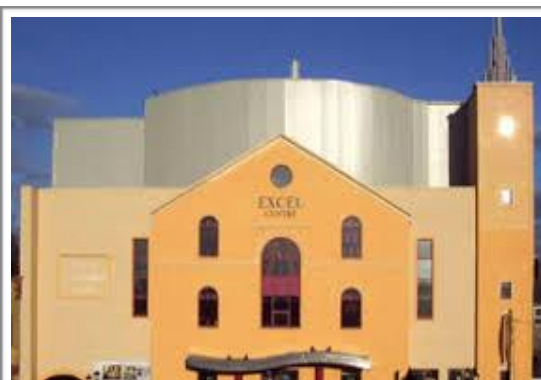
**Figure 8: Distribution of Capital Funding for Arts Venues by Source, 2000-**

Some key points highlighted by the data in Figure 8 are as follows:

- Local Authorities were by far the largest investors in arts venues between 2000 and 2015, investing €83.1 million, representing 58% of total public sector investment during this period.
- The Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht, and its predecessors, supported a larger number of venues, committing €47.2 million across 78 sites.
- During the past two years, the Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht (DAHG) has awarded a further €10.2 million in capital grants under the Arts & Culture Capital Scheme 2016-2018. This investment was spread across 134 recipients, with an average value of €76,226 per grant. However, most grants were very small as the median grant value was just €20,000.
- Continuing their commitment to cultural infrastructure, it is reasonable to assume that Local Authorities have also continued to invest in arts venues since 2015, but data are not available at the time of writing.

**Figure 9: Some of the Larger MAVs**

*(clockwise from top left: The Visual, Tipperary Excel, Solstice Arts Centre, Town Hall Theatre, An Grianán)*



- Other sources of public capital investment are small in scale relative to Local Authorities and DAHG. However, they can be very important for individual recipients, five of whom received grants exceeding €1 million from either the EU or government departments other than DAHG.
- There is a large difference between the average value and the median value of capital funding, with the former being biased upwards by a small number of large investments, especially by certain Local Authorities. Notable examples are dlr Lexicon (€37 million, of which €36 million from LA); Visual (€17 million, of which €13.5 million from LA); Solstice (€11.5 million, of which €8.5 million from LA); and Rua Red (€8 million from LA). These four venues together accounted for 79% of all LA investment in the arts venues between 2000 and 2015.

### **2.6.2 Revenue Funding**

There is a lack of clarity regarding the overall level of revenue funding provided to arts venues. This arises from the uncertainty about the absolute number of such venues, the absence of any systematic gathering of such data at national level, and the fact that substantial support is channelled indirectly to venues, especially by Local Authorities, many of whom take operating overheads within their own budgets. The following analysis therefore does not represent an audit of financial support but is intended to highlight key features of current revenue funding arrangements.

The data on which we have relied were taken from the following sources (see also Box 1 in Section 2.1):

- 1) The group of 138 year-round venues who identified sources of income in the AIRO Audit
- 2) A group of 105 venues for which actual funding by Local Authorities and the Arts Council is available
- 3) The group of 49 MAVs funded by the Arts Council.

Group 2 is a subset of Group 1, and Group 3 is a subset of Group 2.

The distribution of income by source for the AIRO survey group of 138 year-round venues is illustrated in Figure 9. This shows that, overall, earned (box office) income accounts for one-third of the income generated by these venues, with Local Authorities

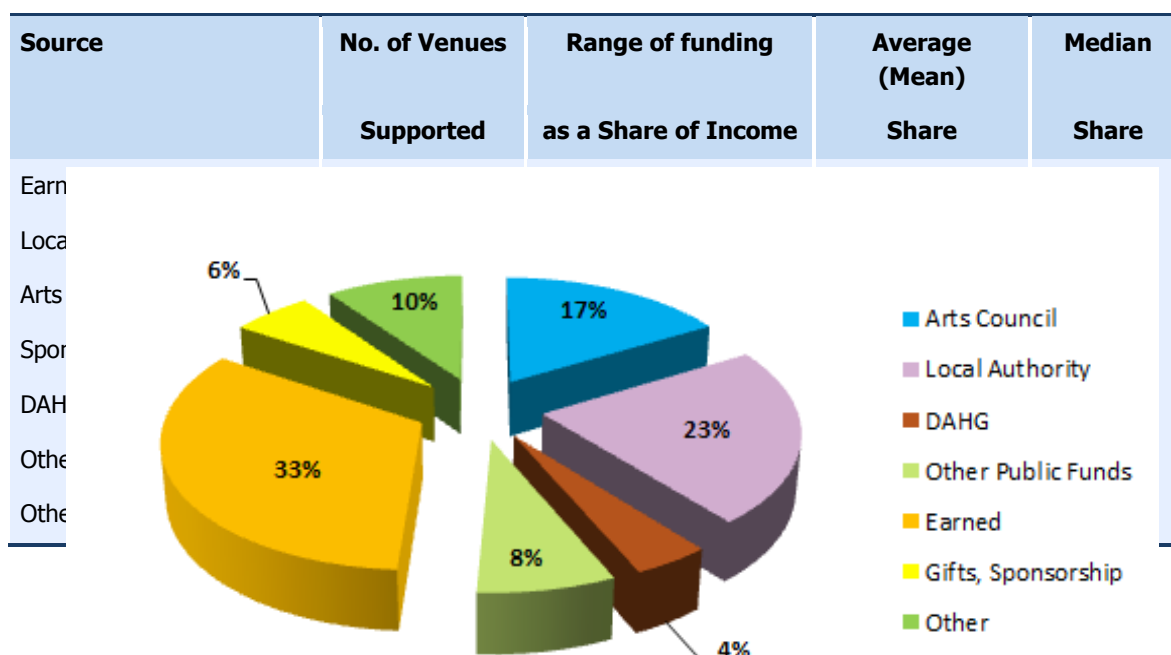
and the Arts Council delivering 23% and 17% respectively. The balance of 25% is fragmented among a wide variety of sources.

It may be noted that the distribution of income by source for the groups of MAVs in receipt of venue funding from the Arts Council is very similar to that of the larger group illustrated in Figure 10. In both groups, the Arts Council and Local Authorities contribute a combined total of 40% of funding, with an almost identical split between the two sources. The main difference between the two groups is that, on average, the Arts Council group generates 42% of revenue from earned income sources, in contrast to the average of 29% for the rest of the group of 138 venues included in the AIRO second stage survey group. The latter generate more from a range of minor sources, including sponsorship and donations.

**Figure 10: Distribution of Venue Income by Source  
(AIRO Survey)**

The picture shown in Figure 10 represents the overall average for the group of 138 venues. However, the mix at individual venue level varies widely from venue to venue. The data in Table 2.4 give some indication of the degree of variance.

**Table 2.4: Extent and Range of Venue Funding by Source**



Notes: - The average and median shares in each case refer to the number of venues supported by that particular source.

Source: derived from AIRO, *op.cit.*



A number of points emerge from the analysis in Table 2.4:

- A small proportion (12%) of the venues have no earned revenue.
- The degree to which venues rely on any particular source ranges very widely: for example, excluding those that receive no Local Authority funding, the extent of support that venues receive from their Local Authorities ranges from 1% to 100%. Likewise, venues in receipt of Arts Council support depend on the Council for anything from 1% to 76% of total income.
- The wider the gap between the average and median shares, the greater the impact on the average of a small number of relatively large grants as a share of total income. The median share is therefore a better reflection of the typical share of income received from any one source.
- The very broad ranges of funding from each source as a share of income demonstrates that there is no consistent model of funding in terms of its distribution by source.

The Arts Council supplied data on funding by Local Authorities and the Council to 105 venues in 2017. This shows that the Local Authorities committed €12.8 million in direct revenue funding to these venues, with the Arts Council contributing a further €5.4 million, bringing the total that year to €18.2 million. The levels of funding from each source varied widely, with Local Authority funding per venue ranging from €3,000 to €744,000 and Arts Council funding ranging from €10,000 to €718,000. This is a sizeable annual investment reflecting both the scale of the resource requirements of cultural infrastructure and commitment of the Local Authorities and the Arts Council commitment to endeavouring to meet these.

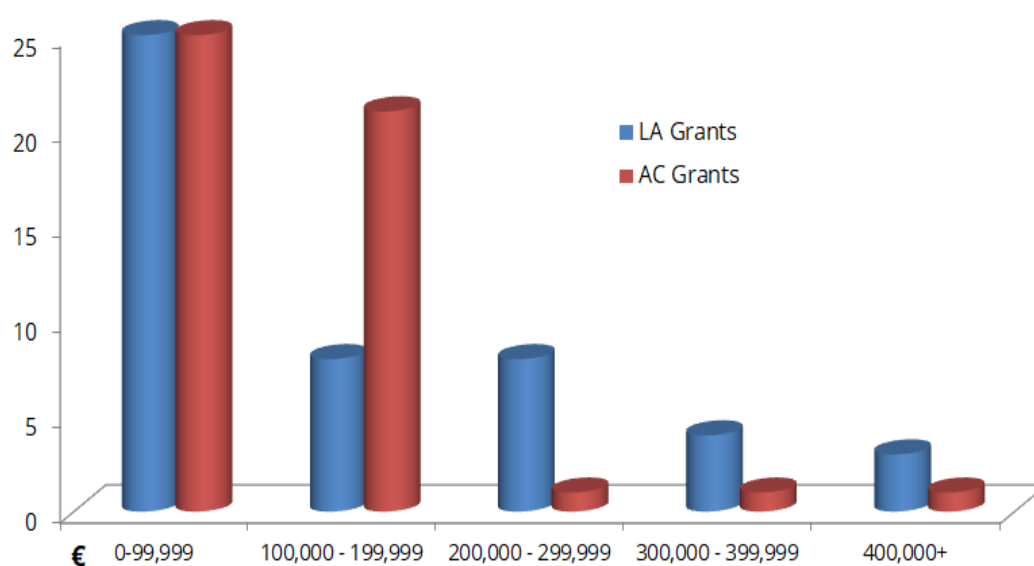
Focusing on the group of 48 MAVs in receipt of Arts Council funding in 2017, the level of support that they received is summarised in Table 2.5. Not included in the table is the earned income and funding from sources other than the Arts Council and Local Authorities.

**Table 2.5: MAVs in Receipt of Arts Council Venue Funding, 2017**

	Total	Average
--	-------	---------



No. of Venues	48*	
Arts Council Funding 2017, €	5,386,250	112,214
Local Authority Funding 2017, €	7,295,946	151,999
Total Arts Council & Local Authority, €	12,682,196	264,213



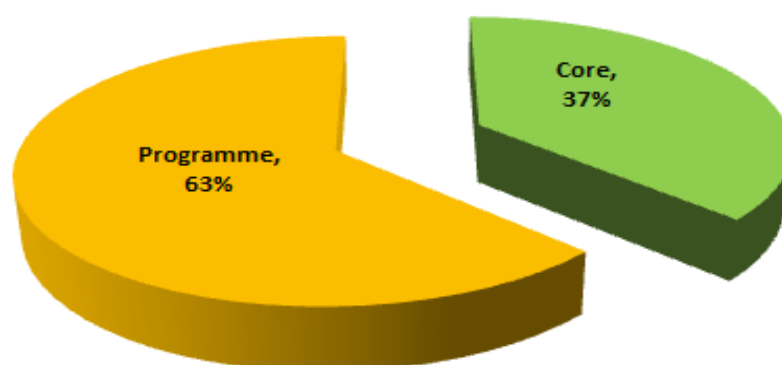
\*venues in 2017, 49 in 2018.

Most grants are modest in size, as reflected by Figure 11 which shows that the majority of grants from both the Arts Council and Local Authorities are under €100,000. Statistical analysis shows that there is no correlation between the levels of funding granted respectively by the Arts Council and the Local Authorities to these MAVs. While, in many instances, one or other source is much more significant, the scale of funding and the difference in amount between the two sources varies widely.

**Figure 11: Distribution of Grants by Size (Local Authority & Arts Council)**

Generally, Arts Council funding is used for programming activities. However, previous analysis by the Arts Council found that over one-third goes towards core costs, as shown in Figure 12 below. In practice, it is impossible to draw a clear distinction between programming and core (overhead) costs as they inevitably must overlap.

**Figure 12: Use of Arts Council MAV Funding  
based on Arts Council Plan Analysis of Funding for 46 Venues, 2016**



*analysis*

*Source:  
Arts  
Council*

Analysis of Arts Council and Local Authority grant funding in relation to a number of variables suggests that there are no consistent metrics that can be applied to the widely ranging levels of support received by venues. Correlation analysis highlights the absence of any systematic relationship between the levels of grant support delivered and a series of quantifiable variables. The results of this analysis are summarised in Table 2.6, and the key points are as follows:

- There is a weak correlation between size of population and the levels of support provided to venues, including MAVs. However, as was shown in Figure 3 (page 9), there is a very wide spread in the level of provision of full-time venues by Local Authority area, in terms of the average number of people served per venue (see also Figure 13 below).
- There is no correlation between the audience capacity of funded MAVs and population at county/city level.
- There is a moderate correlation between venue seating capacity aggregated at county/city level and Arts Council support. However, there is no correlation between MAV capacity and Arts Council support at individual MAV level.

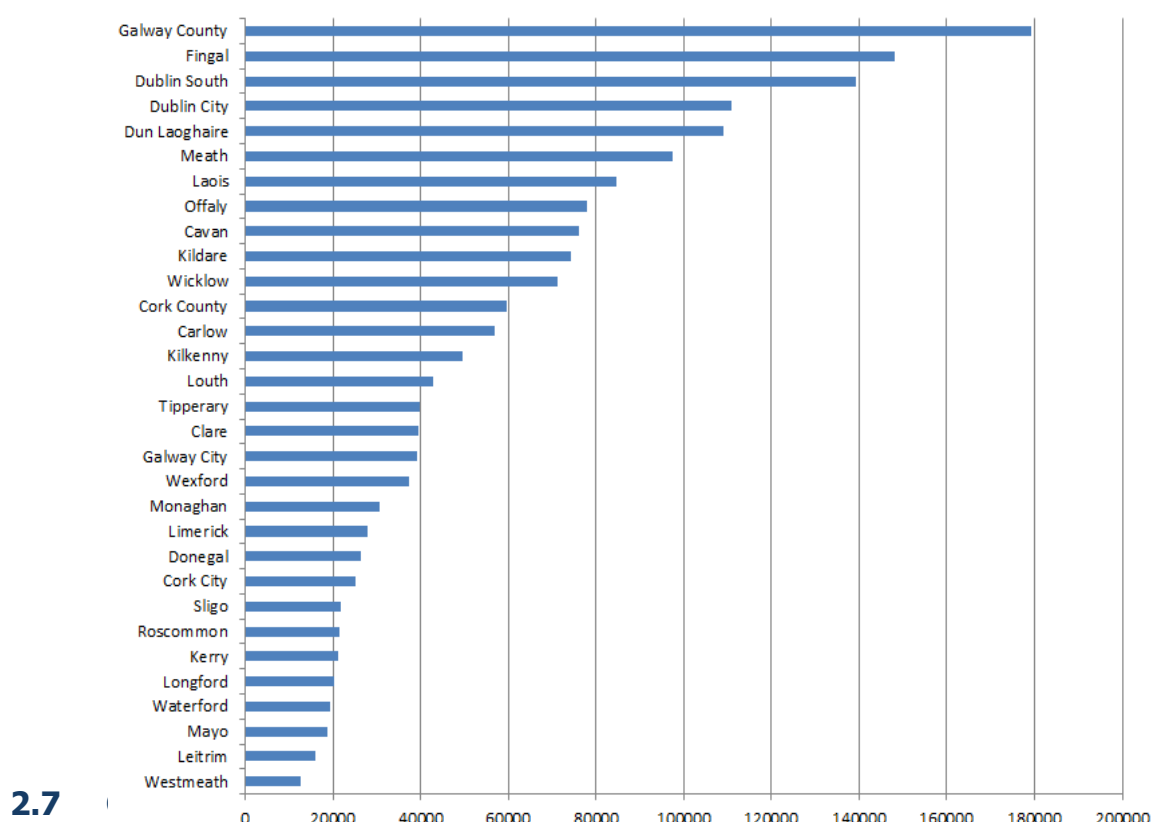
- There is no correlation between the weighted application assessment marks awarded to applicant venues and the absolute amount of grant received - although this finding is based on a small sample. Based on the same small sample, there is a moderate inverse correlation between the total marks awarded and the level of grant per mark.
- Again, on the basis of such a small sample, there is an inverse correlation between the level of grant awarded and the level of earned income achieved by a MAV - this is perhaps not surprising as the relative level of grant support will fall as the level of earned income rises.

**Table 2.6: Correlation Analysis: Arts Council & Local Authority Funded Venues**

Variables	PCC	Assessment
Population by County / AC Support	0.51	Moderate correlation
Population by County / LA Support	0.65	Moderate correlation
County Venue Capacity / AC Support	0.58	Moderate inverse correlation
Individual Venue Capacity / AC Support	0.05	No correlation
Population by County / County Venue Capacity	0.01	No correlation
Weighted Application Marks / Grant Awards (sample of 7 venues - post LM-CRM reports)	0.13	No correlation
Weighted Application Marks / Grant per Mark	-0.54	Moderate inverse correlation
Earned Income / AC Support (Sample of 8 venues)	-0.89	Inverse correlation

*Note:* - PCC is the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. It ranges from -1 to +1, where -1 is a perfect inverse correlation, zero is a nil correlation and 1 is a perfect positive correlation.

**Figure 13: Population per AC/LA Funded Venues in each Local Authority Area**  
*105 Venues in total – 49 of which are funded by Arts Council, 104 by Local Authorities*



- 1) There is a very broad variety and large number of venues involved in offering arts programmes in Ireland and most offer a number of different art forms. However, a high proportion of these cater primarily to a local audience and a significant minority operate on a part-time or seasonal basis only.
- 2) Despite the large number of arts venues in the country, the number that can be considered multi-disciplinary, year-round venues is considerably smaller. While the first-stage AIRO Survey identified 488 arts venues - or venues that include some degree of arts programming - their second stage survey was based on 138 year-round (full-time) arts venues of which 102 regularly offer more than one art form.
- 3) The larger, multi-disciplinary year-round arts venues represent a considerable investment in infrastructure by the Arts Council and Local Authorities as well as a strategic opportunity to reach broad consumer groups across the country, given their geographic distribution. Between 2000 and 2016, a total of €143.3 million was invested in venues.

- 4) Over many decades, Local Authorities have delivered considerable support to the development and sustenance of arts infrastructure in Ireland. This engagement has generated a significant level of knowledge and expertise among Local Authorities which will be a key enabling factor in the future development of arts centres and venues.
- 5) Public sector funders don't always fund the same facilities as each other - with facilities playing differing roles for different public bodies - and there is a lack of a co-ordinated approach to venue funding among funders.
- 6) The scale of funding provided to individual venues varies considerably from one venue to another (when measured as a proportion of overall income).
- 7) There is a lack of clarity regarding the overall level of revenue funding provided to venues, as many are subsidised on an in-kind basis, especially by Local Authorities who, in many instances, take on staff costs and other operating overheads within their own budgets.
- 8) The degree to which individual venues rely on particular sources of income (e.g. earned income vs. grants) ranges very widely.
- 9) Arts Council funding is used primarily for programming activities. However, there is a very blurred line between what constitutes programming and what constitutes core (overhead) costs as there is an inevitable overlap between the two.
- 10) All stakeholders would benefit from an accurate and comprehensive national database of arts venues and their funders to support ongoing monitoring and analysis of arts infrastructure.
- 11) There were 2,881 staff directly employed at 138 year-round venues in 2016. There is a considerable reliance on volunteers and low paid workers among arts venues. Only slightly more than one-fifth of staff across 138 venues are employed full-time.
- 12) In addition to their direct employment, arts centres and venues generate significant indirect employment opportunities for artists and production personnel across all art forms.



### 3. POLICY REVIEW

#### 3.1 Introduction

The arts and culture sectors operate in a complex and competitive policy environment. Economic development, job creation, roads and infrastructure, health and business have in the past taken precedence over arts and culture. This hierarchy of importance comes about understandably in putting first the critical needs of a functioning society. Within a competitive policy environment it is important to seek alignment where possible. Policy alignment ensures that key partners have the same terms of reference to engage in dialogue and debate, justify support and facilitate access to resources.

With the publication of Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan 2018 – 2027, Ireland is moving closer to a set of shared priorities in which understanding more fully the role of the arts in society is embedded in strategic thinking at national government level, offering opportunities for frameworks of delivery in line with Local Authority development priorities:

*'Ireland 2040 sets out its vision for Ireland as a creative, innovative and culturally attuned society, whose people, businesses and communities are equipped to further our national economic output and creative endeavour. It will provide for high quality, well managed built and natural environments that contribute to public confidence and quality of life'.*

Strategic investment priorities include **Enhancing Amenity and Heritage (National Strategic Outcome 7)** in recognition that cultural infrastructure, of which MAVs deliver the most diverse range of experiences, sits alongside built and natural heritage and sporting amenity, reflecting more accurately the role of the arts in synergy with other cultural and leisure activities.



*'Plans for investment in culture and heritage recognise that high quality infrastructure is critical for a vibrant heritage and culture sector and that investment in our cultural heritage underpins social cohesion and supports strong, sustainable economic growth. In terms of regional objectives, specific priorities are to enhance arts and culture centres throughout the country, develop the sustainable tourism potential of our culture and heritage infrastructure and improve Ireland's outdoor recreation infrastructure and natural heritage.'*

This joined-up thinking is borne out in a significant commitment to capital investment in the National Cultural Institutions, with resources being made available to upgrade built infrastructure in concert with strategies for expanding access and participation in arts and culture.

*'In recognition of the vital role of culture, heritage and sport in our national life, total funding allocated to strategic investment priorities in this area is in excess of Euro 1 billion.'*

Aligned to National Strategic Outcome 7, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport recognises that investment in connecting 'People to Places' through improved transport to attend culture, sports and tourism amenities plays an important role in the liveability and appeal of cities, small towns and rural areas.

Naturally, there are consequences to capital investment as upgraded and modernised infrastructure expands in capacity. The delivery of arts and culture programmes requires regular grant aid as part of the revenue model. Capital investment needs to be considered in the context of future business planning to ensure the investment is able to meet its potential.

**This highlights the need and opportunity for collaborative planning as we move into a period of alignment in strategic priorities.**

resources to implement all policies flow from this same governmental source, vertical and

horizontal alignment is important to reflect the relatedness arts and culture have with respect to the general quality of life of the citizen. Vertically from legislation, through government policy, Arts Council and Local Authority policy connecting to venue plans and strategies; horizontally across government and Local Authority development plans, and policies in arts and culture, economic development, education, health, tourism and heritage. This vertical and horizontal alignment networks the arts into a rounded perspective on what are the important components of a fully rounded society,

How we experience culture is connected with intangibles such as quality of life and well-being coupled with tangible social outcomes in economic development, social regeneration, innovation, education, health, citizen engagement and public participation. This extends the reach of the arts as a key tool of cultural engagement, helping to democratise artistic engagement and normalising culture as an intrinsic characteristic of a healthy society.

Table 3.1 below broadly sets out the policy environment and illustrates how different policies relate vertically and horizontally.

**Table 3.1: The Policy Environment for Arts Venues**

	<b>Legislative</b>	
	The Arts Act	
	The Local Government Act	
<b>National Associated Policy</b>	<b>National Policy</b>	<b>National Associated Plans</b>
Project Ireland 2040	Culture 2025	National Development Plan, 2018-2027
National Planning Framework	Creative Ireland	Action Plan for Jobs
		Action Plan for Rural Development
		Action Plan for Education
	<b>National Agreements</b>	
	The Arts Council / CCMA Framework Agreement	
<b>Associated Plans</b>	<b>Policies &amp; Strategies</b>	<b>Associated Plans</b>
Local Development Plans	Making Great Art Work: Local Authority Arts Plans	Local Tourism Plans, Library strategy
	Specific Plans	
	Venue Policies	

Within this context there is considerable potential for strategic alliances between The Arts Council, CCMA and national government. These offer the potential for built infrastructure to be part of a more strategic long-term set of objectives, developing more fully the potential to represent an island-wide approach for arts engagement and participation.

The following sections provide an overview of the policies and plans noted in Table 3.1, and identify the touch points where current policies intersect.

## 3.2 The Legislative Context

Framed by legislation, The Arts Act (2003) is the statutory basis for all arts policies (but not for culture policies, which can cause confusion), just as the responsibilities and purpose of Local Authorities are set out in the various Local Government Acts. An analysis of the primary legislation reveals the source of much of the current thinking, and identifies the twin foundational pillars that support policy on venues.

### **3.2.1 The Arts Act (2003)**

The Arts Act (2003) is described as *'an act to promote the development of and participation in the arts. Reaffirming the existence of The Arts Council the Act describes its purpose and functions to:*

- 9.1.    *(a) stimulate public interest in the arts,*  
           *(b) promote knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts,*  
           *(c) assist in improving standards in the arts;<sup>4</sup>*

*The Act also clearly defines 'the arts' as '...any creative or interpretative expression (whether traditional or contemporary) in whatever form, and includes, in particular, visual arts, theatre, literature, music, dance, opera, film, circus and architecture, and includes any medium when used for those purposes;'*

The Act mandates the Local Authorities as follows:

*"6. (1) A Local Authority shall, for the purposes of section 67 of the Act of 2001, 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.*

*(2) A Local Authority may provide such financial or other assistance as it considers appropriate to such persons or in respect of such activities, projects or undertakings, for the purposes of:*

- (a) stimulating public interest in the arts,*  
*(b) promoting knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts, or*  
*(c) improving standards in the arts, within its functional area.*

In summary, The Arts Council is established as an authority on the arts with a mandate to make the public aware and interested and the Local Authorities are mandated to create a development plan for the arts within their jurisdictions but are under no statutory obligation to fund or otherwise resource that plan.

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<sup>4</sup> There are five other functions (d – h) related to its function as an advisory body to advise, assist, furnish advice or information to the Minister or to other public bodies

### 3.2.2 Local Government Act (2001)

Local Authorities take their legislative lead from The Local Government Act (2001), which, under section 63, paragraph 1, states that the functions of a Local Authority include:

*'(d) to take such action as it considers necessary or desirable **to promote the community interest** in accordance with section 66.'*

Section 66, subsection 3, (b) states that,

*'For the purposes of this section a measure, activity or thing is deemed to promote the interests of the local community **if it promotes, directly or indirectly, social inclusion or the social, economic, environmental, recreational, cultural, community or general development of the administrative area** (or any part of it) of the Local Authority concerned or of the local community (or any group consisting of members of it).'*

Section 67 then states that,

*'...a Local Authority may take such measures, engage in such activities or do such things (including the incurring of expenditure) as it considers necessary or desirable **to promote the interests of the local community** in relation to the matters indicated in subsection (2)', namely:*

- (i) general recreational and leisure activities,*
- (ii) sports, games and similar activities,*
- (iii) **artistic, linguistic and cultural activities,***
- (iv) civic improvements,*
- (v) general environmental and heritage protection and improvement.*

Cultural activities in the context of social and community development continue to be referenced throughout the Local Government Act (2001) & Local Government Reform Act (2014).

This provides a statutory context in which plans based around strategic priorities, actions and outputs take on meaning. It is the interpretation of this legislation which is really key and, as outlined in Section 3.1, we are currently operating in a period when there is greater opportunity for a unified approach to that interpretation.

### **3.3 Arts Policies and Plans**

#### **3.3.3 National Policy: Culture 2025**

The arts come within the remit of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, guided by The Arts Council as the national expert agency in the arts. Current Departmental policy, *Culture 2025 – A Framework Policy to 2025*, (not yet reached final draft status) is being implemented by Creative Ireland.

Creative Ireland is *"...a culture-based programme designed to promote individual, community and national wellbeing"*.

The arts now sit within a more modern understanding of culture, absorbing professionalism and excellence in art form, creativity and participation for everybody, and reframing these within a cultural and creative industries model. Informed and accelerated by the recent experience of several cities with the European Capital of Culture bid process, including Cork, Galway and Limerick, this is a time when public awareness of arts and culture is high and, ergo, opportunities arise in which the arts and, in particular, the on-going resourcing of national built infrastructure, are a core component of artistic activity

The significance of this shift can be observed in the language of both Culture 2025 and the Creative Ireland website and publications. Culture 2025 is built on seven pillars:

- Put culture at the heart of our lives
- Foster creativity
- Celebrate our cultural heritage and traditions
- Recognise the importance of culture to a vibrant society
- See collaboration as the new norm
- Emphasise the international dimension
- Respond to the digital age.

With a refocus on access, participation, embodying creativity and wellbeing, the arts are seen in the context of a wider cultural landscape. This positions the fundamental elements such as venues and arts centres at the heart of delivering national policy. For example, a priority within the first pillar of the strategy is the recognition of the need for on-going resourcing and investment in built infrastructure:

- ***Put culture at the heart of our lives***

***'Improve funding structures through multi-annual funding, investment in capital infrastructure, cross-streamed funding & investment in regional and local services.'***

Within this framework, the arts are understood as contributors to wider social and economic programmes, tools in the development of social cohesion and individual wellbeing. Public participation in creative activity, including arts activities, is now the priority.

Creative Ireland's core proposition is that participation in cultural activity drives personal and collective creativity, with significant implications for individual and societal well-being and achievement.

Creative Ireland has been instrumental in mandating the Local Authorities to create Culture and Creativity Plans. In some Local Authorities this has delayed the development of an arts plan (as mandated by the Arts Act), but has given rise to consistent, action-oriented plans which could be an important stepping stones to bringing some alignment between Local Authorities who all operate within their own set of strategies and directives as governed by elected representatives.

This synthesis and a more consistent approach to creativity and culture at a community level is likely to be the significant legacy of Creative Ireland which exists as an all-of-government initiative until 2022.

### **3.3.2 Making Great Art Work – Leading the Development of the Arts in Ireland**

The Arts Council's most recent strategic plan is an action-oriented road map focusing on the development of the arts as defined by the Arts Act. Its two core priorities are '*The Artist*' and '*Public Engagement*'. These priorities are supported by the pillars of '*Investment Strategy*' (to invest public money effectively to realize the Council's priorities); '*Spatial and Demographic Planning*' (to benefit people across Ireland) and '*Developing Capacity*'.

The emphasis on the arts is balanced by its sense of the public as both consumers of the arts and practitioners. The strategy states as its inspiration 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 practised 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.*

The first two elements of the vision are the points at which Arts Council and Local Authority concerns intersect. They express the multiple values and purposes of venues to both partners. Arising from this specific policy context The Arts Council and the County and City Management Association developed '**A Framework for Collaboration**', which has provided the context of this review.

The Framework for Collaboration agreement acknowledges the dual responsibility of Art Council and Local Authority:

***'The arts have had demonstrable impact across the three key pillars of local development; culture, community and the economy. Local government investment in the arts is underpinned by their inherent potential to contribute to these three areas of development.'***

and acknowledges the instrumental purpose of the arts in a policy context, stating that

***'...the arts, because they encompass a diversity of human experiences in a variety of forms, contribute directly to building cohesive and sustainable communities and to enhancing quality of life.'***

As a result of The Framework of Collaboration, county framework agreements (in draft form at the time of writing) set out bespoke goals, objectives and financial commitments between each Local Authority and The Arts Council for the period of 2018 – 2025. These framework agreements offer an important basis on which common purpose in the arts and sustainable approaches to MAVs can be explored and agreed.



### **3.3.3 Local Authority Arts Plans**

The Arts Act mandates Local Authorities to prepare plans for the development of the arts in their areas. Some local authorities have current arts plans while others have opted for arts and culture, or creative strategies. Every Local Authority has published a Culture and Creativity Plan in keeping with the pillars of the Creative Ireland programme.

A number of these strategies explicitly describe the arts plan as part of a wider cultural strategy or identify the arts as instrumental in the development of vibrant cultures and the functioning of communities and wider society. Expired plans tend to refer to the Arts Act and its definition of the arts, while focusing on the tasks of supporting local artists and community interests and promoting the arts (as defined by the Arts Act), capturing change in progress as we move from using the term 'the arts' to a more wide-ranging definition of creative and cultural activities.

While many Local Area Development Plans include a section on the arts set against competing priorities, arts and culture does not always feature in the same way. This can be understood as a 'provision perspective' whereby arts centres - like houses, roads or parks – are provided to a high standard but not advocated or planned for as a dynamic resource, with changing outputs supported by essential infrastructure.

Local Authorities, in their respective Arts Plans and in practice, adhere to the twin priorities of support for artists and furthering community engagement with the arts. The local authority arts office provides the framework with which this engagement and participation by artists and audiences takes place. Be it an arts plan or a cultural strategy, the Local Authority plans are vitally important to the development and delivery of any cohesive funding policy which may evolve from this process between Local Authorities and The Arts Council.

## **3.4 Project Ireland 2040**

### **3.4.1 The National Planning Framework**

The arts as a specific topic is not foregrounded in the National Planning Framework, The Action Plan for Jobs, and the Action Plan for Education, although it is implicit in the prominence of culture and creativity as an intrinsic aspect of some of these policies.

The National Planning Framework and the Action Plan for Jobs both emphasise the importance of creativity, culture and innovation alongside the tourism and regional regeneration agendas, acknowledging the key roles of the social, built and natural environment. National Planning Framework sets out its vision for Ireland as...

*'a creative, innovative and culturally attuned society, whose people, businesses and communities are equipped to further our national economic output and creative endeavour. The Creative Ireland Programme provides a clear mechanism for the delivering on this vision by ensuring creativity is at the heart of public policy and by the implementation of actions under the five pillars'.*

The positioning of creativity and culture as central to the country's long-term development is significant. Within this, the role of built infrastructure as an enabling resource could greatly enhance the profile of MAVs with recognition in the National Planning Framework of the importance of cultural spaces and amenities in building sustainability and satisfied communities.

*'...the value of cultural heritage as a key component of, and contributor to, the attractiveness and sustainability of our cities, towns, villages and rural areas in terms of **developing cultural creative spaces**, private inward investment, and **attracting and retaining talent and enterprise**. This includes all elements of living space including streets, public spaces, built heritage and natural amenity areas, **cultural and sporting opportunities** and sustainable transport networks, all of which play a central part in defining the character and attractiveness of places...'.*

*'Plans for investment in culture and heritage recognize that **high quality infrastructure is critical for a vibrant heritage and culture sector** and that investment in our cultural heritage underpins social cohesion and supports strong, sustainable economic growth. In terms of regional objectives, specific priorities are to enhance arts and culture centres throughout the country, develop the sustainable tourism potential of our culture and heritage infrastructure and improve Ireland's outdoor recreation infrastructure and natural heritage'.*

The values guiding the National Planning Framework reflect a recognition of how growth and development of communities, large and small requires careful consideration and enhancement:

- Carefully managing the sustainable growth of compact cities, towns and villages to achieve effective density and consolidation through a streamlined and co-ordinated approach to their development
- Ensuring that the fabric of rural areas is strengthened and the contribution of rural communities is harnessed as a major part of Ireland's strategic development
- Enhancing amenities and heritage linked to and integrated with our built, cultural and natural heritage.

The NPF also states that *"Capital funding for libraries will support implementation of the new Public Library Strategy (2018-2022) and **strengthen libraries as essential community facilities**, providing services that underpin the attractiveness, liveability and sustainability of communities. Funding supports new buildings, renovations, technology investment, continued roll out of My Open Library Services, and new initiatives that seek to increase user numbers."*

There are two observations to be made here: one is the existence of a Public Library Strategy, and the second is the explicit description of libraries as 'essential community facilities' that speak to many of the values and objectives of wider policy. It would be useful to explore, as an output from this review, what synergies there are currently and what would enhanced strategic planning between libraries and MAVs achieve for growing areas and changing communities.

### **3.4.2 Investing in our Culture, Language & Heritage, 2018 - 2027**

Developed by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht within the framework of Project Ireland 2040, 'Investing in our Culture, Language & Heritage 2018 – 2027' sets out specific initiatives and levels of investment to meet the following objectives:

- Better for children and families
- Better for learning and innovating
- A more creative and innovative society
- A place where we have more opportunity to enjoy our cultural heritage, our language and our landscape
- A cleaner and healthier environment to bequeath to future generations

- A more equal society in which we all have the opportunity to share increasing prosperity, where we choose to live and work
- A society where individual wellbeing is the cornerstone of all public policy.

The case for capital investment in infrastructure to support initiatives which meet these aims is framed by six propositions:

- 1) it is 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
- 3) heritage plays a major role in creating and sustaining community cohesion, collective wellbeing, and instilling a deep sense of belonging
- 4) our language is fundamental to our identity and to our expression of ourselves as a distinct people
- 5) the arts are of intrinsic value to individuals and to society: The arts bring essential qualities
- 6) participation in arts and culture is instrumental in developing individual and collective creativity – with enormous implications for our society and our economy.

These propositions reflect government acknowledgment of the central role of arts and culture in a healthy and happy society and are underpinned in these planning contexts by a commitment for multiannual investment prioritised in three areas:

- 1) Culture
- 2) Heritage
- 3) Language and the Island,

Specifically relating to built infrastructure, the following intentions have been set and an allocation of resources made as outlined in Table 3.2:

- Strengthen Ireland's reputation as a leader in the cultural arena through the development of a world class network of cultural and heritage infrastructure;
- Allow greater cultural participation by citizens all across Ireland through increasing the capacity of the entire cultural sector;
- Address longstanding infrastructural issues in our National Cultural Institutions;
- Enhance arts and culture centres throughout the country.

The allocations in the Plan include a provision of €40 million to *'Secure existing investment in arts and culture infrastructure nationwide, and ensure a regional balance'*. This infrastructure is defined as including art galleries, museums, theatres and performance spaces. The allocation appears modest when set against the needs of venues and museums over the next ten years.

**Table 3.2: Allocation of Capital Funding for Culture, 2018-2027**

Area of Investment	€m
Investment in National Cultural Institutions	460
Investment in local arts and culture infrastructure nationwide	40
Investment in the digitisation of our National Collections	10
Investment in Media Production and Audio Visual Industry	200
Galway European Capital of Culture	15
Investment in our National Parks and Nature Reserves	50
Caring for our Historic Environment	85
Celebrating and Investing in our Built Heritage	60
Caring for our National Monuments	30
Protecting our Natural heritage and Biodiversity	60
Investment underpinning the Gaeltacht Language Planning Process	33
Investment by Údarás na Gaeltachta in job creation	105
Investment in Irish Language Networks, in Gaeltacht Service Towns and in a Dublin City Language and Cultural Hub	13
Investment in islands and island marine infrastructure	27
<b>Total Investment</b>	<b>1.8 billion</b>

Source: 'Investing in Our Culture, Language and Heritage, 2018-2027', Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht.

### 3.4.3 Rural Regeneration and Development Fund

As part of Project 2040, the government have committed an additional €1 billion to a new Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF). The Fund will provide capital for suitable projects in towns and villages with a population less than 10,000. It is intended to help achieve 'Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities', a key objective of the National Planning Framework.

Funding criteria are based around relevance to the strategic outcomes of Project Ireland 2040: sustainability, impact, collaboration, vision and additionality. Projects are sought that propose the development of land and buildings which create jobs, impact the local economy, improve quality of life in the area and have a regenerative effect. In this context heritage, leisure and recreational provision are recognised for their capacity to

meet the objectives and enhancement of same considered desirable. There is potential to obtain funding for arts infrastructure under this Fund.

Of the two hundred and eighty applications made in 2018, twenty four allocations totalling €24.5 million were made in 2019 to projects improving access, public realm, leisure and sporting amenities with grants which ranged from €500,000 to €3,816,451. A second call for applications is expected mid-2019.

#### **3.4.4 Urban Regeneration and Development Fund**

The Urban Regeneration and Development Fund is intended to support projects in cities and towns with populations greater than 10,000 residents, together with a small number of selected towns with fewer than 10,000 people.

*'The Fund is the most broadly applicable urban regeneration initiative in Ireland for many years and in line with the objectives of the National Planning Framework (NPF), is designed to leverage a greater proportion of residential and commercial development, supported by infrastructure, services and amenities, within the existing built 'footprint' of our larger urban areas.'* As with the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, there is potential to obtain funding for arts and culture infrastructure, given the broad breadth of eligibility criteria.

€100 million is available for expenditure in 2019 with grants being scaled to population size. While arts and culture infrastructure does not feature specifically in the guide of the types of projects the fund is most suitable for, public amenity and recreation are cited along with strategic reuse of buildings, social development, community facilities and projects which tackle social disadvantage.

In the first round of awards, Eighty-eight projects received investment from €470,000 to €6,000,000, the majority of which focus on improving primary infrastructure such as access routes, public realm and the restoration of existing built and natural heritage alongside town centre development, commercial and enterprise initiatives. This includes investment in civic amenity and cultural quarters, for example Newbridge Cultural and Civic Quarter.

### **3.5 National Action Plans**

### **3.5.1 Action Plan for Jobs**

The Indecon report, *"Assessment of Economic Impact of the Arts in Ireland"* (2009), estimated that, in 2009, there were 16,689 jobs in direct employment in the wider Arts Sector, with a total employment figure of 26,519.

There is a direct relationship between this employment and the existence of venues. Venues themselves directly provide employment for people working in the wider arts sector and, through their projects and programmes, contribute to the income and employment of artists and producers. For example, the income of many performing arts companies is tied to work done with and toured to venues. Visual artists depend on relationships with venues to secure exhibitions, residencies and commissions. Venues and local authority arts officers often provide the first supports and resources to emerging artists and organisations, stimulating economic activity and cultural entrepreneurship.

It is interesting to note that the Action Plan for Jobs makes no direct mention of the arts or arts venues as job creators under *Competitiveness, Driving Export Led Growth, Stimulating the Domestic Economy*, or *New Sources of Growth*.

The audio-visual sector is singled out for the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs it creates (about 6,000). However, even the figures provided by the Olsberg report into the audio-visual sector for 2016 demonstrate that the wider arts sector is bigger in terms of GVA than the audio-visual sector (€1.55 billion to €1.1 billion) and creates almost five times as many FTE jobs. The vast majority of that €1.5 billion of GVA and nearly all of those jobs depend on, and are driven by, the venues' infrastructure. The overlooking of this in the Action Plan for Jobs may reflect the visibility of the arts as subsumed into a more general cultural context including commercial venues. The impact of MAVs as direct and indirect employers in support of production, indigenous and international touring, residencies and associated technical and front of house services would be a useful piece of research to complete.

### **3.5.2 Action Plan for Education**

The relationship between the arts and education has a long history, and the debate over STEM or STEAM is ongoing. The Arts in Education Charter was an important step in reconciling these positions, and the work of the High Level Implementation Group is



ongoing. The primary rationale in education policy and curriculum development is jobs and employment: the ability of the education sector to produce people with the capacity to work within the major employment sectors. However, arts and creativity are considered enabling tools towards the achievement of educational goals. The emphasis lies specifically in building community engagement and participation, and strengthening the focus on entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation. MAVs offer facilities and expertise to these kinds of uses which are not always considered core to the expectations of the local arts centre.

### **3.5.3 Realising Our Rural Potential - Action Plan for Rural Development**

The Rural Ireland Action Plan makes specific mention of the arts in the context of access, social cohesion and well-being and, echoing the language of the National Cultural Policy, it states:

*"Access to the arts, in all its forms, enriches society in many ways, including by improving the **health and well-being** of individuals. Many rural communities all over Ireland have a thriving arts scene and **it is important that facilities and assets in rural areas are enhanced to strengthen the social fabric of rural life**. Culture 2025, the draft Framework Cultural policy, aims to increase the participation of individuals and communities from across Ireland, including rural communities, and will provide a platform for bringing together the numerous local, regional and national cultural entities with a view to sharing best practice, and developing synergies between these networks".*

Pillar 4 of the Plan, Fostering Culture & Creativity in Rural Communities, sets out the following key objectives:

- *Increase access to the arts and enhance cultural facilities in rural communities*
- *Further develop and enhance culture and creativity in rural Ireland through the establishment of culture teams and creativity hubs as part of the Creative Ireland programme*
- *Promote the Irish language as a key resource in Gaeltacht and other rural communities.*

And again, under Enhance Culture and Creativity in Rural Ireland 'Rural communities have a history of strong cultural activity through local festivals, amateur drama and

*music. It is important that **cultural participation is actively supported** in rural communities, as a way **to combat rural isolation**, enhance and contribute to the vibrancy of rural Ireland, and **generate economic activity**, for example through cultural tourism’.*

It is significant how much of the value of access to, and participation in, the arts is considered to be related to regeneration, community development, well-being and economic development. This is consistent with the findings in Section 4 regarding the different kinds of roles MAVs perform depending on the operating context and how important it is to recognise the merit in delivering programmes which are responsive to the needs of the community in which they are located.

### **3.5.4 The Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment National Implementation Plan, 2018-2020**

The DCCAE National Implementation Plan 2018 – 2020 is based on the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations in 2015<sup>5</sup>. These goals speak to a range of sustainability issues and intentions. Among those relevant to this review are those related to climate action. These are further elaborated in Ireland 2040’s goal to ‘Transition to a low carbon, energy efficient society’. In implementing its goals, the DCCAE recognises four key enabling actions, the final being policy alignment.

- **Awareness:** raise public awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- **Participation:** provide stakeholders opportunities to engage and contribute to follow-up and review processes, and further national implementation of the Goals;
- **Support;** encourage and support efforts of communities and organisations to contribute to meeting the SDGs, and foster participation; and
- **Policy alignment;** develop alignment of national policy with the SDGs and identify opportunities for policy coherence

It is incumbent on the developers of built infrastructure of all kinds to aspire to achieving higher levels of energy efficiency. For MAVs that are operating a number of spaces which are largely dependent on the use of high-voltage lighting, this is particularly relevant to the environmental and economic impacts of the MAVs’ operating standards.

Additional detail specific to the policies noted in this section is contained in Appendix 3.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations: *Transforming our World, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, UN 2015



### **3.6 Summary Conclusions**

- 1) The arts sector operates in a complex and competitive policy environment, impacted by numerous plans, policies and frameworks. Seeking alignment is vital in order to ensure key partners have shared terms of reference, to justify support and to facilitate access to resources.
- 2) National policy includes enhancing amenity and heritage, and recognises the role of high quality infrastructure in that regard. The National Development Plan 2018-2027 and the National Planning Framework can provide a foundation on which to establish a shared understanding for the sustainable, equitable funding of MAV's.
- 3) The importance of creativity, culture and innovation are highlighted as central to the country's long-term development. The arts are now being reframed within the broader landscape of culture and creativity, as outlined by the draft policy of the DCHG, *Culture 2025 - A Framework Policy to 2025*, being implemented by Creative Ireland.
- 4) The Arts Act (2003) is the statutory basis for all arts policies and establishes The Arts Council as the authority on the arts with a mandate to develop public awareness and interest.
- 5) Local Authorities take their legislative lead from the Local Government Act (2001) and are mandated to create arts development plans within their areas. Not all have a current arts plan, but every LA has published a Culture and Creativity Plan, in keeping with the Creative Ireland programme.
- 6) The recognition of the role of the arts in both of the Acts above has given rise to the policy context in which the Arts Council and the CCMA developed 'A Framework for Collaboration', acknowledging the dual responsibility of both. County framework agreements for 2018-2025, currently in draft form, offer a basis on which common and sustainable approaches to MAVs can be agreed.
- 7) There is an alignment between venues' role in civic engagement, as required by Local Authorities, and the Arts Council's strategic priority of public engagement, which is grounded in 'A Framework for Collaboration'.

- 8) The development of a new Venues Strategy (akin to the Strategy for Public Libraries 2018-2022) would underline the valuable contribution of the venue network to promoting arts and culture, economic development, heritage and tourism, and job creation.
- 9) Under the National Development Plan 2018-2027, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht has allocated a modest €40 million to *'secure existing investment in arts and culture infrastructure nationwide, and ensure a regional balance'*. It is possible that additional funding may be obtained from the Rural and Urban Regeneration and Development Funds.

## **4. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The review of MAVs included a considerable amount of desk research, consultation, case studies and primary research. A summary of each of these strands is presented here, and brought together in the Conclusions in Section 4.5.

The research strands are:

- 1) Venue Survey
- 2) Local Authority Survey & Feedback
- 3) Additional Stakeholder consultations
- 4) Audience Research.

Copies of the survey questionnaires and more detailed results are included in the Appendices. As questionnaires were completed on the basis of confidentiality, responses are amalgamated.

### **4.1 Venue Survey Results**

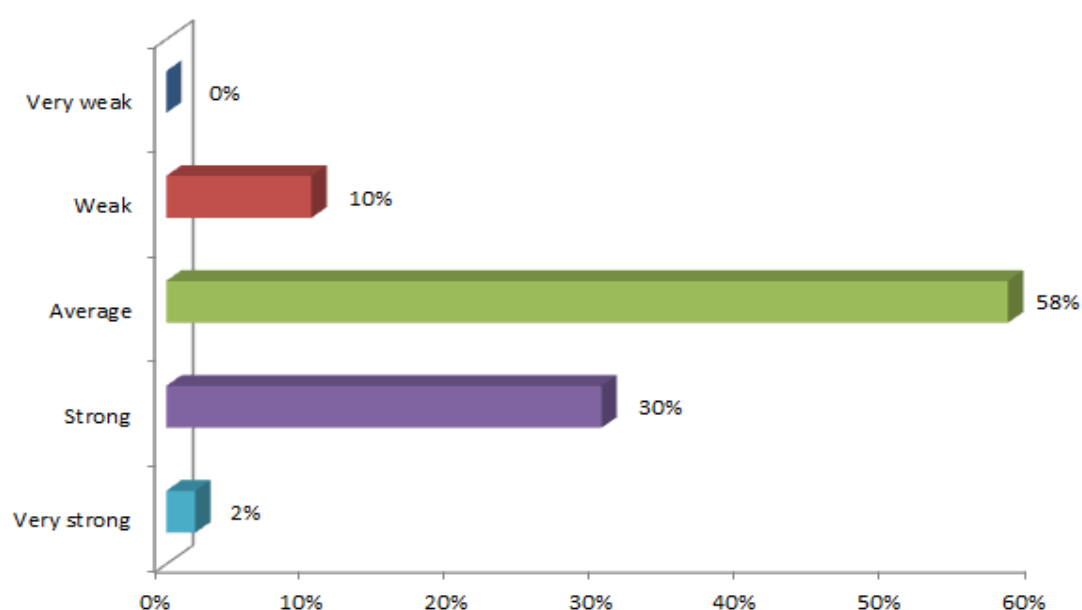
58 venues were selected as a representative sample of venues for this brief online survey. The purpose of the survey was to provide additional qualitative information that would supplement the more detailed audit undertaken by AIRO in 2016 and enrich our understanding of the sector. The venues were invited to participate via an email invitation and forty-one participated, representing a healthy 71% return rate. Key findings are presented below.

- 1) **Quality of infrastructure is variable:** venues rate their performance and indoor public areas highly, but their non-public and exterior spaces average to very poor. This suggests that investment is made primarily in the most essential public-facing areas but that finance is not sufficient to stretch to all areas.
- 2) **There is insufficient funding across the board:** for maintenance, for upgrades, for staffing, for artists.
- 3) **Planning for infrastructural investment is often irregular and ad-hoc:** while 55% have a regular planned programme for investment in infrastructure, 45% of centres do not.

- Those that plan for investment generally do so by setting aside budget from earned income for routine upkeep, with investment plans signed off by the Board.
  - Local Authority (LA)-owned venues usually provide financial support for both routine and capital expenditure, with some of the work being carried out as part of the LA's own facilities management programme, and some have formal agreements (e.g. a Cultural Use Agreement).
  - The availability of external funding/grants was rated one of the most relevant factors in deciding to invest in infrastructure (rated of very high relevance by 72%). Availability of own funds (52%), deteriorating quality (50%) and need for compliance (45%) were also rated as highly relevant - ahead of changing artists and audience needs.
- 4) **Programming strategy is the greatest influence on programming:** other influences on decisions regarding programming are audience profile, availability of artists and potential financial return. Most venues have a broad mix of audiences - with different types of events programmed to attract different audiences. 60% of venues say that changing demographics/audience profile has affected programming, with changes in cultural diversity, growth in the family market and an older consumer being among the changes mentioned.
- 5) **Most venues cater to a broad audience base:** the majority cater for a wide range of audience types, including amateur dramatics, children, families, young adults, older, disabled, etc.
- 6) **Economic sustainability is generally not strong:** more than half (57%) of the venues that responded rated their economic sustainability as average, with 10% struggling – see Figure 14. Only one-third consider themselves to be economically sustainable.

**Figure 14: Rating of Economic Sustainability by Venues**  
*40 responses*

- 7) **AC funding mechanisms are regarded more critically than those of the LAs:** there is general dissatisfaction with the process of applying for / receiving AC funding (67% dissatisfied). However, venues are generally more satisfied with the process of applying for /receiving LA funding (half were very satisfied).
- 8) **Venues also draw on non-financial supports:** over half (52%) of the venues surveyed have

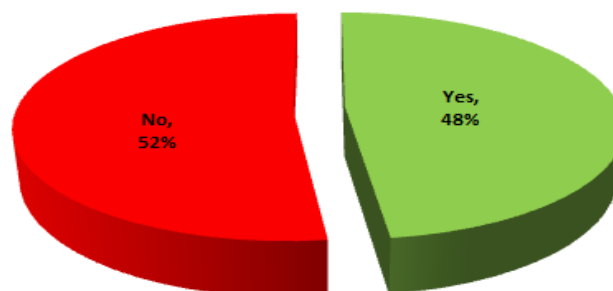


received non-financial support from agencies, most often in the form of staff under a Community Employment, Tús or other scheme, but also in relation to building maintenance and fixed costs – Figure 15.



Figure 15: Receipt of Non-Financial Support

**Q: Has your venue received non-financial support (e.g. employment of staff) from other agencies in the last 3 years? 40 responses**



#### 9) Some

observations

respondents included:

additional  
by

- Substantially more funding is required for an industry that is chronically over-worked, under-staffed and under-paid.
- Commercial models used to determine financial sustainability do not reflect the reality of the triple bottom line (public value, artistic vitality and financial sustainability).
- A system of resource-sharing is needed.

## 4.2 Local Authority Feedback

### 4.2.1 Survey

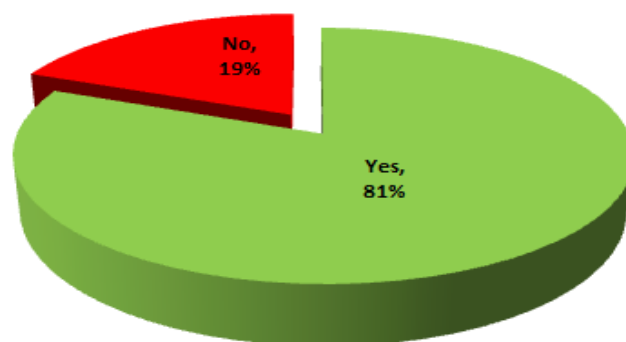
Arts Officers and Directors of Services in all LAs were invited to participate in a brief, qualitative, online survey. All but two LAs completed the survey and the main findings are presented here.

- 1) **The 29 LAs that responded to the survey support 151 arts centres/venues between them:** there is a significant difference between the amount of MAVs in the country and the much larger number of arts facilities supported by the LAs. There is also a significant difference between LAs in the number of facilities they support. As can be seen in Figure 16, most support up to 5 venues, but there is a small number that support far more.

**Figure 16: Map of Responding Local Authorities, Indicating the Number of Arts Venues Supported**



- 2) **LAs provide significant financial and non-financial supports to arts venues:** almost all LAs provide annual direct revenue and capital supports to venues and 81% provide non-financial supports (e.g. staff,



maintenance, absorbing overheads, access to professional services, etc.) - see Figure 17.

**Figure 17: Provision of Non-Financial Support by Local Authorities to Venues**

***Q: Have you provided non-financial support (e.g. staff, maintenance, absorbing overheads, etc.) to any arts centres/venues? 31 responses***

- 3) **They also provide funding and other supports to a variety of other arts activities:** including artists' workspaces, festivals, groups, non-arts spaces creating art (e.g. heritage sites), and other projects.
- 4) **There is a variety of models for LA involvement in funded arts venues:** over half of LAs input into arts venue development plans, and the most common approach to governance is to establish, or assist with the establishment, of a company limited by guarantee to operate the venue, and to appoint members or officers as Directors to the Board, but to be hands-off with regard to daily operations. Agreed reporting structures with regular reports are also common. However, these are not universal and some LAs are completely hands-off.
- 5) **Many would like to do more for the arts:** over half of LAs (52%) said they would like to provide more support to arts venues, were finances available. Additional funding is

required for a number of things, including professional staff, upgrading of facilities and programming.

- 6) **Many work in partnership arrangements for the arts:** over half of LAs are involved in a variety of AC schemes, as well as with Creative Ireland, Leader, Government Departments and others, in partnerships for the arts.
- 7) **There are many criticisms with regard to the current funding mechanisms for arts venues:** LAs have a range of concerns regarding existing capital and non-capital funding mechanisms, including:
- the intermittent nature of capital funding,
  - the shortage of revenue funding,
  - the absence of a long-term perspective;
  - AC funding towards operational costs.

These issues make it difficult to plan strategically, to address ageing infrastructure and even to cover basic maintenance. Shortage of funding also results in a shortage of staff, which means that the opportunities provided by capital investment are not being maximised.

- 8) **LAs rate their arts venues broadly on quality of infrastructure, programming and relevance:** given the variety of types of arts venues around the country, it is not surprising that they are of varying quality. There are also a few that require urgent attention, but the majority are rated in the middle range (average/good).

#### **4.2.2 Additional Local Authority Feedback**

Feedback from LAs with regard to policy has already been included in Section 3, and many of the main comments have been captured through the survey above. However, there are some additional points that arose during consultations with Arts Officers and Directors of Services in LAs that are relevant to mention:

- There needs to be a common understanding between LAs and the Arts Council of what a venue is. From an LA perspective, any visible public space that can be animated can be considered a venue, including libraries (which are currently being re-imagined).
- LAs and the Arts Council need to work together to develop and sustain arts capacity in place.
- SLAs are starting the process of co-ordinating LA and AC plans and funding programmes.
- There is no reflection of the importance of the Irish language in Gaeltacht areas.

*"The Local Authority involvement in culture is addressing a market failure – which means that this is still viewed as provision as opposed to resource exploitation."*

*"The pressure needs to come off the venue in terms of helping them to wash their face – they are a public good and should be understood as such. When we ask "who runs it" the answer is the public."*

*"Having an artist in residence underpins the artistic purpose of the space. It brings a great creative energy to the environment outside of production periods."*

*"Before we start thinking about how we fund the venues that are there – because they will always cost more and more – we have to find a way to make arts something that people can't do without."*

### 4.3

#### St

#### akeholder Consultations

Not surprisingly, feedback through consultations reinforced much of what we learned through the surveys and desk research, including:

- the variable quality of infrastructure at MAVs
- dissatisfaction with Arts Council funding mechanisms
- the subjective approach to funding by many LAs
- directors of MAVs are increasingly administrative rather than creative

- artist residencies are an important part of the year-round work of MAVs as support agencies as well as production / presenting houses.

The consultations also provided valuable insights for this review in terms of both the existing challenges as well as the opportunities and possible solutions. These are summarised below:

1) **With their geographic spread and broad community reach, there is an opportunity for MAVs to play a greater role at a local, regional and national level - given the right supports.**

- **MAVs need to be embedded in, and owned by, the community:** everyday participation is important for a venue's sustainability.

*"This is your theatre and yours alone. Committees and Corporations can keep a building open, but it is only people who can keep a theatre alive by their presence, support and encouragement. The future is in your hands<sup>6</sup>".*

- **MAVs, along with festivals, resource organisations and arts offices, are the key mechanisms for rolling out AC strategy:** they have the geographic spread and community reach to implement strategy.
- **There is a huge diversity between MAVs** both in themselves and in terms of the environments in which they operate, particularly between rural and urban centres. This diversity needs to be accommodated in support mechanisms.
- **There is a tension between perceived artistically legitimate and more commercial, populist programming:** there is inherent challenge in accessing financial supports which acknowledge the full spectrum of programming which allows MAVs to engage with the widest range of audiences and support the greatest amount of participation.
- **Location and venue capacity have a significant effect on programming:** smaller venues can't generate significant income through annual pantos, musicals, etc., the way larger ones can. But rural venues play an important role in facilitating national touring productions.

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<sup>6</sup> Larry Fanning, late Chairman of the Theatre Royal Friendly Society.

- **There is a need for greater co-operation and sharing of learnings:** smaller and larger venues could work together to facilitate national and international touring productions, and to share good practice learnings with regard to design and delivery. This may require some attention to changing venue mind-sets.
  - **Differing audiences have different needs:** not all venues can cater to the audiences they are engaging with (as discussed previously). Disabled groups and children, in particular, have very specific needs in terms of building design and fit-out (access, lighting, seating in particular).
  - Through consultation with members' organisations and venue directors it became clear **how important MAVs are in supporting artists, and vice versa.** Artists' residencies allow the hosting venue to engage in the creative process from the earliest stages without pre-set ideas of what the output may be. The artist benefits from having time and space in which to test and develop ideas and the added value of supporting artistic and technical expertise on site.
  - **Belonging to a creative community is important for artists,** who often work in isolation, and also for management, technical, marketing and administrative staff alike. Most people who pursue a career in the arts are motivated by the desire to support or contribute to the making of work which will in turn be part of a meaningful experience for the public. MAVs offer the most concentrated version of this with multi-disciplinary programmes and residency / development opportunities.
  - MAVs have in the past developed in response to a community of artists in the area and the need for space in which to make and show work. **Artists are often catalysts for further growth and development.**
- 2) **The Local Authorities and Arts Council have a vital role to play in resolving issues with regard to funding and the co-ordination of supports that would enable venues to play a larger and more constructive role in the cultivation and promotion of the arts in Ireland.**
- **There needs to be a connection between funding infrastructure and funding to deliver programmes, production, etc.:** there has been considerable investment in venue infrastructure, giving rise to expectations that

more can be delivered by venues - but with the same, or reduced, revenue funding.

- **There is a discrepancy between the approach to funding newer venues** (funded by LAs through Access and for whom a partnership agreement is in place) **and older venues** (that were 'caught in the middle' between the AC and LAs in 2007). This historic inequality has not been fully resolved.
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) need to be set for venues in the context of the Local Government policy** in order to embed venues' roles in the delivery of strategic priorities.
- **Moving towards a creative Industry model, there is a role for Local Enterprise Offices** in helping venues develop capacity as micro-enterprises offering employment in a range of artistic, technical and operational specialisms, and support of this kind could assist in sustainable employment and staff retention by venues.
- **There is an opportunity for the development of regional clusters or hubs:** as arts centres and venues have their own unique strengths and areas of focus, there are opportunities for them to work together in broad geographic clusters to produce work, grow audiences and share learnings.

The following are a sample of comments from MAVs' directors and sectoral representatives that reflect the challenges of running a multi-disciplinary, year-round, arts centre in the 21st Century in Ireland.

*"...it is impossible to have programmes in place in theatre, music, dance, opera etc. for the following year at time of Arts Council deadlines. As a result fictional programmes are being submitted and often bear no resemblance to final programme content - trust venues to know they can and will pull these programmes together in time and instead allow us to apply for a "Core Programme Cost" to cover day to day programming that can be correctly reported on as part of end of year submissions. Outside of this, applications can then focus on initiatives to do with audience development, children and young people, participation, supports to artists and budget for each of these individually - this would simplify the process hugely."*

*"There is a direct inverse relationship between funding received and the amount of commercial programming. Simply put, the less funding received the more the venue is under pressure to prioritise commercial programming to make ends meet. There is a genuine concern that this becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy i.e. funding is based on the existing programme which, if commercially orientated, scores poorly in applications."*

*"Because we don't have the same critical mass of arts attenders seen elsewhere in the country we are quite concerned with developing arts ecology in the region, effectively acting as a producer organisation"*

*"I beg for a living."*

*"I can book Brendan Grace three times a year and sell out - it will pay for the leak."*

*'genuine collaboration requires an intertwining in the mind as well and the landscape. It requires shared standards, buy in and an understanding of producing and programming for the region you are operating in'.*



## 4.4 Audience Research

### 4.4.1 General Arts Participation

Participation in the arts in Ireland is regularly monitored, and reported on, by the Arts Council, and provides a relevant counterpoint to previously presented findings from the AIRO and bespoke surveys. Below we capture some of the key points.

- Participation levels across the country are consistent with general population distribution, as illustrated in Figure 18.
- Cinema remains the most popular art form as measured by participation levels (76% of survey respondents attended a cinema).
- A wide variety of venues are visited for the purpose of participating in the arts, including pubs, hotels, churches, schools and community halls as well as theatres, art galleries, concert halls and other dedicated arts venues, as shown in Table 4.1 overleaf.
- Those who participate in the arts at least once a month are more likely to use a wider range of venues - up to four different types of venues.

**Figure 18: Geographical Breakdown of Arts Attenders vs Irish Population by Region<sup>7</sup>**

	Irish population	Arts attenders
ROI regions	%	%
Dublin	29	31
North-west	9	9
East coast	19	18
South-east	10	10
South-west	13	13
West	8	8
Shannonside	12	10

*TGI base: Irish population: All adults, 15+, arts attenders. ROI regions breakdown based on TGI's tourist regions/areas*

**Table 4.1: Attendance at Different Types of Venue<sup>8</sup>**

Venues of Arts-Events Attendance	% Irish Population 2016
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<sup>7</sup> *The Arts in Irish Life*, The Arts Council, 2017

<sup>8</sup> *The Arts in Irish Life*, The Arts Council, 2017 - adults 15+

Cinema	76%
Pub / Hotel	25%
Church	21%
Theatre	17%
Library	14%
Art Gallery	12%
School Hall	11%
Community Centre	10%
Concert Hall / Opera House	10%
Open-air venue	8%
Other	5%
Town Hall	5%
Other dedicated music / arts venue	3%

*Note: it appears that Arts Centres are included by reference to art form – i.e. theatre, art gallery etc.*

- Research shows that those who attend events in a community centre are more likely to have attended a greater variety of arts events than the average arts attender - including plays, musicals, variety shows and music-related events. This highlights the importance of arts in the community, both from the perspective of promoting social integration as well as providing a platform for artists at all levels.

#### **4.4.2 Audiences with Specific Requirements**

While it is possible to segment audiences in a variety of ways - most commonly according to arts discipline or socio-demographic profile - it is important for the purposes of this study to review audiences that have specific needs of venues.

Arts Council research shows that the disabled and non-workers / unemployed / homemakers have the most significant barriers to arts engagement. It is reasonable to assume that the primary barrier for the latter is cost. However, people with disabilities have specific requirements of venues that are beyond cost and programming concerns. To this group, we can also add children as another segment of the population that have particular requirements.

- **Children:** children participate in a wide variety of art forms, both through structured activities at school as well as extra-curricular activities. These start at an early age, with participation rates tending to fall with the transition into secondary school when subject choices have to be made and there are more demands on children's time. Pre-schools and primary schools are particularly important in exposing children to a variety of art forms, and the arts are now well-integrated into curricula in early childhood settings, e.g. 'Aistear' for young children. However, as most out-of-school activity requires payment, cost is a barrier to participation by children from low-income families<sup>9</sup>. Language is also recognised as a barrier for young children from immigrant backgrounds, although this diminishes as the child grows older and their proficiency in English improves.

*"Many arts venues focus on reach, comfort, access and engagement for families, in an attempt to overcome barriers of price, social or cultural inhibitions."<sup>10</sup>*

There is a reasonable level of information available from a number of sources (including the Arts Council and the Ark) on the development of children and youth audiences, and collaboration with educational establishments and relevant programming are areas of particular importance. However, there appears to be considerable scope for further collaboration and development - for example, there are only four venues in the Short Works network of venues that cater for children. Moreover, feedback through consultation suggests that younger children have particular needs of arts infrastructure that are generally not met - including the ability to adjust seat heights, continual lighting during performances to ensure children can find their way to and from toilets, and appropriate sound levels.

<sup>9</sup> *Arts and Participation among Children and Young People*, Dr. Emer Smyth for The Arts Council, 2016

<sup>10</sup> *Early Childhood Arts - Three Perspectives*, The Arts Council, 2013

- **People with Disabilities:** it is estimated that over 13% of the population is living with some form of disability<sup>11, 12</sup>. However, there is evidence that their level of arts participation is not dissimilar to that of the population as a whole, as illustrated in Table 4.2 - in fact, 86% of respondents to the Audiences in Waiting survey said that they had attended at least one arts event, including cinema, in the last 12 months, compared to 64% of the general population according to the Arts in Irish Life, 2015.

**Table 4.2: Participation in a variety of activities in the last 12 months - people with disabilities<sup>13</sup>**

Activity	% of survey respondents
Gone to a cinema	69%
Gone to a museum or art gallery	45%
Visited a library	45%
Gone to a concert / gig	39%
Participated in an arts or craft activity	36%

*Source: Audiences in Waiting*

However, 64% would like to do at least one arts activity more often and there are recommendations for simple improvements that venues could make in order to encourage greater participation<sup>14</sup>:

- 13% would participate in arts activities more often if they didn't have to deal with inadequate access;
- make sure the hearing loop is working properly;
- make sure there are enough seats in public areas;
- ensure that those using the wheelchair area can still see when people in front of them stand up;
- develop buddy schemes to support attendance by those who have no-one to go with;
- explore options for local transport as this is a challenge for 15% of survey respondents.

*"Access is not a motivation - it only becomes an issue if it gets in the way...the first job is persuade them that the arts event is worth the money and the effort<sup>15</sup>."*

<sup>11</sup> CSO

<sup>12</sup> One-third of these are not limited by their disability while one-fifth are extremely limited.

<sup>13</sup> *Audiences in Waiting*, The Arts Council, 2017. Total respondents on which data in this table is based = 519. The data in this table excludes non-arts activities that were also part of the question, e.g. visiting a garden centre.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*

## **4.5 Conclusions**

- 1) Increased co-ordination of activities and supports, including a shared vision and a common understanding of what venues are, is required between LAs and the Arts Council to support the development of a vibrant and sustainable arts sector in Ireland.
- 2) Public funding is critical for the viability of arts venues - more regular and longer-term funding is required. There is insufficient funding available across all areas, a short-term approach to funding, and intermittent availability of capital funding. These factors result in a difficulty in planning strategically for both programming and infrastructure investment, varying infrastructure quality, an inability to hire sufficient staff with the right skills, and an over-reliance on commercial programming to boost income.

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<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*

- 3) There is significant criticism with regard to funding mechanisms, more so with regard to Arts Council mechanisms (specifically in terms of timing and requirement for detail), but also with regard to the variable and subjective nature of LA mechanisms.
- 4) Costs associated with infrastructure, operations and programming at venues cannot be neatly segregated.
- 5) Other, non-financial, supports also play a critical role for many arts venues. These include staffing, maintenance, professional advice and absorbing overheads. However, there is a high degree of variability and a lack of transparency across the country with regard to these supports.
- 6) Community 'ownership' is essential - both for economic viability as well as to fulfil the vision of most arts venues.
- 7) The venues are highly creative in fulfilling their missions, and in addressing the challenges of commercial viability and audience-building. Most offer broad programmes to attract broad and diverse audiences.
- 8) With the right supports, there is an opportunity for arts venues to play expanded roles at a local, regional and national level - given their geographic spread and broad community reach. They are well-positioned to be the mechanism for arts strategy delivery, to co-operate in creative production and touring, and to share resources and learning.
- 9) In particular, larger arts venues and clusters of arts venues have the opportunity to play a bigger role in creative production, supporting international touring and sharing expertise.
- 10) MAVs play an important role in supporting artists and the development of a creative community. Likewise, artists are often catalysts for further growth and development for MAVs.
- 11) Audience research further confirms the wide range of venue types used across the country.

- 12) Levels of audience participation, as a proportion of population, are relatively consistent nationwide.
- 13) While infrastructure is not a motivator for audience participation, venues can make some improvements that might encourage more frequent participation by niche audiences such as people with disabilities.

## 5. CASE STUDIES & COMPARATORS

In order to further inform the study, a number of Irish and international case studies and comparators were reviewed. The principal learnings are presented here in Sections 5.1 and 5.2.

### 5.1 Case Study Learnings

The case studies were selected, in consultation with the Arts Council, to explore in more detail learnings and good practice examples in a number of areas, including resource management, collaboration and operating models.

- **The Theatre Royal, Waterford:** an example of an historic theatre that has a high degree of reliance on earned income and exemplifies an approach to cross-jurisdiction working with other partners (i.e. The Four Rivers Initiative).
- **An Grianán and Letterkenny Arts Centre, Donegal:** an example of a clustering of arts facilities, each playing to its own strengths while also collaborating and co-operating.
- **The Lime Tree and Belltable, Limerick:** a single operator across two venues achieving efficiencies in governance, operations and finance plus enhanced development capacity for artists.
- **glór, Ennis:** a custom built venue for the promotion of traditional arts, which widened its remit to incorporate a multi-disciplinary programme, providing a cultural hub for the county.
- **VISUAL, Carlow:** a regional destination for visual and performing art, VISUAL is a County Council owned facility which offers learning for future capital development, environmental standards, operating structures and relevance in connecting with local businesses.
- **Roscommon Arts Centre:** an example of a rural venue with a low population base making the most of its opportunities, with a broad programme catering to a variety of audiences and offering a range of supports to artists.



- **Axis Ballymun, Dublin:** an example of an arts centre that is intrinsically embedded in the community, providing a melting pot of backgrounds, ages, art forms and agencies, and that has developed a strong relationship with its local authority funder (Dublin City Council).
- **The Albany Arts Centre, London:** an example of how an arts centre can harness its expertise to earn additional income.
- **Godsbanen, Denmark:** an example of how responsibility for the physical infrastructure and responsibility for the artistic development/programming aspects of an arts centre can be separately managed.

Details of the individual case studies are included in the Appendices, and the main findings, as they relate to this study, are presented below.

**1) Specific expertise is the difference between a thriving venue and one that is just sustainable:**

- Capital development requires both venue and construction project management expertise; these are not always available within the existing in-house team.
- Understanding how venues operate is crucial at Board level; good governance must come from the top.

**2) Public funding and support for venues play a key role, for a number of reasons:**

- Significant public funding is required for venues that do not have a primarily commercial focus - particularly visual arts venues and venues that are smaller in scale.
- The LA plays an important role in creating and sustaining a cluster of arts facilities through its long term vision, financial and other supports.
- Intent and expectation is an important part of originating and sustaining a MAV; continuous resources are required to ensure the infrastructure can fulfil the role for which it was intended and meet its potential.

**3) Working in partnership across venues, events and administrative boundaries has creative and practical benefits.**

- It can result in events of scale, sharing of audiences and sharing of resources, as exemplified by the co-operation of An Grianán and the Regional Cultural Centre in Donegal and the potential for collaboration between glór, Clare Arts Office, and Clare County Library.
- In addition to the above, it can also support creative development, as is seen in the Four Rivers initiative in the South East.
- Relationships between complementary, as well as larger and smaller, venues can benefit the venues as well as local artists and communities. For example, glór supports traditional music which is available throughout the county at other venues; The Lime Tree and The Belltable present works of different scale while offering shared supports to artists and local community groups.
- Larger venues can play an important role in producing touring work which benefits other venues within a formal or informal network as well as providing local employment. Smaller venues can also share programmes and offer new work to their audiences.

**4) Rural venues have particular challenges, but also opportunities<sup>16</sup>, due to their remoteness from large population bases and the resulting low attendance rates.**

- Rural venues can show considerable creativity in engaging with very diverse audiences in order to meaningfully engage with the local population and to encourage participation.
- They can demonstrate (but also require) a good degree of networking with other artistic creators and venues/potential venues in order to deliver to a broad audience.
- Working with specific groups that have in-built audiences can be an important source of sustenance.
- Rural venues can provide essential services that may otherwise be unavailable in the area for local artists (e.g. access to specialist software, reliable wi-fi).
- Off-site delivery of programmes/work can be a good way of reaching a wide community, for example using locations such as heritage sites that traditionally would not be considered arts venues. This can also be a way of making up for any shortcomings in existing facilities (e.g. lack of access for disabled).

<sup>16</sup> As reflected in the Rural Ireland Action Plan.

- 5) **Commercially popular acts can be a regular and important source of revenue for venues that cannot rely on regular support of significant scale from public bodies - but this has its downsides:**
- the rapid changeover of events causes strain on the venue's systems.
  - it does not provide support for local artists or for the creation of new artwork.
  - it does not provide a creative platform through which to engage the local community or to reflect local issues.
  - it does not attract support from the Arts Council.
- 6) **A café/bar can play an important role in animating a venue and providing an opportunity for community engagement. It can also be an important regular source of income.**

- 7) The Albany Arts Centre, London, demonstrates **that it is possible for an arts venue to capitalise on its experience in community engagement and venue management/development by sharing its expertise in order to generate a valuable income stream.**
- 8) Godsbanen in Denmark illustrates how **supporting the development of artists and supporting creativity in the local community can grow together.**
- 9) Godsbanen is also an example of a Local Authority establishing **two funding mechanisms to support an arts venue** - one for building management and maintenance, and another for communications, programming and community engagement.

## **5.2 International Comparators**

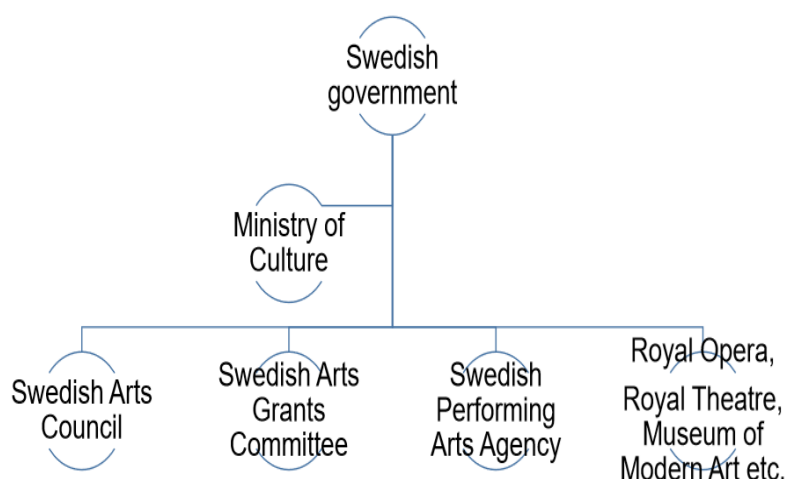
International comparators, generally speaking, do not provide any 'ideal' investment models that would suit Ireland. European countries, with a greater devolution of power – and the allied resources – provide examples of some interesting partnership structures but they may not be readily replicable in Ireland. In this context, we provide details on Sweden and Germany in this Section. However, the approach in Ireland is currently more consistent with the approach in the UK and therefore we have also included an overview of Scotland, England and Wales.

### **5.2.1 Sweden**

- 1) Strong support for all types of arts organisations and professionals at national, regional and local levels.
- 2) Highest rate of cultural participation in Europe (Eurostat 2016)
- 3) The arts sector is mainly financed by public funding, with a low level of sponsorship, etc.
- 4) There have been no cuts in the culture budget, creating a stable environment for the arts.
- 5) Public funding is based on a devolved model. State funding for culture is about SEK6.8bn (€705 million), or 0.9% of overall budget – of which the Swedish Arts Council is responsible for allocating about SEK1.8bn. The majority of the funding goes to the regions and the Arts Council receives approx. 7,000 applications per

year, 50% of which are funded. Peer reviews are used as part of the assessment – 120 people at 'arm's length' from the Council.

**Figure 19: Cultural Funding Model, Sweden**



Promoting cultural development and making culture accessible – in every respect – are the two overriding aims of the Swedish Arts Council. As a result, it supports a very broad range of activities, including funding libraries and arts periodicals.

Under its mandate, the Swedish Arts Council focuses in particular on developing activities of artistic and cultural merit relating to:

- independent cultural activities in the performing arts and music
- literature, arts periodicals, reading promotion and public libraries
- graphic art and design plus museums and exhibitions
- regional cultural activities
- the culture of the Sami people and other national minority groups
- other cultural areas.

There has been a growing emphasis on encouraging greater regional and local responsibility for the arts in Sweden<sup>17</sup>. County museums, along with county theatres, county music organisations and county libraries, are part of the network of cultural institutions that help to realise the country's cultural policy objectives.

<sup>17</sup> There are 290 municipalities in Sweden.

There are also cultural institutions at a municipal level that are funded wholly or for the most part from local income taxes, e.g. public libraries, art museums and, in some instances, municipal schools for children and young people specialising in music and the arts. In certain cases, the State provides funding for projects and special commissions.

*"There are certain national cultural institutions that receive funding direct from the Swedish government, such as the Royal Opera, the Royal Dramatic Theatre, Riksställningar (Swedish Travelling Exhibitions) and Statens Musikverk (Music Development and Heritage Sweden). In every county there are theatres, music institutions, county libraries and county museums. These often function as regional centres in their respective cultural spheres, working together with schools, the business community and others. Regional and municipal heads of these organisations have financial responsibility for their own institutions and thereby decisive influence over the scope and nature of their activities. However, for some considerable time, the State has been promoting the establishment of the regional network of institutions, providing substantial funding each year. The State and regions also jointly fund specialist county consultants for dance, the pictorial arts and design with the aim of promoting activities in these areas."*<sup>18</sup>

The framework under which Sweden allocates its funding is known as The Collaborative Cultural Model.

*"Within this model, The Swedish Arts Council allocates government grants to regions and county councils on the basis of a regional cultural plan. Regions and county councils further disburse the grants to professional theatre, dance and music activities, museums, libraries, art and culture promotion, regional private archives, film culture activities and handicraft promotion activities."*<sup>19</sup>

The Collaborative Council is comprised of agencies and regional institutions, and is chaired by The Arts Council. Collaboration between culture and civil society is part of the collaborative cultural model, with consultations taking different forms in different regions - in open meetings such as cultural parliaments and hearings, but also individual consultations.

<sup>18</sup> Kulturrådet – Swedish Arts Council  
<sup>19</sup> UNESCO

The breakdown of funding for regional institutions under the Collaborative Council is approximately 27% Swedish Arts Council, 26% county council/region, 30% municipality, and 17% Other and Earned Income.<sup>20</sup>

### **5.2.2 Germany**

- 1) As with Sweden, there is a great degree of regional and local ownership of culture in Germany and most cities, regardless of size, have their own separate cultural institutions. The fact that the country has a federal system means that there is a concentration of art schools, museums and arts centres throughout the different regions, providing employment for artists as well as access for communities.
- 2) For example, Augsburg (population c.250,000) is about 30 minutes by train from Munich, which is home to The State Opera (it was the resident house for Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss), but Augsburg also has its own 52 week season opera house which performs Wagner's entire Ring every year. In the Ruhrgebiet (Germany's largest industrial and population centre) most of the major communities have contiguous city limits, such as Dortmund, Düsseldorf, Essen, Bochum, Gelsenkirchen, and Duisburg, but each one has its own State Theatre with an opera, symphony orchestra, and spoken theatre, all with 52 week seasons, as well as a variety of city museums. All are less than an hour from Cologne.
- 3) The majority of funding goes to the cultural institutions owned and operated by the cities, with a small fund retained for independent artists.
- 4) Each city government has an arts ministry responsible for funding the local institutions and artists, usually with a staff of specialists for each main arts discipline.
- 5) Funding on a State level focuses more on large institutions such as State theatres and State-owned radio/televisions which have resident orchestras and professional choirs.
- 6) Central and private intervention in the arts is viewed with mistrust as it is felt that the regional and local agencies are closer to the artists and the communities.

### **5.2.3 Scotland**

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

- 1) Within the venue ecosystem in Scotland, many venues are wholly owned by Local Councils. Creative Scotland, which replaced the Scottish Arts Council, does not contribute to the core operational costs of these venues.
- 2) Creative Scotland may support elements of the arts programme in venues wholly owned by local councils. The median level of contribution to such arts programmes is 80% from Creative Scotland and 20% from the Local Council.
- 3) There are independent venues (an independent legal entity with its own board etc., although the building may well be owned by the Local Council). Historically these independent venues were core funded on a 50/50 basis by Creative Scotland and the Local Councils, but the financial crisis affecting local authorities has seen that relationship move to a median of 75% Creative Scotland and 25% Local Council. These are median values – in some cases, Creative Scotland provides up to 90% of the funding with the Local Councils providing just 10%.
- 4) Historically the relationship between venues, Local Councils and the Arts Council is similar in the UK to that in Ireland. Public funding to venues from the Arts Councils in the UK dates back to the 1950s. However, the 1990s saw the development of a whole new strand of built infrastructure with support from National Lottery funds. This development of Local Council arts centres saw the emergence of a funding model in which the Local Council invested in the core operational costs of the buildings, and the venues applied to the Arts Council for the cost of their programme content.
- 5) Although this system more or less still applies today, it is tacitly understood that a significant share of the programme funding is in fact going toward operational costs. Over the last 20 years, the 50/50 relationship between Arts Council and Local Council has moved closer to a 90/10 relationship. As in Ireland, Local Councils are not explicitly mandated to invest in arts or culture.
- 6) There is no blanket system in place within Creative Scotland, but the following are some characteristics of the existing funding mechanisms:



- Out of 121 client organisations, Creative Scotland core funds approximately 30 venue-based mixed arts organisations with 30 different rates of support and each recipient with different earning capacities.
  - In terms of the conditions of funding, offering a high quality artist experience is a key aim but, as funders, they are not prescriptive on the nature of this.
  - Sustainability of the venues is essential and so they accept that, in many venues, it is essential to have a “highly populist” programme, but that the venues also accept a responsibility to make work of “artistic merit” available to their communities.
  - Venues are required to provide quantitative and qualitative audience/community reports. While there are different levels of detail required, depending on the size and capacity of the venue, the obligation to report generates some momentum for smaller venues to partner up with larger venues or with educational institutions.
- 7) The Local Councils do not have a statutory obligation to support the arts, and their focus is on their community and community provision. Creative Scotland aims to balance artistic excellence with the realities of access.
- 8) In Creative Scotland’s application assessment process, review panels are composed of one member from Creative Scotland, one member from a portfolio (regularly funded) organisation, and one member from the public. Their responses are guided by their understanding of the applicant’s intention, and their response to that intention. Within this structure, the different opinions and value perspectives of panel members are counterbalanced.

#### **5.2.4 England and Wales**

In broad terms, the Arts Councils in England and Wales operate along similar lines to Creative Scotland. It is notable that Arts Council England’s remit now extends to supporting and developing museums and libraries as well as the arts, although it has limited roles in these additional areas. It currently supports a small portfolio of just 21 single museums and consortia, and its role in relation to libraries, where it does not have any statutory responsibilities, relates to specific initiatives such as skills development and making the most of digital technology and creative media.

The overall strategic plans adopted by both Arts Council England and the Arts Council of Wales are quite similar to the Irish Arts Council's "*Making Great Art Work*" in terms of values, goals and priorities. However a key feature of Arts Council England's funding strategy is that it has mapped out a 4-year plan for investment in the arts for the period 2018/19 – 2021/22, involving a total commitment over 4 years exceeding £2.3 billion.

Both Arts Council England and the Arts Council of Wales invest a considerable share of their available funding into Portfolio organisations. Portfolio organisations are those in receipt of regular annual revenue funding, and include many arts centres and venues. There are 829 National Portfolio Organisations in England, holding 842 agreements with the Arts Council, and they are budgeted to receive a total of £1.64 billion, or 60% of total projected funding, over the current 4 year plan period. In Wales, there are 67 revenue funded organisations in the Arts Council's Arts Portfolio Wales, and they take about 50% of the Council's available funding.

In both England and Wales, the Portfolio organisations have multi-annual agreements with the Arts Council, which indicate the level of annual funding that they can expect over the period of the agreement. However, actual allocations are finalised on an annual basis as they are contingent on the level of funding provided to the Arts Councils by their respective governments. There is a real benefit for the Portfolio organisations in being able plan to a longer time horizon than one year.

A further aspect of Arts Council England's funding strategy has been the introduction of funding bands for National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) starting in the 2018-19 year. The bands are set out in Table 5.1. Over 62% of the NPOs are in Band 1, with Bands 2 and 3 accounting for 23% and 8% respectively. The balance of NPO funding agreements is with sector support organisations.

**Table 5.1: National Portfolio Organisation Funding Bands, Arts Council England**

<b>Band</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Support Organisations</b>
Funding Range (£)	40,000 – 249,999	250,000 – 999,999	1,000,000+	
No. of NPOs	527	190	67	58
% of NPOs	62.6%	22.6%	7.9%	6.9%

*Source: Arts Council England*

The purpose of the banding is to simplify the structure and to reduce the administrative burden on smaller organisations. Thus the level of administration and expectations imposed on Band 1 organisations has been reduced from previous practice; they remain the same for Band 2 organisations; Band 3 organisations are expected to show active leadership in the arts and culture sectors, to have greater clarity about their future plans and their delivery to date, and to produce more detailed reports.

Despite the objective of simplifying funding processes, the list of requirements for every band is extensive including, for all bands, a detailed initial application form, a four-year outline business plan and one-year detailed plan (to be refreshed annually), an environmental policy and action plan, an annual survey, collection and submission of audience data, an annual progress report, and regular periodic submission of management accounts (at least quarterly) and board papers (at least every 6 months). The level and range of planning and reporting requirements rise through the bands, and the Arts Council England also reserves the right to attend board meetings of NPOs as an observer. NPOs in Bands 2 and 3 also give the Arts Council the right to be involved in recruitment for senior positions, and Band 3 organisations must seek Arts Council views when reviewing the performance of senior team members.

The introduction of bands by the Arts Council England has not really changed the basic application assessment and grant award procedures. Thus, the relationship manager for an applicant organization initially assesses applications in terms of how they contribute to the Arts Council' strategic goals, and also considers the proposed programme of work, financial viability and risk management. The second stage of assessment focuses on the spread of investment that the Council wants to make in the arts and culture sector with specific reference to diversity, range of art forms, and geographical spread. The final decisions are then made by the Area Councils (up to £800,000) or the National Council (over £800,000). Overall, therefore, the banding structure has retained the traditional application process, and categorization by band is, initially at least, based on previous levels of funding. NPOs are required to engage closely with the Arts Council, through their relationship managers, and to fulfil very extensive reporting requirements.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

- 1) The Local Authorities and the Arts Council have a key role to play in resolving issues with regard to funding and co-ordination that would enable venues to play a larger and more constructive role in the cultivation and promotion of the arts in Ireland.
- 2) Working in partnership, and in clusters, across venues and administrative boundaries has creative and practical benefits.
- 3) International comparators provide an example of how a large venue can sell its expertise in community engagement and venue management in order to generate additional income.
- 4) Rural venues have particular challenges. These can be partially addressed through greater collaboration with other, larger, venues (see previous point), more off-site activity and the provision of a wider range of services for the local community.
- 5) International examples shows that it is possible to create structures, between a national Arts Council and regional/municipal authorities, that provide for a more devolved model of funding (e.g. Sweden, Germany).
- 6) Regularly funded organisations are a major feature of funding programmes elsewhere, which brings greater stability to the sector. As shown in England and Wales, it is possible to introduce multi-annual planning for regularly funded

organisations on the basis of indicative levels of funding, with the proviso that actual funding may not meet the levels indicated, depending on the resources made available each year by government.

- 7) Banding organisations into funding levels can simplify funding expectations and decisions. However, the introduction of bands may not necessarily change the application assessment process, nor will it be predictive of specific grant amounts awarded to individual organisations, given the high degree of variance in their individual circumstances.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

This Section draws together the principal conclusions arising from the various strands of research and analysis undertaken for this review. The primary focus is on those aspects of the current provision of MAVs that are central to the terms of reference.

### **6.1 The Present Provision of MAVs**

#### **6.1.1 Number of Venues**

Based on the findings of the AIRO Audit, there are at least 102 MAVs distributed around the country. This is the share of the 138 year-round venues included in the Audit that regularly offer multiple art forms – see Section 2.2.<sup>21</sup> The majority of the remaining 36 offer one art-form regularly and other art forms ‘occasionally’. On visual inspection, the Map in Figure 2 (Section 2.1) appears to show a reasonable geographic spread of MAVs, although the ratio of venues to population varies widely between Local Authority areas.

The ratio of venues to population does not take into account the nature, scale and programming of different venues. However, it does show that there is access to MAVs in each county, with most counties having more than one. The picture is further improved if the much larger grouping of part-time, occasional, community and other venues is also taken into account. It is not evident that there is a need to build more venues in the short to medium term - the priority should be to make best use of the existing infrastructure, with a focus on increasing productive capacity. See also the commentary on expansion of provision in Section 6.1.4.

Both the set of 138 venues included in the AIRO audit and the set of 49 MAVs funded by the Arts Council’s venue programme, comprise very diverse groups. They differ widely in terms of age, scale, design, location, facilities, productive capacity, programming and staffing. They are not amenable to simple classification and there is no ready typology that could be applied to funding arrangements. As the analysis of current funding by the Arts Council and Local Authorities shows, this diversity among centres means that there are no consistent metrics that can be applied to the levels of support received by venues.

#### **6.1.2 Delivery**

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<sup>21</sup> Note that 138 of the 144 venues responded to the AIRO second stage survey.

The MAVs deliver a diverse and extensive set of outputs across a wide range of art forms. They are embedded in their communities, engaging with a range of audience types, and play a key role in delivering Arts Council strategy. As noted in Section 2.4, three-quarters of year-round venues regularly offer more than one art form, with the average for these being 4. Theatre, visual arts and music are the most commonly offered choices, but the traditional arts, film, dance and literature are also widely offered.

MAVs seek to respond to their (local) audiences, and most venues therefore cater for a range of different audience types. They also endeavour to respond to changing needs, and the majority (60%) of respondents to our survey of venues stated that changing demographics and audience profiles have had a significant impact on programming. This reinforces the degree to which individual venues are rooted in the communities that they serve.

Arts venues - including those outside this review's focus group of MAVs – fulfil a key role in the delivery of the Arts Council's strategy, as noted in Section 3. To some extent, they contribute to all five priority areas of *Making Great Art Work*, but are of particular importance in relation to three:

- 1) **The Artist:** artists are supported to make excellent work which is enjoyed and valued
- 2) **Public Engagement:** more people will enjoy high quality arts experiences
- 3) **Spatial & Demographic Planning:** well-planned arts provision benefits people across Ireland.

Roles for MAVs can also be detected in the other two priority areas – Investment Strategy and Developing Capacity.

While acknowledging the value of MAVs, the question arises as to whether the best possible outcomes are being obtained from the network. If measured against potential, the answer must almost certainly be in the negative, with financial constraints being widely identified as the greatest limiting factor. Thus, many MAVs struggle to maintain their buildings and technical facilities to an adequate standard, and to hire sufficient staff with the right skills. There is a constant pressure on most MAVs to build commercial programming to supplement, or replace shortfalls in, public funding. While all stakeholders concede that it would be desirable to invest more in MAVs, in terms of both

infrastructure and programming, it is most unlikely that this will happen to the point where all needs are satisfied. The question then is one of how to make best use of existing resource flows, while negotiating for a realistically attainable increase.

A potentially effective route to optimising the present network would be to foster a much greater level of active and continuing collaboration between MAVs than is the case at present. There are considerable strengths – knowledge, experience, expertise, technical resources, etc. - resident in the existing set of MAVs, but they are not distributed equally. The consultations and workshops highlighted an interest in, and appetite for, increased collaboration among venues. Moreover, there are useful ideas among leading venue operators as to how such collaborations could be made to work in practice, and the experience of the existing set of networks would be informative in that regard. The fostering of longer-term collaborative initiatives will require positive policies and financial resourcing to create sustainable initiatives.



### 6.1.3 Local and Rural Venues

Smaller local and rural venues play an important role in delivering on Local Authority and Arts Council objectives, and in providing access to the arts for rural communities, although at a national level they may not be all that visible. There is an opportunity to strengthen them through clustering and collaboration.

Features of this extensive, dispersed network of smaller venues are:

- there is a fragmentation of available financial and other resources
- there are some venues with particular expertise and/or significant importance to a particular art form
- there is a flexibility in responding to local needs.

There is potential to develop efficiencies in all of these areas.

Taking account of these points, the concept of collaboration and active networking outlined in 6.1.2 offers a potential model at local/county levels to deliver on both Arts Council and Local Authority objectives. This collaboration could be based on the following foundations:

- ***Local groupings of arts supports and activities***, with each venue focusing on its own area of expertise while sharing common activities, operating anti-clash diaries, jointly considering staffing, governance, maintenance and other contracts, etc. These clusters may not always happen within a close geographic space, depending on existing infrastructure, and may stretch across county boundaries.
- ***County clusters of small and rural venues hubbed around leading MAVs*** which would provide access to greater levels of expertise.

- This model could be further enhanced ***by using the arts cluster as a vehicle to facilitate bringing national touring productions to more rural venues and facilitating audience development*** - thus making savings in the cost of bringing more expensive (and international) productions to smaller venues and also providing more audiences for artists<sup>22</sup>. The more remote arts venues as well as multi-functional rural spaces could operate partly as 'outreach' for county clusters rather than being left to 'fend for themselves'<sup>23</sup> in less financially rewarding environments.
- ***This integrated delivery would facilitate sharing of good practice, learnings, etc.*** It would also take into account the need to consider arts venues as imagined as well as physical spaces (i.e. the arts 'centre/venue' as operating wherever art is being produced/offered within the catchment area).
- It would also ***facilitate a more rational, efficient and streamlined approach to venue support by Local Authorities.***

#### 6.1.4 Future Development of the MAV Infrastructure

The future development and possible expansion of the infrastructure of MAVs must be considered in the context of continued population growth. Between 2002 and 2016, the population of Ireland increased by 844,662, from 3.9 million to almost 4.8 million. The ESRI has projected that, by 2040, the population of Ireland will have risen by one million people over the level in 2011, to reach 5.64 million<sup>24</sup>. Population growth is expected to be highest in and around the five major cities, and the population share of the Dublin and Mid-East regions is projected to increase to 42%. Future provision of access to arts venues will need to take this growth into account, as well as considering the current gaps in the geographic spread of MAVs in more rural areas.

Fourteen, or 10%, of the 138 year-round arts venues included in the AIRO second stage survey have opened since 2000. Looking ahead, based on projected population growth, it would not be unreasonable to expect that at least a similar number of additions may be made to the network over the next 20 years<sup>25</sup>. This would imply that future capital programmes for new venues will need to accommodate at least this number to meet the

<sup>22</sup> E.g. Some of the touring productions facilitated through The Abbey (ref. Lali Morris) where smaller venues were able to 'tag onto' touring production schedules to larger ones. This may require some shifting in the 'sharing mindset' of larger venues?

<sup>23</sup> And, in some cases, rural venues feel they are being penalised by rolling out non-high art forms.

<sup>24</sup> ESRI: 'Prospects for Regions and Counties: Scenarios and Implications', ESRI Research Series, No. 70, January 2018

<sup>25</sup> Indeed, if the ratio of year-round venues to population is to be maintained at the average of 2.9 (see Figure 3, Section 2.1), a further 25 new venues would be required by 2038.

needs of a growing population. However, the drivers that deliver new venues tend to be related to politics, the availability of funding and opportunity – for example, the availability of a suitable site or building, or the involvement of dedicated and influential project champions. There is much less reliance on more objective approaches, such as a systematic analysis of needs in the community and gaps in supply.

Quantitative guidelines exist for the provision of a range of socio-economic facilities, from retail, education and health, through to parks and community facilities. In some cases, there are nationally-set guidelines – for example, the Department of Education & Skills' Geographical Information System (GIS), which is used to forecast demand for school capacity, or the Retail Planning Guidelines issued by the then Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government in 2012. In other areas, guidelines are set by the Local Authorities – for example, many Authorities have adopted a general guideline for parks provision of 2 – 2.5 hectares per 1,000 residents in an area; South Dublin County Council has a guideline for the provision of community facilities of 150m<sup>2</sup> of floor space per 1,000 dwellings.

There are no such quantitative guidelines for the provision of arts and culture facilities, and it is not clear that there should be. There are so many variables involved in arriving at the right blend of design, capacity, art form capabilities, programming etc., that highly prescriptive and simplistic models based on crude ratios of funding to variables such as catchment population, audience capacity or art form should be avoided.

The Guidelines for Local Area Plans, published by the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government in 2013, make reference (in section 6.3 of the document) to the provision of social and community infrastructure, stating that such provision is *"crucial in terms of creating sustainable communities"*. A robust engagement with this subject by Local Authorities is clearly envisaged, where the document states that: *"Local area plans provide a critical opportunity for planning authorities to take a leadership role in relation to co-ordinating the activities and investments of various infrastructure providers. Planning authorities should use this opportunity to formulate a shared vision and implementation schedule for the local area plan."* While no specific guidelines are offered on how to assess provision, explicit reference is made to arts and culture facilities, as follows:

*"Local area plans must act as vehicles for the delivery of social infrastructure provision by containing policies, objectives and measures which (inter alia)*

- provide funding for arts and cultural facilities by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht under the ACCESS programme."*

This statement is fairly broad, and the ACCESS programme was superseded by the Arts & Culture Capital Scheme 2016-2018. However, it does seem to be saying that Local Authorities have a central role in identifying the need and opportunity for arts and culture facilities, and that they should co-ordinate their plans with the Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht with respect to securing capital funding.

Before embarking on the provision of new venues, it would make sense to ensure that best use is being made of the existing facilities. New buildings bring substantial additional costs in operations and maintenance, and more might be achieved in the first instance by expanding services through the existing venues.

Public access to the arts is very important, and a priority goal of the Arts Council's Strategy. Delivering on this goal will mean giving consideration to the development of new venues in areas of high population growth. A broad guideline could be adopted so that when the population size threshold is breached in any area, this would trigger research into the most appropriate response. The need for a new venue in any particular area of significant population growth should be assessed carefully, explored in consultation with the local communities, and tested through the provision of services by existing providers in the surrounding area.

## **6.2 Governance**

The most popular governance model in the arts and culture sector is that of the company limited by guarantee (not having a share capital) which is widely used throughout the arts, culture, tourism, sporting, education and community sectors. This appears to be the most relevant model for the majority of venues, although it has its challenges (including the increasing burden of governance), and a balance needs to be found between prudent operations and artistic output.

All but four of the 49 MAVs funded by the Arts Council are operationally structured as companies limited by guarantee (CLGs). Two of the remaining four are operated directly by their Local Authority owners, one is operated by the Education & Training Board that owns the premises, and one is a company limited by shares (and owned by the relevant Local Authority).

Local Authorities have frequently availed of the CLG model to provide an operating structure for various types of enterprise, including visitor attractions, heritage centres, museums, urban regeneration companies, enterprise centres, leisure centres and local tourism companies. In general, the CLGs are operating companies, and are tenants rather than owners of any land and building assets that they manage. The separation of ownership and management protects the primary assets in the event of adverse financial or litigious circumstances affecting the management company. Additional benefits include:

- independent operation with regard to staff employment
- the ability to operate commercial activities

- the possibility of involving people with relevant skills and experience on the board of the company.

The MAVs funded by the Arts Council typically are tenants of the buildings that they operate (Table 6.1). In 36 of the 49 cases (73%), the buildings are owned by the relevant Local Authority. Seven are owned by the venue operating company, and the rest are mostly in buildings owned by a range of institutions. As noted in Section 4.2, Local Authorities frequently subvent the operations of MAVs that they own by taking on building maintenance and related overheads, such as insurance costs, directly. They may also charge a minimal rent or even waive it entirely.

**Table 6.1: Ownership of MAVs Funded by Arts Council**

Owner	No. of Venues
Local Authority	36
Venue Itself	7
Others	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>

In many cases, the operating CLGs effectively come under the control of the parent Local Authorities, and this control is exercised most directly through the appointment of directors to the boards of the companies. Lease or licence agreements and financial arrangements also provide vehicles for the owners of the venues to maintain control. However, they generally take a hands-off stance in relation to the day-to-day management and operation of the venues, and much responsibility lies with the boards and management.

The CLG model has served its purpose quite well, the principal alternatives being either direct operation by the owner or the letting of the venue to a commercial operator. The former is not favoured, as it would probably increase the cost to the owner of operating the venue, although it might give greater security to the management team; the latter option would only work if the MAV in question was a good commercial prospect, which would be very unusual, or if the owner was prepared to pay an attractive management fee to a prospective operator. Commercial operators have taken on the operation of Local Authority leisure centres, but they are far simpler operations to MAVs.

The CLG model is not without its own challenges. In particular, the directors of limited companies, including CLGs, have to bear the increasingly onerous burden of corporate governance in relation to their fiduciary duties and financial management and reporting, as well as compliance across a range of statutory requirements in relation to health and safety, employment, environmental matters, data protection etc. For those CLGs that are also charities – and the advancement of the arts is an eligible charitable purpose - there are additional requirements levied by the Charities Regulator.

In the light of these multiple requirements, it is not surprising that board members will prioritise the fundamentals of prudent operation, including financial stability, rather than artistic output. There is, therefore, a need to balance the operational constraints arising from the CLG model with measures that will enable boards to give appropriate priority to the artistic output of their venues. Such measures might focus on ensuring that the recurring overhead costs of operating their venues are fully covered, and that there is a longer term view on such funding beyond the traditional one-year horizon. Directors should also be protected by indemnity insurance.

## **6.3 Funding**

### **6.3.1 Revenue Funding**

The review of present funding arrangements in Section 2.6, and the findings of the surveys and consultations summarised in Section 4, show that there is no consistently applied model of MAV funding in place as supporting agencies endeavour to respond to differing venue needs. This reflects the diversity of MAVs and lack of a typology capable of acting as a guide to the appropriate scale of support. However, built infrastructure comes with inherent long term responsibilities and operating within appropriate planning cycles contributes to the capacity of venues to deliver. Policies and strategies for current and future built infrastructure need to be brought together under a national venue strategy.

In very broad terms, the Arts Council seeks to fund programme activities, but about one-third of its funding actually goes to pay for operational overheads ("core costs") - although it is recognised that, in terms of generating artistic output, the distinction between programme and core costs is very blurred. The overall picture of Arts Council funding for venues is made more complex by the fact that, while it includes 49 venues in its venue funding, it provides funding to a total of 89 (Table 2.6, Section 2.6.2).

Local Authorities contribute to both overhead costs and programme expenses, but a substantial share of their support is delivered indirectly by their absorption of staff and overhead costs into their own budgets. As a result, it is impossible to quantify the total level of support given by Local Authorities although it is clearly much larger than funding provided to venues by the Arts Council - see Section 2.6.2.

The combined shares of MAV funding contributed by the Arts Council and Local Authorities average 40% of total income for both the group of MAVs in receipt of Venues funding from the Arts Council and the wider group of 138 year-round venues surveyed by AIRO. (Of this average, the Arts Council provides c. 17% and the Local Authorities c. 23%.) However, there is a very high degree of variation between venues in these shares, as shown in Table 2.6. The absolute level of funding granted to any one MAV depends on the particular circumstances of the venue. Relevant factors include location, catchment population, audience preferences, size of venue, productive capacity, its financial situation, technical facilities, art forms offered, the range of skills and



experience available in-house and locally, and collaborative and touring production opportunities etc. A venue's unique circumstances influence the type of programming that it can deliver, and the extent to which it can generate income from sources other than the Arts Council and its Local Authority, especially earned box-office revenue.

As venues are diverse, so are their funding needs. Since the Arts Council and the Local Authorities endeavour to respond to these needs, the funding packages they grant differ from venue to venue. Thus, as shown in Table 2.8, Section 2.6.2, there is no correlation between the amount of funding granted to a venue and key variables such as capacity and county population. There is also no correlation between the size of grant awarded to a venue and the scoring of its application against the criteria set out in the Arts Council Venues Funding application form. This indicates that there are implicit criteria in operation which take into account the circumstances of a venue and additional goals of the Arts Council.

The 2018 Venues Funding application form sets out five criteria against which applications will be assessed. These are as follows:

- Track record and/or potential for achievement in the arts
- Art form development
- Public and/or artist engagement
- Operating model, partnerships and resources
- Arts Council strategic considerations.

There are several sub-headings under each of these criteria, but these are not individually scored in the assessment. Taking the criteria and sub-headings into account, it appears that there may be additional criteria which influence the grant award. These may include:

- assessment of productive capacity
- a venue's funding history: what they got last year
- the overall amount of money in the Venues' fund
- international plans
- geography - there is at least one venue in each Local Authority area
- scale of Local Authority support.

There is nothing inherently wrong about taking such criteria into account in determining grant awards - in fact, they are very practical considerations. However, the combination of implicit criteria and the lack of scoring of the sub-headings of the explicit criteria tend to make the process less transparent. While it is inevitable that any assessment method will be a subjective process, to the extent that objectively determined quantitative measures are not available, it is important that the assessment is transparent, fair and professional, and is seen to be so.

As discussed throughout this document and evidenced in the research and consultation findings, built infrastructure comes with inherent long term responsibilities. Physical upkeep is an obvious consideration when running a MAV but so too is maximising use of the infrastructure in order that it may meet its potential in delivering quality arts to its audience.

Operating within appropriate planning cycles contributes to this capacity to deliver. It is desirable arising from this review that policies and strategies for current and future built infrastructure be brought together under a national venue strategy. A single framework should embrace a variety of considerations including access, participation, demographics, community engagement, urban and rural planning, social impact and regeneration alongside supporting artists and art making, cultural and creative development and the role of arts in education, well-being and the development of creative communities.

A National Venue Strategy would set out the ambition for multi-annual funded cycles, the context and rationale for capital investment in existing and new infrastructure, and the aspiration to maintain a thriving set of arts venues which connects to the wider national cultural environment, National Planning Framework and National Development Plan. A framework for this strategy is outlined in Chapter 7.

### **6.3.2 Capital Funding**

The principal issues highlighted by venues are that capital funding is made available only on an intermittent basis, and it is insufficient to meet the needs of MAVs. It may never be possible to fully satisfy the demand from existing venues for capital funds, as demand tends to escalate with availability. However, a better continuity of funding for the maintenance of infrastructure would be a significant improvement. It would also go some

way to addressing the issue of sufficient funds as timely expenditure could avert further deterioration in infrastructure, with knock-on implications for cost.

The present model for capital funding of arts venue infrastructure depends very heavily on Local Authorities and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. As shown in Table 2.4, Section 2.6.1, during the period 2000-2015, the Local Authorities contributed 58% of total capital funding to the group of 138 year-round venues in the AIRO survey, with the Department contributing a further 33%. The overall scale of Local Authority capital funding during this period was greatly amplified by a small number of very large commitments to the development of new venues. The Department provided capital to a much larger number of venues than the Local Authorities. During the period 2016-18, capital funding continued from both sources, and the Department has provided €10.2 million to 134 recipients under its Arts & Culture Capital Scheme, 2016-2018. Other sources, such as LEADER, provide small, but undoubtedly very useful, capital grants to venues.

MAVs do not generate enough income to produce a surplus sufficient to create a renewal fund that can be built up over several years. They are also not in a position to borrow large sums of money. As a result, they are dependent on external sources to fund replacements, renewals and upgrades, including meeting health and safety and other statutory compliance standards. As revealed by the survey of venues - see Appendix 6 - the greatest influence on decisions to invest in infrastructure is, not surprisingly, the availability of external funding/grants.

In addition, it was noted in Section 6.1.3 that projected population growth over the next 20 years is likely to surpass that of the past 16 years, by at least 10%. Thus, there must also be the potential for a similar number of new arts venues to be built, as there have been since 2002. New venues are very expensive propositions, especially when striking architectural design is sought. They should be the subject of rigorous viability analyses and designed clearly with their audiences in mind. As noted in Section 6.1.3, the need for a new venue in any particular location should be tested through the provision of arts services by existing providers in the region, using informal venues, such as community centres and schools, that may already be available.

## **6.4 Summary**

- 1) Based on the findings of the AIRO audit of 138 venues, there are at least 102 MAVs distributed around the country. The majority of the remaining 36 offer one art form regularly and other art forms occasionally.
- 2) Both the set of 138 venues included in the AIRO audit and the set of 49 MAVs funded by the Arts Council's venue programme, comprise very diverse groups. They differ widely in terms of age, scale, design, location, facilities, productive capacity, programming and staffing. They are not amenable to simple classification and there is no ready typology that could be applied to funding arrangements. As the analysis of current funding by the Arts Council and Local Authorities shows, this diversity among centres means that there are no consistent metrics that can be applied to the levels of support received by venues.
- 3) The geographic distribution of venues shows that there is access to MAVs in every county, with most counties having more than one. The picture is further improved if the much larger grouping of part-time, occasional, community and other venues is also taken into account. It is not evident that there is a need to build more venues in the short to medium term - the priority should be to make best use of the existing infrastructure.
- 4) Venues contribute to all five priority areas of *Making Great Art Work*, and are of particular importance in relation to three: the artist, public engagement, and spatial and demographic planning.
- 5) MAVs deliver a diverse and extensive set of outputs across a wide range of art forms. They are embedded in their communities, engaging with a range of audience types, and play a key role in delivering Arts Council strategy. There are also considerable strengths among MAVs – knowledge, experience, expertise, technical resources, etc.
- 6) However, the infrastructure of MAVs is not being currently being optimised and strengths are not distributed equally. One effective route to optimising the infrastructure would be to foster longer-term collaborative initiatives between MAVs. This will require appropriate policies and financial resourcing to create sustainable initiatives.



- 7) The collaborative concept could be extended to the establishment of county clusters of smaller local and rural venues, some of which could be hubbed around leading MAVs. This would raise their capabilities and levels of delivery, providing access to greater levels of expertise.
- 8) Public access to the arts is very important, and a priority goal of the Arts Council's Strategy. Delivering on this goal will mean giving consideration to the development of new venues in areas of high population growth, especially new towns. A broad guideline could be adopted so that when a defined population size threshold is breached in any area, this would trigger research into the most appropriate response. Before embarking on the provision of a new venue, best use should be made of the existing network. The need for a new venue in any particular area of significant population growth should be assessed very carefully.
- 9) The CLG model under which most MAVs operate appears to be the most suitable. However, there is a need to balance operational constraints with measures that enable boards to prioritise the artistic output of their venues, e.g. by ensuring that recurring overhead costs are fully covered, that there is a longer term view on funding, and that Directors are protected by indemnity insurance.
- 10) There is an opportunity to simplify and make more consistent grant application and assessment processes across all funding agencies, while still ensuring a model that can accommodate the diversity of venues, and that can be flexible in response to both need and opportunity.
- 11) In view of the wide diversity among MAVs, great care should be taken in attempting to prescribe funding models that go beyond a framework level. There must be scope in a model to accommodate diversity and be flexible in response to both need and opportunity.
- 12) There is potential to develop a framework within which venue funding is structured for the benefit of the major stakeholders. A framework based on defined levels of contribution to operating costs could be introduced to support and promote a truly collaborative infrastructure of MAVs - and this is considered in the recommendations.

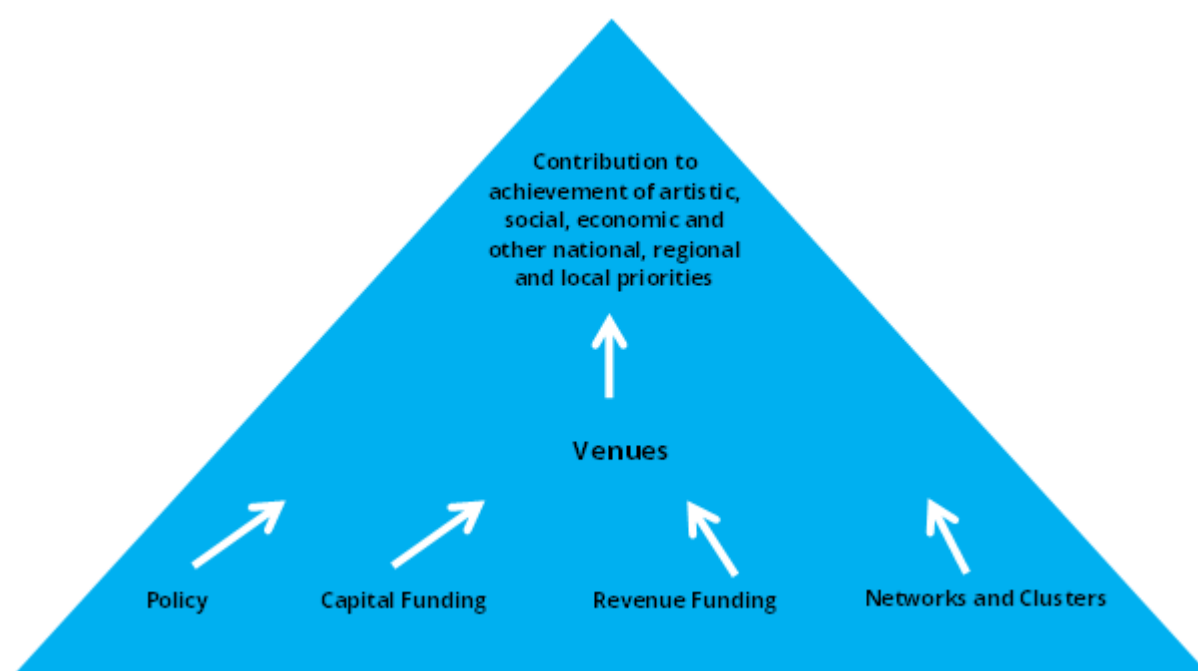
- 13) Gaps in the insufficiency of public capital funding can be mitigated, to some degree, by providing better continuity of funding to ensure a much better standard of continuous maintenance and upgrading of capital assets in the sector.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS: OUTLINE FRAMEWORK FOR A VENUE STRATEGY

This section sets out proposals in the form of a series of recommendations arising from the findings and conclusions of the review. The key dimensions of the Framework are gathered under four headings:

- 1) Policy
- 2) Networks and Clusters
- 3) Revenue Funding
- 4) Capital Funding.

**Figure 20: Key Dimensions of the Framework**



The recommendations are presented concisely and summarised in Table 7.1 overleaf. The underlying rationale may be found in the preceding sections of the review, especially the conclusions in Section 6.

**Table 7.1: Recommendations**

Area	Recommendation
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<b>Policy</b>	<p>7.1.1 Develop a full venues strategy, including the recognition of venues as strategic infrastructure and ensuring an effective alignment of Local Authority arts plans, culture and creativity plans, and development plans.</p> <p>7.1.2 Ensure a continuity of policy among Government Departments with respect to the arts and arts venues, this initiative would be led most effectively by the Department of Culture, Heritage &amp; the Gaeltacht.</p> <p>7.1.3 Establish a consistent approach among public sector bodies and agencies with regard to arts policy priorities, planning and delivery.</p> <p>7.1.4 Agree what criteria are appropriate to measure the economic, social and artistic contribution of the venues - the key measures regarding Quality of Life and Place identified in the National Framework should be included.</p>
<b>Venue Clusters and Networks</b>	<p>7.2.1 Establish and energise active venue clusters and networks.</p> <p>7.2.2 The clusters should engage with arts offices, libraries, major festivals, and other arts-related organisations. In particular, joint programming, residencies, artistic development and partnerships between arts offices and arts organisations should be considered.</p> <p>7.2.3 Continuous professional development and peer learning should be embedded in the cluster agenda with an emphasis on both staff and boards, ensuring they are operating with up-to-date skills in arts, business and governance.</p>
<b>Revenue Funding</b>	<p>7.3.1 Funding for venues should be restructured into two venue categories: local and county.</p> <p>7.3.2 Venue funding by the Arts Council and Local Authorities (LAs) should evolve towards a more consistent and balanced structure within the context of the framework agreements between the AC and LAs, and should be related to the category of venue and productive capacity.</p> <p>7.3.3 The priority in funding venues should be on enhancing their productive capacity, that is, extending the ability of the infrastructure to support the development/making of work in different art forms and providing facilities and career opportunities for artists.</p> <p>7.3.4 Indicative funding agreements with a 5-year horizon should be considered - this term could be aligned with the terms of the Local Authority Councils.</p> <p>7.3.5 The process of venue grant application assessment should be reviewed with the possibility of introducing greater alignment between Arts Council and Local Authority processes.</p>
<b>Capital Funding</b>	<p>7.4.1 DCHG capital funding for maintenance and upgrades should be made available on a continuous basis. Upgrades should include a strand for increasing productive capacity in line with demographic and spatial criteria.</p> <p>7.4.2 Advantage should be taken of the funding opportunities offered by the Rural and Urban Regeneration and Development Funds to secure additional capital funding for arts venues.</p> <p>7.4.3 New venues should only be built on the basis of a comprehensive and rigorous analysis of sustainability; the first priority is to invest in the productive capacity of existing venues.</p>

## **7.1 Policy**

### **7.1.1 Develop a full venues strategy, including the recognition of venues as strategic infrastructure and ensuring an effective alignment of Local Authority arts plans, culture and creativity plans, and development plans**

The development of Culture and Creativity Plans under the Creative Ireland initiative strengthens capacity at a grass roots level but does not connect all parties to a strategic framework. At county level, the Local Authority arts plan is a key component of the Local Development Plan from which the annual Culture and Creativity Plan can draw its priorities and actions. This approach would create a more consistent and detailed planning framework for collaboration with the Arts Council and a basis on which MAVs could shape venue-specific strategies. However, as acknowledged by the CCMA and the Arts Council, a full venue strategy is required and the recommendations in this Section provide a framework for such a strategy.

#### **7.1.2 Ensure a continuity of policy among Government Departments with respect to the arts and arts venues**

Greater continuity at national level would enhance strategic planning for cultural infrastructure and the arts. A policy alignment initiative developing a consistent perspective on cultural strategy between the Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht, Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government, Department of Education & Skills, Department of Health and the Department of the Taoiseach. This initiative could be led by the Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht, and would facilitate a greater understanding of the role and impact of the arts and a more transparent rationale for stronger and more stable resourcing. Very importantly, it should take into account the ownership of cultural infrastructure, and the prominent role of Local Authorities in this respect.

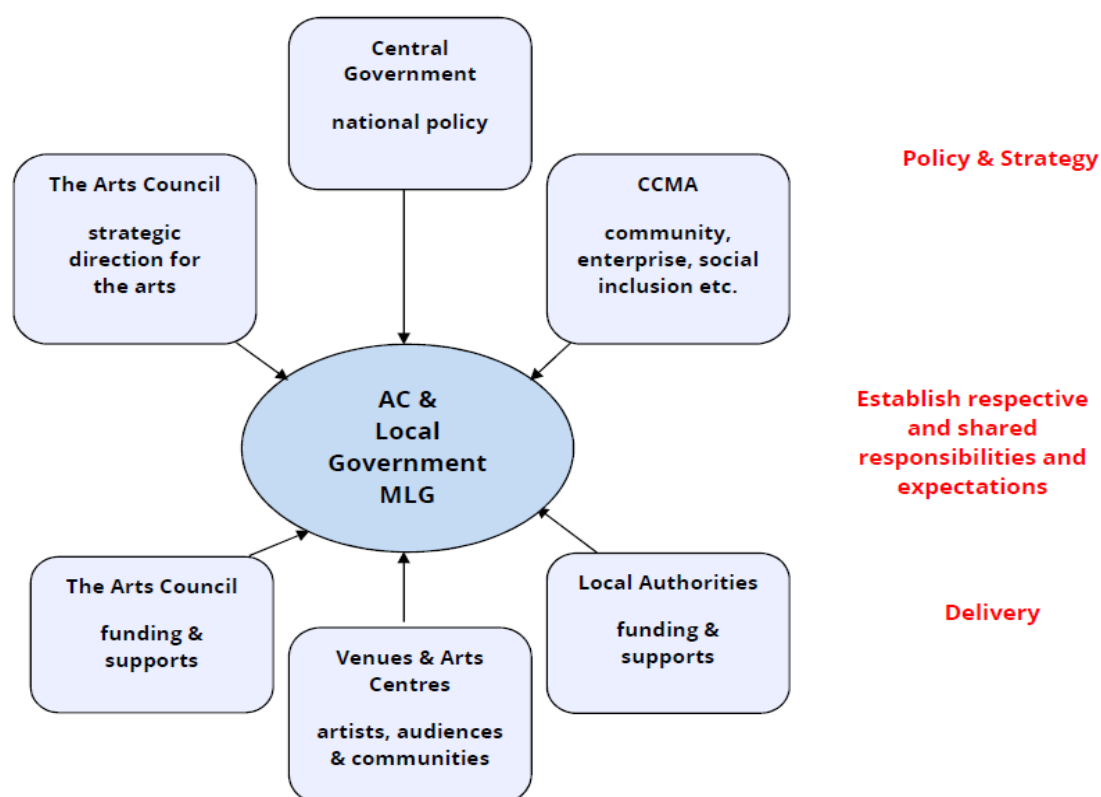
### **7.1.3 Establish a consistent framework among public sector bodies and agencies with regard to arts policy priorities, planning and delivery**

Enabling a framework for planned investment in MAVs requires a consistent approach across all relevant agencies and departments. Figure 21 illustrates the appropriate model of connectivity between stakeholders at national and local levels, coordinated via a central expert hub which can establish responsibilities and expectations set against policy and planning priorities.

### **7.1.4 Agree what criteria are appropriate to measure the economic, social and artistic contribution of the venues**

The arts contribute to a wide variety of sectors, both in themselves and as enablers of other goals. In developing a shared Arts Council/CCMA venues strategy, there is a need to establish a consistent understanding of the value of MAVs at Government, Local Authority and Arts Council level through the application of agreed criteria - solidifying the place of arts centres alongside leisure and heritage as essential strategic infrastructure. The key measures regarding Quality of Life and Place, as identified in the National Planning Framework, should be included.

Figure 21: National and Local Level Stakeholder Connectivity



## 7.2 Clusters and Networks

### 7.2.1 Establish and energise active venue clusters and networks

Further to the discussion in Section 6.1, and taking into account the existing venue networks described in Section 2.4, it is recommended that the concept of active collaboration between venues be much further developed with a view to both increasing productive capacity and to enhancing the art experiences and opportunities offered to audiences and artists. A two part structure is envisaged:

- 1) **County clusters:** clusters of venues would be created at county level, whereby designated leading arts organisations would share expertise and provide mentoring and technical support to smaller local and rural venues in their counties. These clusters would operate on a geographic basis, taking into account spatial and demographic needs. Local Authorities would have a significant role to play, along with the Arts Council, in stimulating and enabling the formation of such clusters. As with networks, the cluster leaders would be MAVs with the enthusiasm, capability

and vision to provide the necessary leadership. Those with the potential to fill that role could, in the first instance, be invited to present expressions of interest.

- 2) **Networks:** the existing venue networks concept could be further developed into a more integrated approach, expanding the level of engagement among members beyond touring. It is envisaged that networks would involve the formation of small groups of MAVs collaborating together to develop and fund productions across different art forms, and raise standards through joint creative planning and sharing expertise and other resources. These groups could be formed on the basis of actual or potential connections by theme, art form and/or location, and should be established with a long-term perspective. Such groups should be led by MAVs with a capacity to operate at national and international levels, and with a track record and capacity to provide real leadership. Potential leaders should be those with that capacity and a genuine interest and the creative vision necessary to bring this collaborative structure into being.

Appropriate funding arrangements would need to be made to support these networks and clusters, and recommendations are made accordingly in Section 7.3.

### **7.2.2 The clusters should engage with libraries, major festivals and other arts-related organisations**

Both libraries and major festivals effectively may be considered part of the wider infrastructure of venues and, in many cases, they command valuable resources. It would be in the interests of the venue clusters, libraries and festivals and other arts-related organisations to explore how they could develop partnerships that would enhance the production and delivery of great art to the benefit of both the public and artists.

### **7.2.3 Continuous Professional Development and Peer Learning should be embedded in the network and cluster agenda**

Opportunities for CPD become more deliverable in the context of networks and clusters where peer learning, skill sharing and knowledge exchange can be more readily accessed. This depends on the availability of necessary expertise to be shared, and the resources required for acquiring external specialism should also be more achievable when coming from a collective pot. From board level governance to next generation staff

and volunteers, regular training and development is a key to ensuring MAVs meet their potential and set rising standards for the sector.

## **7.3 Revenue Funding**

### **7.3.1 Funding for venues should be restructured into 2 venue categories: local and county**

Revenue funding for venues should be restructured to support the cluster development strategy, and to bring greater certainty and clarity to the process. Accordingly, it is proposed that venues be categorised into two levels, as follows:

#### ***Local***

Local venues can be categorised as those which fulfil an important role in their immediate environs, supporting local amateur and professional arts and presenting scale appropriate touring shows for local audiences. Investing in programmes which are particular to the place in which they operate, local venues are more likely to programme with an emphasis towards art forms which are most popular with their local audiences. They may not always be multi-disciplinary in their offer and should be able to articulate the rationale behind any programme policy. They should be active in linking in with other arts, culture and heritage provision locally and through members' organisations such as Theatre Forum.

### ***County***

County venues typically service a much larger population and spatial area than local venues. Under this categorisation, venues would be expected to deliver a year-round cross-art-form programme with a clearly articulated rationale for the make-up of the programme related to artistic development and providing access to a wide audience. County venues should be at the heart of the artistic community, providing employment, residencies and developmental opportunities. There is an expectation that these venues will showcase arts and culture from the creative community in their county, and will also connect with networks and touring partners to bring work from across the island. They should take a leadership position in county clusters, supporting local venues in their areas.

As a landmark provision for a county, these venues should have an active policy and programme which seeks to engage with all-ages audiences through education, broad reach and other creative initiatives which meet the arts and inclusion goals of the local authority and Arts Council. These venues would have the capacity and expertise to commission, develop, produce, co-produce, tour and present work from Ireland and abroad. They should be actively in partnership with other agencies and organisations engaged in the wider cultural space including education, health and library services.

**Indicative Criteria for Venue Categories****Local**

- local remit
- small capacity
- support amateur and professional arts, including touring productions, in-house productions and county-cluster produced work
- capable of presenting touring works (within the limits of their capacity)
- full-time director / general manager
- not necessarily multi-disciplinary, but have a programming policy
- local audience development plan in place.

**County**

- county remit, and beyond, based on spatial and demographic criteria
- medium to large capacity
- year-round, multiple art form programming
- an appropriate and well developed staffing structure, adequate to the demands of a county venue
- clear programming policy
- present touring works from Ireland and overseas
- commission, develop and produce/co-produce work for touring
- offer education, training and professional development programmes in partnership with education and training institutes/providers
- provide residencies and production opportunities
- showcase work by creative community in their county
- active, all-ages audience development plan in place
- leadership role in county clusters.



**7.3.2 Venue funding by the Arts Council and Local Authorities should evolve towards a more consistent and balanced structure within the context of the framework agreements between the AC and LAs, and should be related to the category of venue and productive capacity**

The analysis of venue funding in Table 2.6, Section 2.6.2, shows that the levels of funding provided by both the Arts Council and Local Authorities vary over very wide ranges as a share of total venue income - 1% to 100% in the case of the Local Authorities, and 1% to 76% in the case of the Arts Council. While the median values show a more modest average contribution (16% in the case of Local Authorities and 18% in the case of the Arts Council), it is evident that there are very wide disparities in funding levels, in both absolute and relative terms. It is unrealistic to think of trying to eliminate disparities in the short term, as to do so would almost certainly cause great damage. However, it is reasonable to set a goal of achieving a more consistent, shared balance of the respective funding contributions by the Arts Council and Local Authorities with a view to resolving existing disparities over a longer period of time - say 5-7 years. This can be accomplished within the context of framework agreements between the Arts Council and Local Authorities, which would, *inter alia*, review existing funding levels for venues delivered by each party, and set targets for future funding levels.

**7.3.3 The priority in funding venues should be on enhancing their productive capacity**

The shared goals of the Arts Council and Local Authorities with regard to arts venues would best be met through investment in enhancing the productive capacity of the existing venue infrastructure. The productive capacity of venues embraces their facilities, staff, skills and production budgets. It is also dependent on their ability to employ artists and improve venue output in qualitative terms. Increase in venue funding should be focused specifically on productive capacity.

#### **7.3.4 Indicative funding agreements with a 5-year horizon should be considered by both the Arts Council and Local Authorities**

While actual funding commitments can only be agreed on a calendar year basis, there is no real reason why indicative 5-year funding plans cannot be agreed. Most of the MAVs in receipt of the Arts Council's Venues funding have been receiving grants on an annual basis for years, which shows that funding is not as uncertain as often thought. This would give venues a more secure sense of their existence, and would enable them to develop programmes that are not bounded by the calendar year. Funding agreements could be reached on the basis of 5-year plans prepared by venues, which would be updated annually. The Arts Council would not be committed to the level of funding indicated, apart from that for the first year of the plan, with the overriding proviso being the receipt by the Arts Council of continued funding from Government. The 5-year funding horizon could be aligned with the terms of the Local Authority Councils.

#### **7.3.5 The process of venue grant application assessment should be reviewed with greater alignment between the Arts Council and Local Authority processes**

The present process of grant application assessment is broadly consistent with the approach adopted elsewhere, but it is appropriate to review it now with a view to making any improvements that would suit both the applicant venues, the Arts Council and Local Authorities. The guiding principles in any grant scheme operation should be: transparency, fairness and professionalism. Thus, grant applications should be simplified to the extent possible to facilitate ease of response, and unnecessary information demands should be deleted. This should be done without compromising the essential need for an application form to gather information necessary for the purpose of the administering the scheme successfully.

Applicants should be provided with a very clear briefing on how to complete the form to achieve the best outcome. All criteria that might be applied in the evaluation of the applications should be stated clearly, with any currently implicit criteria being made explicit (see Section 6.3).

All scoring of applications against criteria is inevitably subjective, except where objective quantitative measures can be applied, such as population, audience numbers / occupancy rates and financial data. However, in the case of arts venues, there are few such quantitative evidence-based criteria available. The use of a small group of evaluators scoring applications independently of each other can help to reduce individual biases, and this should be considered for the assessment of Venues' applications.

Finally, Local Authority and Arts Council applications could be aligned to simplify the processes for applicants (deletion of rest of sentence). A shared 5-year funding horizon (see 7.3.4) would further ease the administrative burden.

## **7.4 Capital Funding**

### **7.4.1 DCHG capital funding for maintenance and upgrades should be made available on a continuous basis**

The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht plays a vital role in the development and maintenance of the arts infrastructure in Ireland. However, its capital funds are only made available periodically at irregular intervals, the latest allocation being the Arts and Culture Capital Scheme 2016-2018. A better continuity of funding for the maintenance and upgrading of arts infrastructure would be a significant improvement, and this could be provided by way of an annual fund or successive multi-annual funds. Such a continuous schedule of funding would also achieve efficiencies as more timely expenditure could avoid further deterioration and higher costs.

A central consideration in funding upgrades should be a focus on enabling an increase in productive capacity. This would call for a greater alignment between capital and revenue funding.

### **7.4.2 Advantage should be taken of the funding opportunities offered by the Rural and Urban Regeneration and Development Funds to secure additional capital funding for arts venues**

The two Regeneration and Development Funds, established as part of Project 2040, will together provide a total of €3 billion in capital funding for Urban and Rural Regeneration over the period to 2027. These funds would not substitute for the continuous DCHG funding stream recommended in 7.4.1, but could provide significant funding for individual projects over the next 8 years.

**7.4.3 New venues should only be built on the basis of a comprehensive and rigorous analysis of sustainability; the first priority is to invest in the productive capacity of existing venues.**

Continued high population growth is projected to add almost 20% to Ireland's resident population by 2038. If the present ratio of year-round venues to population were to be rigidly maintained, this would result in a significant number of new venues being brought on stream over the coming 20 years. However, as new venues are very expensive propositions, in both construction and operations, any proposal to build one should be subjected to rigorous viability analysis, including whole of life costs. A broad guideline might be to initiate research into the most appropriate response when new population expansion in any area exceeds, say, 35,000 people. In addition to the viability analysis, the need for a new venue in any particular area of significant population growth should be assessed carefully, explored in consultation with the local communities, and tested through the provision of services by existing providers in the region. The first priority in any such assessment should be to invest in the productive capacity of existing venues.

## **7.5 Next Steps Towards Implementation**

The proposed new approach will take up to three years to implement, as venues move to their appropriate categories and funding arrangements. The first steps that might be taken are as follows:

- 1) The Arts Council and CCMA to review the proposed Framework, with a view to refining it as appropriate.
- 2) The Arts Council and CCMA to establish an Implementation Group which should define and scope out the objectives, structure, manner of collaboration and range of activities and deliverables for the networks and clusters. The models should be sufficiently flexible to accommodate the diversity inherent in the venues sector, while

at the same time setting clear expectations that are consistent with the goals of the Arts Council's strategy (*'Making Great Art Work'*), and with the objectives of the Local Authorities. The membership of the Implementation Group should be drawn from the Arts Council, the Management Liaison Group, and the CCMA/Arts Council working group, and should include a number of representatives of the venues sector.

- 3) The proposed Implementation Group to establish the respective expectations for venues at local and county level, as well as the demographic and spatial criteria for the latter group.
- 4) The Implementation Group to identify into which group each venue falls based on its work and productive capacity.
- 5) An initial pilot cluster programme should be set up with the goal of developing and refining the proposed cluster model. The emphasis in the cluster should be on increasing the productive capacity of the participating venues. The pilot and subsequent roll-out of the cluster programme will depend on funding being made available to support it.

## **8. APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1:**

#### ***Terms of Reference***

## A1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Schedule 1 – The Services

#### 1. Overview

The County and City Management Association (CCMA) is the local government management network. Its members are Chief Executives of the County and City Councils and the Assistant Chief Executives of Dublin City Council. It is a non-statutory body that works to ensure that the influence of local authority Chief Executives is brought to bear on the development and implementation of relevant policy.

#### The Arts Council

The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon is the Irish government agency for developing the arts. We work in partnership with artists, arts organisations, public policy makers and others to build a central place for the arts in Irish life.

The Arts Council is guided by its Strategy “**Making Great Art Work**”.

We set policy to ensure that all of our funding is spent strategically, that all of our actions reflect the long-term interests of the public and that all of our decisions are transparent and fair. We aim to have policies which are current and relevant and which reflect our role as an expert agency in the arts.

#### 2. Background

This is a tender for a contract commissioned by the Arts Council on behalf of the Arts Council and local authorities for the review of arts centres / venues in the context of a new initiative between local authorities and the Arts Council.

Tenders are being sought from suitably qualified individual service providers or from a consortium/partnership of service providers.

In January 2016 the Arts Council signed a 10-year agreement *A Framework for Collaboration (2016 – 2025)*<sup>1</sup> with the local authority sector through the County and City Management Association (CCMA) in which both parties undertook to work more strategically in partnership in developing the arts in Ireland.

Under *A Framework for Collaboration (2016 – 2025)* the following goals were agreed:

- To optimise our shared investment in the arts at local and regional level and ensure we are applying resources in the most equitable and efficient way possible
- To effectively integrate the key principles of this agreement into relevant future planning and development strategies of the Arts Council and local authorities

<sup>1</sup>[A Framework for Collaboration \(2016-2015\)](#)

The following values informing our work together are also agreed:

- A conviction that by working together we can be more effective
- A public service ethos that has the citizen as its core
- A commitment to transparency and accountability
- A commitment to regular open and inclusive communication
- A mutual respect for the distinct but overlapping remits and mission of both parties.

Arising out of these goals and contained in the shared work programme for this partnership, there is a priority to:

- Develop a co-ordinated, spatially-informed strategy to support and develop the infrastructure for the arts

This priority is given effect in the shared objective to:

- Produce a strategic plan for the built arts infrastructure

This objective informs the joint action to:

- Review the nationwide infrastructure of arts centres and venues from a range of perspectives

The review will meet the action outlined in the Arts Council's strategy 2017 – 2019 Making Great Art Work<sup>2</sup> to:

- review our existing funding relationship with arts centres and venues from 2017 in partnership with Local Government
- introduce a new investment approach from 2018 using the following criteria: spatial and demographic analysis, quality of artistic programming, levels of public engagement and partnerships and economic sustainability

### 3. Governance

Carrying forward this action, a review is now being undertaken of arts centres and venues across the country on a joint basis between the CCMA and the Arts Council. The following governance structure will manage and monitor the review:

Arts Council / Local Government Management Liaison Group

- Oversight of the project
- Agreement of Terms of Reference
- Nominations to the advisory panel
- Receive update reports on progress
- Agreement of the final report

<sup>2</sup>[Making Great Art Work 3-year plan 2017 - 2019](#)

#### Arts Council / Local Government Working Group

- Oversight of implementation plan
- Drafting the Terms of Reference
- Make proposals on the composition of advisory panel
- Consultation with relevant stakeholders
- Appointment of service provider(s)
- Organisation of consultative meetings

#### Advisory panel

An advisory panel has been agreed by the Management Liaison Group which contains a range of expertise in all aspects of the review and representatives of all stakeholders. The panel will:

- Provide information and insight over the course of the review
- Be a source of advice, data and evidence from all disciplines and areas of relevance as necessary
- Be informed of the overall aims and progress of the review

#### 4. Scope of the review

1. To describe the current landscape in which arts centres and venues in Ireland operate, taking account of the context of government strategy and policy.
2. To outline and consider areas of common interest as well as the differing priorities within and between the Arts Council and Local Government in supporting this sector.
3. To undertake research (including comparative study from other fields in Ireland and internationally) to assist in informing the review.
4. To conduct the review in the context of serving both public engagement and artists as expressed in the *Framework for Collaboration and Making Great Art Work*.
5. To describe arts centres and venue types in terms of size, approach to arts provision and location.
6. To consider future innovative models for creating strategic opportunities for cultural and arts hubs to align with / share other facilities having a community based and arts / cultural ethos.
7. To consider (but not be limited to) the following factors in the course of the review:
  - Quality and nature of artistic programming
  - Support of individual artists
  - Public engagement
  - Economic sustainability
  - Strategic partnerships



8. To conduct this review from a spatial perspective and in doing so to differentiate between the role of arts buildings in arts and cultural development regionally and sub-regionally. Work undertaken by the Arts Council in conjunction with the All-Ireland Research Observatory (AIRO) will be made available to the successful Tenderer.
9. To outline and examine the viability and sustainability of current models of support, financial and otherwise.
10. To consider the challenges / risks which have arisen and which are likely to arise in relation to this sector, including (but not limited to):
  - a. Changing patterns of engagement with the arts
  - b. Broader cultural changes that may impact on arts attendance and engagement
11. To consider all the above in the light of the economic and public sector in which Local Government / Arts Council funding operates (particularly as expressed through the National Planning Framework, the National Investment Strategy, Creative Ireland, Culture 2025)

#### **5. Required services**

The review and associated report will be required to:

1. Describe and reflect government policy on the arts and align proposals within this context.
2. Provide case studies of models of practice from Ireland and internationally, that illustrate proposals for future support and development.
3. Identify models of best practice and outline where there is a deficit in provision and accessibility to the arts.
4. Outline the resources required for the different types of arts centres and venues described and the scale of support each requires.
5. Recommend intervention strategies and propose actions to maximise the likely available resources (infrastructural, human and financial), giving consideration to flexible and scalable models of provision for arts centres.
6. Make proposals as to how Local Government / Arts Council might best plan to support the sector in a co-ordinated way, providing a rationale for such support so that resources can be shared on merit and in a transparent, fair and equitable manner and consider the need to address any imbalance in support structures.
7. Provide models of development for funding structures to transition from existing models in a planned way that ensures the stability of arts provision nationally.
8. Consider and review existing models of governance of arts centres and venues and propose recommendations in the light of new legislation, codes of practice and recommended best practice

## **Appendix 2:**

### ***Members of the Working Group and Management Liaison Group***

## **A2. MEMBERS OF THE WORKING GROUP AND MANAGEMENT LIAISON GROUP**

The Members of the Working Group were:

- Val Ballance, Head of Venues, Arts Council
- Deirdre Behan, Strategic Development Director, Arts Council
- Donal Brennan, Finance Director, Offaly County Council
- Monica Corcoran, Strategic Development Manager, Arts Council
- Barbara Heslin, Director of Services, Longford County Council
- Somhairle MacConghail, Arts Officer, Monaghan County Council
- Siobhán Mulcahy, Arts Officer, Clare County Council
- Traolach Ó Fionnáin, Arts Officer, Donegal County Council
- Sinead O'Reilly, Head of Local Arts Services, Arts Council
- Michael Quinn, Director of Services, Waterford County Council.

The Members of the Management Liaison Group were:

- Deirdre Behan, Strategic Development Director, Arts Council
- Ann-Marie Delaney, CE Offaly County Manager
- Pat Dowling, CE Clare County Manager
- Orlaith McBride, Director, Arts Council
- Liz Meaney, Arts Director, Arts Council
- Paul Reid, CE Fingal County Manager.

## **Appendix 3:**

### ***Policy Detail***

## A3. POLICY DETAIL

### A3.1 Local Government Act (2001) and Local Authority Reform Act (2014)

The Local Government Act (2001), under section 63, paragraph 1, states that the functions of a local authority include:

*"(d) to take such action as it considers necessary or desirable **to promote the community interest** in accordance with section 66". (emphasis added)*

Section 66, subsection 3, (b) states that,

*"For the purposes of this section a measure, activity or thing is deemed to promote the interests of the local community **if it promotes, directly or indirectly, social inclusion or the social, economic, environmental, recreational, cultural, community or general development of the administrative area** (or any part of it) of the local authority concerned or of the local community (or any group consisting of members of it)". (emphasis added)*

Section 67 then states that,

*"...a local authority may take such measures, engage in such activities or do such things (including the incurring of expenditure) as it considers necessary or desirable **to promote the interests of the local community** in relation to the matters indicated in subsection (2)", namely:*

- (i) general recreational and leisure activities,*
- (ii) sports, games and similar activities,*
- (iii) **artistic, linguistic and cultural activities,***
- (iv) civic improvements,*
- (v) general environmental and heritage protection and improvement,...*

The Arts are mentioned again in section 78 of the Local Government Act (2001) where it states that:

*"(2) (2) A library authority may, in particular, arrange for the provision of the following services:*

*...(b) activities and events of **artistic, linguistic, educational, cultural, recreational, community or similar interest**;..."*

The word "culture" and the phrase "cultural infrastructure" crop up in several places in the Local Government Act (2001), specifically in section 129 (City and County Development Boards), where it states:

*"(5) The functions of a Board are —*

*(a) to take such steps, as the Board may consider appropriate, **to enable each of the bodies and interests, whose functions affect the economic, social or cultural development of the county or city** or any part of the county or city and its people (in this section referred to as the "community") to provide the maximum benefit each of them can to such development, both individually and collectively;*

*(b) to draw up a strategy (in this section referred to as the "strategy") for the **economic, social and cultural development** of the county or city and the community;"*

The 2014 Act, under section 63 which deals with the co-operation of public bodies and regional assemblies, amends Chapter III of the Planning and Development Act (2000) and, with respect to section 23 of the latter Act, states:

*"(2) The regional spatial and economic strategy shall, for the whole of the region to which the strategy relates and in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development and the economic policies and objectives of the Government, address the following matters:*

*(b) in respect of regional economic strategy—*

*(v) identifying the regional attributes that are essential to enhancing **regional economic performance, including—***

*(IV) the social, community and cultural facilities,..."*

With regard to the preparation of a Local Economic and Community Plan, section 44 of the 2014 Act amends section 66 of the 2001 Act, including the following:

*"(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), promotion of economic development includes but is not limited to —*

*(c) identifying local attributes that are essential—*

*(i) to enhancing local economic performance, such as the quality of the environment and the qualities of cities, towns and rural areas, including —*

*(ii) employment opportunities and quality of life, and the means by which these may be utilised to enhance competitiveness, and be supported by investment decisions relating to economic infrastructure (including transportation, water services, energy, communications and waste management), **together with social and cultural facilities....***

### **A3.2 Culture 2025 - Éire Ildánach: A Framework Policy to 2025**

Culture 2025 is the first framework policy to embrace the whole cultural sector and is established based on the following values:

- The intrinsic value of culture
- The value of culture to our lives and our communities
- The right of everyone to participate in the cultural life of the nation
- The importance of the Irish language, our cultural heritage, folklore, games, music and the uniqueness of our Gaeltacht areas
- The value of cultural diversity, informed by the many traditions and social backgrounds now in Ireland
- The value of culture as a means of fostering a more sustainable future for Ireland, including through economic and social policy
- The value of culture in presenting Ireland to the world.

### **A3.3 Arts Council Departmental Policies 2018**

The summary below sets out the policy overview and key priorities drawn from the eleven departmental policy papers which relate to the role of MAVs, venues and arts centres.

#### ***A3.3.1 Spatial Strategy***

**Policy:**

- Ensure policy and strategy are informed by the National Planning Framework and by good spatial and demographic analysis
- Develop our key strategic partnership with local government
- Ensure investment in arts infrastructure is strategic and sustainable
- Advise and advocate to ensure that national, regional and local capital provision is coordinated and sustainable.

**Key Priorities:**

- Support contextual planning and joined up thinking.

#### ***A3.3.2 Visual Arts***

**Policy:**

Arts Council support is critical to the existence, development and vitality of the independent visual arts sector in Ireland, as it is an art form that does not have significant ways of generating income from alternative sources.

**Key Priorities:**

- Mapping opportunities and engagement in venues and festivals
- Review quality of spaces (design / scale for suitability)
- Prioritise high quality spaces to support the presentation of visual arts.

#### ***A3.3.3 Architecture***

**Policy:**

The Arts Council has primary responsibility for the development of the art form of architecture in Ireland. It fulfils this responsibility by supporting the creative development of architects and the public's engagement with architecture.

**Key priorities:**

- Access to and the support of programming showcasing architecture.



#### ***A3.3.4 Dance***

**Policy:**

The Arts Council's role in dance is central to the provision of a national infrastructure for dance in Ireland. It also supports dance artists in the creation of works, thus providing for and developing public engagement with the art form for both audiences and active participants.

**Key priorities:**

- Develop the artist in line with clear specific needs
- Support participation and dissemination.

#### ***A3.3.5 Public Art***

**Policy:**

The Arts Council's work in this area is an example of its role as a development agency, working in collaboration with key stakeholders including government department and agencies, local authorities and commissioners. There are numerous examples of Per Cent for Art projects which demonstrate its potential to provide creative opportunities for professional artist and to extend the reach of contemporary art to new and diverse audiences. But there are also challenges in relation to its implementation which can limit its creative potential.

**Key Priorities:**

- Support public engagement, commissioning and quality of delivery on Per Cent for Art scheme initiatives.

***A3.3.6 Traditional Arts*****Policy:**

The Arts Council's role in traditional arts is to invest in their continuity and evolution as they take new and fresh directions in composition, fostering technique and repertoire and, adapting creatively to new artistic environments and influences.

**Key Priorities:**

- Support access to traditional arts experiences
- Foster regional diversity
- Incentivise inter-regional artistic collaboration
- Explore the creation of artistic hubs.

***A3.3.7 Film*****Policy:**

The Arts Council supports film artists and provides for, and develops, audiences for cultural cinema. The Arts Council's role is a discrete one that is distinct to that of the Irish Film Board which works to develop the Irish film industry.

**Key Priorities:**

- Access and wider dissemination opportunities
- Exploring new and advanced exhibition models nationally.

***A3.3.8 Literature*****Policy:**

The Arts Council's role in literature is to support the development of the art form and it is a key player in the provision of a national infrastructure for literary culture in Ireland.

**Key Priorities:**

- Strengthen venues' capacity in literary programming
- Support and develop residencies
- Library collaborations

- Developing supports in publishing / accessing / readership of literature in the Irish language.

### ***A3.3.9 Circus, Street Arts & Spectacle***

#### **Policy:**

The Arts Council supports both strands of circus and, through direct support and strategic intervention, engages with the sector to assist individuals and organisations in developing high-quality performance and participatory work.

#### **Key Priorities:**

- The role of built infrastructure in supporting the development of circus, street arts and spectacle as a resource
- Access to Expertise / co-producers / commissioners / curators / dramaturgists
- Developing capacity / mentorship / training.

### ***A3.3.10 Festivals***

#### **Policy:**

The Arts Council's role is to advocate for a diverse and varied arts festival ecology and to provide a chain of funding supports that encourage: models of national and international significance and best practice; models that increase opportunities for public engagement or develop the work of an artist / art form; support for small festivals to deliver quality arts experiences for audiences; and festival programmes engaged with, and relevant to, the local community.

#### **Key Priorities:**

- Festivals are often the entry points to the arts for participants and audiences
- Supporting a diverse ecology
- Vulnerable funding ecology – venues role in hosting / supporting
- Creative risk taking
- Participation & engagement.

### ***A3.3.11 Theatre***

#### **Policy:**

The Arts Council supports non-commercial, professional theatre production in Ireland. It seeks to support artistic excellence in both the standard practice and level of ambition.

The Arts Council recognises the many and varied ways theatre artists work, and aims to support artists whose work seeks to engage in a meaningful way with audiences across Ireland and beyond. Venues are fundamentally linked to theatre as the primary resource in which theatre making and participation occur

**Key Priorities:**

- Recognising opportunities to strengthen the sector
- Alignment in goals for a greater diversity of programmes in venues and arts centres
- Mentoring
- Curation / creative production
- Engagement
- Production / technical best practice.

**A3.4 Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment**

DCCAE Strategy 2018 – 2020 is based on seventeen sustainable development goals in line with United Nations, Transforming Our World, The 2030 Agenda to Sustainable Development. These goals are:

- 1) No Poverty
- 2) Zero Hunger
- 3) Good Health and Well-Being for People
- 4) Quality Education
- 5) Gender Equality
- 6) Clean Water and Sanitation
- 7) Affordable and Clean Energy
- 8) Decent Work and Economic Growth
- 9) Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- 10) Reducing Inequalities
- 11) Sustainable Cities and Communities
- 12) Responsible Consumption and Production
- 13) Climate Action
- 14) Life Below Water
- 15) Life on Land
- 16) Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- 17) Partnerships and Goals.

Specifically meeting issues relating to buildings, Ireland 2040 states its priorities and intentions as follows:

#### ***A3.4.1 Energy Efficiency***

- Investment in energy efficiency, with upgrades to homes increasing from 30,000 to 45,000 per annum from 2021 to achieve a minimum BER Rating 'B'.
- Investments in energy efficiency of existing commercial and public building stock with a target of all public buildings and at least one-third of total commercial premises upgraded to BER Rating 'B'.
- Supports for changing out oil-fired boilers to heat pumps, along with the provision of roof solar energy panels, in at least 170,000 homes.

#### ***A3.4.2 Renewable Energy***

- New Renewable Electricity Support Scheme to support up to 4,500 megawatts of additional renewable electricity by 2030.
- Energy research funding to accelerate diversification away from fossil fuels to green energy, including wind, wave, solar, biomass, biofuels, biogas and hydrogen.
- Full roll-out of the new Support Scheme for Renewable Heat Climate Action Fund to leverage investment by public and private bodies in climate action measures.

## **Appendix 4:**

### ***Case Studies***

## A4. CASE STUDIES

### A4.1 Theatre Royal, Waterford

#### The Numbers

- **Attendance:** 80% of the audience lives within approx. 30 mins drive (2016).
- **Funding:** Earned income is the main source of income (74% in 2016), with AC and LA funding only accounting for 10% and 8% of income respectively.
- **Staffing:** approx. 35 in total - 4 almost full-time, 4 part-time, as well as part-time café/bar staff (who work on an almost permanent basis), casual and CE scheme staff.
- **Capital Funding:** Within the last 12 years, significant upgrades/renovations were funded through €1.5m from DCHG and €200k from the LA. There were significant other additional grants, from local and central government, towards restoration costs estimated in the region of €6 million.



#### A4.1.1 Mission and Role

Theatre Royal Waterford is one of Ireland's oldest theatres - a theatre with a strong heritage and lengthy connection to its city. Waterford was a vibrant cultural centre in the late 1700s, hosting many international celebrities and developing many native talents that went on to international success. In the 1800s, it was decided to upgrade the existing Playhouse in the Georgian City Hall, and in 1876 the Theatre Royal opened its doors as a bijou Victorian theatre to significant public interest<sup>26</sup>. During the late 1800s and up to the mid 1900s it hosted many leading figures from a variety of disciplines, including Oscar Wilde, Percy French, the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, the Buffalo Bill Cody Show and Harold Pinter (the latter appeared as part of the Anew McMaster

<sup>26</sup> The police had to be called to restore order to the crowd that had gathered outside pending the opening of the box office.

company). It also operated as a cinema for a period of time, being granted a licence for Cinematograph performances in 1910.

Financial difficulties are common among performing arts venues and Theatre Royal is no different. Back as far as 1955 there was a recommendation that it be converted into Council offices as a resolution for its financial difficulties, but with the establishment of the Theatre Royal Society and a well-supported fund raising campaign, the theatre was saved. Since then the Theatre is also known as The People's Theatre and has been home to:

- Festival of Light Opera
- Féile na Scoileanna
- Tops of the Town
- Old Tyme Music Society
- The Waterford Pantomime Society
- Waterford Dramatic Ballet Companies.

Since the turn of the century, the theatre, foyer and dressing room wing have been renovated through the Access II scheme.

Today, Theatre Royal remains a highly-attractive Victorian theatre in a Georgian building and is a member of the Theatre Forum, under the Artistic Directorship of Ben Barnes, former Artistic Director of the Abbey Theatre. The newly-developing Viking Quarter has been growing up around it in Waterford City, attracting tourists as well as locals into the city centre.

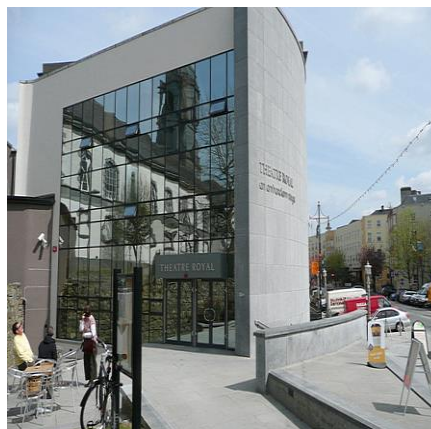
The theatre acts as a receiving and production house, and also does ticketing for other festivals in the areas (e.g. Spraoi, Imagine). It presents a programme of theatre, music, dance and other live performances for the population of Waterford and the surrounding areas. It offers an eclectic programme but with a frequent turnover in events, which is a big strain on the system. In 2017, there were 86 separate events presented.

Theatre interior (top),  
 Georgian Vestibule  
 (bottom right) and  
 wedding set-up (bottom  
 left).





There is strong community usage of the theatre and strong demand for locally produced community and amateur musicals, as well as for popular national and international tourings. It can be a challenge to get audiences for less accessible, 'high brow', work. An additional factor is the challenge of producing new work in an environment where there is no-one producing on a regular basis since the demise of Red Kettle.



The theatre is also available for private hire, including weddings.

#### **A4.1.2      Operating Model**

The Theatre has a Commercial Manager (part-time), a Theatre Manager (almost full-time), an Artistic Director (part-time, on a consultative basis) and a Technical Manager (full-time). It also has a four part-time marketing, box office and front of house staff. These are supported by roughly 27 additional part-time, casual and CE staff.

Cashflow is an issue and the theatre operates almost on a 'hand to mouth' basis, as well as carrying a small amount of historic debt. The majority of operational finance is funded from earned income. A small AC grant goes towards underwriting/guaranteeing shows and production, and a small grant from Waterford Council goes towards staffing and summer opening.

The venue is also now liable for VAT.

#### **A4.1.3      Key Relationships**

The theatre has strategic and operational relationships with a number of partners:

- Theatre Forum
- Arts Council
- Waterford City & County Council
- DCHG
- Theatre Friends, the corporate and individual sponsorship scheme.

The theatre has relationships with Fishamble, Rough Magic, OTC (now INO) and independent producers - Michael Scott, Donal Shiels, Breda Cashe and others - and tries to maintain a consistent number of theatre performances in the course of any year. However, through Four Rivers, the theatre would aspire to helping to produce regional professional work to complement these visiting productions.

The emerging Four Rivers initiative is actively planning for 2019 to provide good quality theatre productions to the theatres in the region - Garter Lane, Theatre Royal, Wexford Arts Centre, National Opera House, GB Shaw in Carlow, Watergate, St Michael's New Ross. The hub would serve these venues in the first instance, but would not preclude touring its work to other suitable venues further afield, such as the Civic, Everyman, Pavilion and others.

#### **A4.1.4 Learnings**

- Popular acts can provide regular and important revenue for a venue that relies on earned income for a significant proportion of its finance and cannot rely on regular support of significant scale from public bodies.
- Reliance on presenting such acts has its downsides for a venue.
  - The rapid turnover of events causes strain on the venue's systems.
  - It does not provide support for local artists or for the creation of new artwork.
  - It does not provide a creative platform through which to engage the local community or to reflect local issues.
  - It does not attract support from the AC.
- There are opportunities for a variety of venues to work together for creative purpose, as reflected in the Four Rivers Initiative.

## A4.2 Regional Cultural Centre, Letterkenny

### The Numbers

**Attendance:** n.a.

**Funding:** €246,000 revenue income (2016); 90% of income comes via the LA (60%) and the AC (30%), with earned income accounting for 10%.

**Staffing:** 4 full-time, 1 part-time

**Cost of construction and fit-out:** €5 million, co-funded by the IFI, Dept. of Arts, Sport & Tourism, and Donegal County Council.



### A4.2.1 Mission and Role

The Regional Cultural Centre (RCC) in Letterkenny is one of a number of cultural and leisure facilities developed by Donegal County Council. It is a purpose-built, multi-disciplinary arts centre, specialising in visual arts, music, film and community arts.

The building has attracted some very positive media attention since it opened in 2007. The distinctive glass and aluminium structure, designed by Letterkenny based MacGabhann Architects, won best building in the Irish Opus Architecture and Construction Awards 2008, and



according to the Irish Times: *"Letterkenny's impressive new arts building places Donegal in an international context rather than on the periphery"*.

The centre includes one of the finest white cube art galleries in Ireland and an excellent black box auditorium with 140 retractable seats and a 220 standing capacity. It also houses full cinema facilities, three multi-purpose workshops, two dedicated digital media

suites, two small music rehearsal rooms and two foyer galleries. An ongoing programme of local, national and international art exhibitions is presented throughout the year. Admission to exhibitions is free.

As is the case with other venues, the RCC finds it an increasing challenge to get people to attend paid events, particularly if the events are in any way niche or specialist.

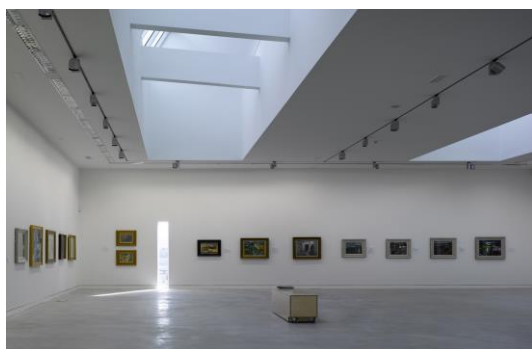
In 2017, it continued to commission and show major Irish and international visual arts exhibitions, with the exhibition programme dominated by a number of large-scale, one-person shows by Donegal artists. It also presented a year-long programme of almost 30 national and international classical, folk, jazz, world and indie music concerts.

#### **A4.2.2      Operating Model**

The Centre is operated as part of the Council's Cultural Services that also includes libraries, museum, archives and the arts office. Apart from annual revenue funding, the RCC also benefits from full-time support in the areas of maintenance, IT, finance, communications, health and safety, and Irish language.

The four full-time staff comprise a Director, a Programme & Digital Media Co-ordinator, a Technician and Front of House Manager.

Clockwise from right: flexible black box space, workshop space and gallery.



### **A4.2.3      Key Relationships**

The RCC's strategies include a high degree of partnership with other organisations in order to maximise the delivery of mutual goals, presenting events in clusters such as festivals, in order to maximise audiences, and organising events that have the capacity to bring in-built audiences.

In particular, it has a close working relationship with An Grianán next door, which has a primary focus on theatre and is therefore complementary. The two co-operate in a number of ways, including:

- the use of anti-clash diaries
- employment of staff under a Service Level Agreement (employed by An Grianán for the RCC, an approach that started during the embargo on public sector staff recruitment during the last recession)
- joint projects, e.g. Earagail Arts, Bealtaine.

It also works with a number of other partners, including the sharing of produced work across other venues. Partners include:

- the County Library
- Donegal Music Education Partnership (based in the RCC)
- Glebe Gallery
- An Gailearaí
- The Nerve Centre
- the Donegal Art Teachers Association.

Other important relationships are with,

- OPW
- Fáilte Ireland
- and cross-border funders/schemes such as IFI and Peace III.

#### **A4.2.4      Learnings**

- Working in partnership across venues and events has creative and practical benefits. It can result in events of scale (e.g. Earagail Arts, Bealtaine), sharing of audiences and sharing of resources.
- Working with specific groups that have in-built audiences can increase attendance.
- Significant public funding is required for venues that do not have a primarily-commercial focus - particularly visual arts venues and/or venues that are smaller in scale.

### A4.3 An Grianán

#### The Numbers

- **Attendance:** 45,000 (2016)
- **Funding:** Revenue income €1.4m (2016); over 40% of income is earned, with approx. 7% coming from the AC and 15% from the LA; 19% comes from other sources.
- **Staffing:** It has 10 full-time staff (3 of which are on behalf of the RCC) as well as up to 25 part-time and casual staff. The café/bar staff are part-time but almost permanent.
- **Capital Funding:** €92,000 for refurbishment and upgrade facilities to front of house and the auditorium (DCHG & Donegal Co. Co., 2018)



AN GRIANÁN  
THEATRE

#### A4.3.1 Mission and Role

An Grianán Theatre opened in October 1999 and rapidly earned a reputation for artistic excellence and accessibility. It is now established as an integral part of Donegal's cultural landscape.

The theatre has a 383-seat auditorium and one of the largest theatre stages in Ireland. It is distinctive among regional venues for its success as a theatre producer, with over thirteen full-scale touring shows having been produced to-date including works by Brian Friel, Cathal



ó Searcaigh and Paul Boyd. In addition to creating high quality programme for the theatre's growing audience, these in-house productions also provide considerable



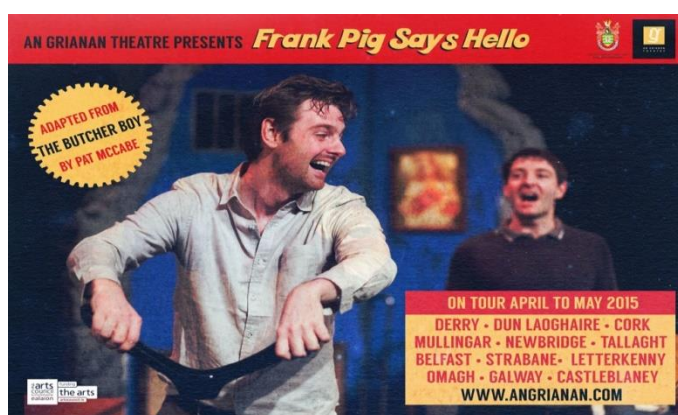
employment and career development opportunities for a great number of local actors, directors, designers and technical personnel.

The theatre also maintains a busy programme of community and outreach events including regular drama classes for children, a youth theatre for young people as well as an exciting summer programme of performing arts for children and young people. It is also the official box office and a host venue for the annual Earagail Arts Festival, Donegal's largest arts festival.

The theatre is open to the public all day and has an excellent café/bar. The café is a significant asset in engaging the community, bringing life into the building and also catering for business sector/meetings, community/group events, etc.

Right: one of An Grianán's own productions.

Below: audience enjoying a live performance.



#### **A4.3.2      Operating Model**

An Grianán Theatre is a municipal facility, commissioned and owned by Donegal County Council and managed on its behalf by An Grianán Theatre Management CLG. Donegal



County Council supports An Grianán Theatre with an annual revenue grant (€250k from the arts programme budget in 2017) and the theatre also receives annual support from The Arts Council and the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. An Grianán Theatre has also received support in recent years from the EU Peace III Programme for a programme of arts events and commissions delivered on a cross-community and cross-border basis, as managed on behalf of the Special EU Programmes Body by Donegal County Council. It has a capital funding 'shopping list' of approx. €250k.

The theatre works with the LA under a Cultural Use Agreement, with the LA taking responsibility for maintenance and insurance. Governance by the LA is managed via Board representation and an annual report.

Full-time staff includes the Director, Technical Manager, the Box Office and Marketing Manager and Assistant, and a Technician. There is a heavy reliance on CE schemes for staffing of box office and ushers (up to 15 staff), which requires supervision and considerable investment in training.

The café was operated under franchise until the recession and has been operated directly since then.

#### **A4.3.3      Key Relationships**

An Grianán has worked in close partnership with other key players in the county and nationally – including Earagail Arts Festival and the Regional Cultural Centre - to invigorate and develop the local arts scene.

The development of the RCC next door to An Grianán was part of an ambitious plan by the LA to create an arts campus, with the theatre focusing more on performing arts and the RCC on visual arts as well as being a small music venue. It continues to work closely with the RCC in very practical ways, as outlined previously under the RCC Case Study.

Creative partners have included Yew Tree Theatre Company, Cork Opera House, Pavilion Theatre, Civic Theatre and The Lyric, Belfast. Commissioned shows have included new works by Little John Nee, Joe Brennan, Workhouse Theatre and Fidget Feet Aerial Dance Company.

Important operational and funding relationships are with the LA, AC, DCHG, and the Dept. of Employment & Social Protection. There are small sponsorship/in-kind sponsorship relationships with Highland Radio and Pramerica.



#### **A4.3.4**      **Learnings**

- Larger venues can play an important role in producing touring work, which benefits smaller venues as well as providing local employment.
- The LA plays an important role in creating and sustaining a cluster of arts facilities through its long term vision, financial and other supports.
- Relationships between complementary, as well as larger and smaller, venues can benefit the venues as well as the local artists and communities.
- There is an over-reliance on community employment schemes to fill staffing gaps created by lack of funding.
- A café/bar can play an important role in animating a venue and providing an opportunity for community engagement.

## A4.4 Roscommon Arts Centre

### The Numbers

- **Attendance:** 16,500 (2016) 85% of whom are from Roscommon.
- **Funding:** €127,043 from Roscommon County Council (33% of turnover); approx. 43% earned income; the balance of income is derived from the Arts Council and Creative Ireland.
- **Staffing:** 3 full-time, 1 contract, panel of 8 on zero hours contract for box office.
- **Construction and Fit-Out:** €650,000 ex vat, provided by
  - €250,000 Department of Arts
  - €400,000 Roscommon County Council.



### A4.4.1 Mission and Role

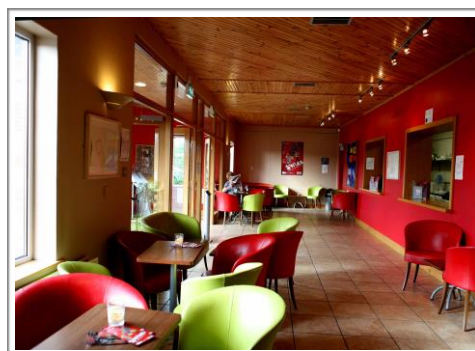
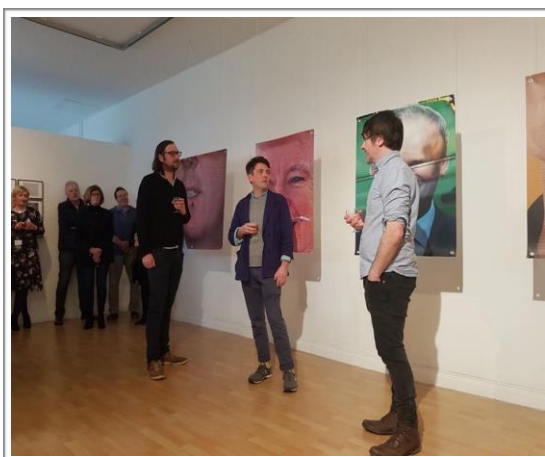
Roscommon Arts Centre describes itself as primarily a receiving house, with a year round multi-disciplinary programme of professional and community events. Annually, it hosts between 120-140 events in the auditorium, a visual art programme that includes 6-8 shows, supported by both workshop and talk programmes, an educational programme and professional development initiatives for artists.

A complementary programme of events takes place in the workshop space, which is also used as a second performance space for smaller scale/early years shows during festival periods. Resident artists and co-producing partners also use this space for periods of research and development and to share work in progress with invited audiences.

An independent part-time curator employed by Roscommon Arts Centre and Roscommon Arts Office delivers the visual art programme, which extends beyond the parameters of the gallery space and often involves working with non-arts spaces around the county

including museums and parks. The Centre has presented work in Lough Key Forest Park, Strokestown Park House and in King House Boyle.

In recent years, the Centre has extended its range of supports to artists/practitioners through increased residency opportunities, commissioning, and by co-producing more work. Most recently, in 2017, the Centre focused on supporting Roscommon artists – through both short and long-term projects - that involved no less than 7 artists working in visual art, theatre, choral and traditional music. Two visual art writers in residence were also appointed as part of this and invited to respond to selected gallery shows throughout the year. Their work is available on line and via the box office.



#### **A4.4.2      Operating Model**

Roscommon Arts Centre is wholly owned by Roscommon County Council, and all staff are employed directly by the Council. There are 3 full-time staff: Centre Director, Marketing Manager and a Technical Manager. Three panels of part-time, temporary staff provide box office, front of house and backstage support.



The centre comprises of a ground floor 194 seat auditorium space, with both a gallery and workshop space located on the first floors. There is a hot desk in the gallery on full public access that is primarily used by visual artists. This hotdesk gives the users access to stable Wi-Fi, and a range of software packages from film and image editing to desktop publishing to which they would not otherwise have access. The bar facility is located in the theatre foyer and is operated by the venue. Backstage facilities include two dressing rooms and a green room.

#### **A4.4.3      Key Relationships**

- The Arts Centre strives to develop new programming initiatives to actively engage with local communities on an ongoing basis.
- A new visual art education programme “Gallery X Ed” is being delivered by a number of **professional artists in partnership with secondary schools** throughout the county that bring pupils into the gallery and workshop space, to both experience and create work with professional artists.
- A new policy strand for commissioning visual art projects is currently being explored encouraging **artists to work with a community or site of interest** in the county, fostering relationships with communities who previously hadn’t engaged with the Centre’s programme – the recent **Arts & Disability Commission** and **The Park Project** 1, 2 & 3 are examples of the success of this policy.
- The Centre is also home to **Roscommon County Youth Theatre**, who meet there weekly and whose annual productions are supported by core Arts Centre staff. Other

programme initiatives of note include “R Time” (**Roscommon Traditional Irish Music Ensemble**) which saw the formation of a new traditional youth ensemble of 11 players; our early years series of music concerts in association with the **Hawk’s Well Theatre** and early years music classes for 0 – 3 year olds.

- The Centre also manages **a number of awards to support artists**, e.g. The Roscommon Visual Artists Forum Award.
- This year (2018) the Centre is working towards formalising its relationship with **Branar Theatre Company** through its “Branar Connect” programme, which will see the company re-locate to Roscommon Arts Centre for periods of R&D and pre-production in advance of national and international touring. In a second Branar/Roscommon Arts Centre initiative, 2018 will see the “Hatch” programme launched, whereby two Branar Tiny Shows participants will be funded to avail of short residencies at Roscommon Arts Centre this summer, before sharing work with audience sat the Centre’s Lollipops festival this autumn.
- The Arts Centre has also **co-produced with Decadent Theatre Company** providing development and rehearsal space, financial support and premiering various shows.
- It has been part of the Nomad theatre network since 2006.

**A4.4.4      Learnings**

- Attendance rates at rural centres can be very low, creating considerable pressure to create commercial opportunities.
- As a result, rural venues can show considerable creativity in engaging with very diverse audiences in order to meaningfully engage with the local population and to encourage participation.
- They can also demonstrate (but also require) a good degree of networking with other artistic creators and venues/potential venues in order to deliver to a broad audience.
- Off-site delivery of programmes/work can be a good way of making up for shortcomings in facilities (e.g. lack of access for disabled) and to reach a wide community. This can include venues that traditionally would not be considered arts venues, e.g. heritage sites.
- Rural venues can also provide essential services that may otherwise be missing in the area for local artists (e.g. access to specialist software, reliable Wi-Fi).

## A4.5 Axis Ballymun

### The Numbers

- **Attendance:** 71,000 (2016)
- **Funding:** €600,000 from DCC (33% of its turnover); 44% of income from ticket sales, venue hire and rental; the balance of income from a range of partners including Pobal, the US Embassy, the HSE, the British Council and others; total Arts Council grant was €46,250 (2016).
- **Staffing:** 35-40 full/part time staff across the building operations. A range of contract staff throughout the year in arts development, facilitation and production
- **Construction and Fit-Out:** €6 million.
  - €3 million from the EU Urban programme
  - €1.3 million from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government
  - €1.1 million from the Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism
  - €600,000 from DCC.



### A4.5.1 Mission and Role

Axis describes itself as "*A Venue, a community centre, an arts development organisation, and a production company*". A 2010 survey reported that the building was used by 69% of Ballymun residents for a variety of purposes. And a survey undertaken by Arts Audiences Ireland also indicated that, based on 2016 figures, Axis had 359 events in total compared with a national average of 238.

At present Axis rents space and facilities to seven community organisations that provide employment for 49 local people, account for a total average weekly footfall of 105 visitors, and provide a range of valuable services to the local community.



The art room, recording studio, dance studio, and conference centre support 275 clients. These spaces are mostly rented, but where necessary and if possible they are made freely available for limited periods to support ideas and initiatives in the early stage of development.

Axis designs and delivers arts/community development projects throughout the year, ranging from art classes to the award-winning Creative Space programme for young men with mental health issues (delivered in association with the HSE). Creative Space won the 2016 DAA Business to Arts Award.

Axis is also a production company. It develops, commissions, produces, co-produces and tours its own original work. Its productions have been critically acclaimed and have won several awards since 2004. All of the work is relevant to its local audience, and serves to carry the Axis:Ballymun story and brand to a national and international audience. Since 2004 it has produced 41 original shows, all of which toured nationally and nine of which have toured internationally.

Ticket sales for events at the auditorium have – as expected – increased since the venue first opened. There was a decline from 2009 to 2012 in keeping with the wider economic decline. The final figures for 2017 will be in excess of 23,000, a 30% increase on 2010 figures. Given that the population of Ballymun, according to the last census is 21,503, this is an extraordinary level of ticket sales.

For the local community in Ballymun, Axis is a place maker, described as the “Heart of the Community”. It is perceived as a place of support and opportunity, and as a place that listens, supports and “fast tracks” people. For the artists who present work, hold workshops, or develop work in the building, Axis is a resource that supports, challenges and opens new ways of thinking and working. Those that engage with Axis perceive it as a unique and effective organisation.

Axis exists because of the work of the Ballymun Partnership and other local community groups working in partnership with the Local Authority and other agencies. It is the result of a grass roots demand and support for an arts and community resource centre, a need



expressed by the community for a place of reflection, a place to rebuild identity and reclaim dignity.

As the regeneration played out, Axis developed hand-in-hand with the Ballymun Community, learning how to listen to, facilitate and respond to the people in that community. Axis is now a “placemaker”, a catalyst for social cohesion.

*"This is their house. We have the privilege of serving here"*

*(Niamh Ni Chonchubhair, Programme Manager)*

#### **A4.5.2      Operating Model**

The Axis building contains a 211-seat theatre, exhibition space, a box office, foyer and café area, a crèche, office space for rent by local community organisations, an art room, a dance studio, recording studios and a conference centre. The café is open Monday to Friday from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. and by special arrangement for Dinner Theatre and other events.

Axis employs 35-40 full/part time staff across its building operations, as well as a range of artists and arts facilitators on a contract basis throughout the year.

### **A4.5.3      Key Relationships**

A key role and value of Axis is as a “public square”, a market place where stories, ideas and support are transacted daily. The CEO, the Programme Manager and the Arts Development manager have all spoken about the importance of seemingly impromptu meetings, chance introductions, and random connections in the development of the programme of work. Office doors are deliberately open and “dropping in” is actively encouraged. However, this spontaneous quality is the result of vision, values and deliberate tending.

The Axis Community is a melting pot of local people of all ages and backgrounds, artists from across the city, various agencies and organisations, all coming together to collaborate, share and learn from each other. Essentially the Axis Community is a learning community, a vibrant site of social bridging and social capital, highly valued by its participants.

Axis has built this community by working with and resourcing artists, by brokering valuable relationships between artists and between organisations using creativity as its currency, and by creating and facilitating work between these artists, organisations and the local community.

In order to deliver on this vision and purpose, Axis relies heavily not only on its relationship with the local community but also with its main funder, Dublin City Council.

### **A4.5.4 Learnings**

- Axis provides a valuable example of how creativity is nurtured and promoted by a venue being firmly embedded in the local community and in issues that are of local relevance.
- Through its location in Ballymun, it also reflects how a venue can bring together a variety of cultures and audiences – an example which is of particular relevance to an increasingly multi-cultural Ireland.
- It also provides a relevant example of how a venue can use creativity as a currency to initiate and develop relationships.

## A4.6 Lime Tree – Belltable

### The Numbers

- **Attendance:** Combined audience 47,306 (2017)
- **Funding:** Revenue income €1.2m (2017); 54% of income is earned, with approx. 7% coming from the AC and 15% from the LA; 19% comes from other sources.
- **Staffing:** It has 7 full-time staff which are shared between the two auditoria, as well as 24 part-time and casual staff.
- **Capital Funding:** Belltable was refurbished in 2008-2010 at a cost of €2m. The Lime Tree Theatre was opened in 2012 as part of the Tara building at MIC. Theatre fit-out was in the region of €1m.



### A4.6.1 Mission and Role

The Lime Tree opened in 2012 as part of the Mary Immaculate College campus. The 510-seat venue fulfils a dual function as a lecture theatre and a performance venue.



The venue's role is to host a range of performance including theatre, comedy, music, amateur and school performances, and conferences. As a large scale venue, the Lime Tree Theatre is a notable addition to the cultural, social, and economic framework of Limerick and the Mid-West, connecting to other national infrastructure and supporting touring to the region of performances of scale and profile.

Belltable was established in 1981 as the first regional arts centre in Ireland. Following liquidation and a period of closure in 2012, Belltable re-opened in 2013 managed by the Lime Tree staff and with the support of Arts Council grant funding. The venue was relaunched in 2016 and consists of a 220-seat auditorium, three rehearsal spaces, meeting and hot desking facilities. Belltable hosts performances from local, national and

international theatre, cinema, music and dance events plus a programme for artist development, BelltableConnect.

The venues present and collaborate with a range of festivals in Limerick city, produce their own Buadlah Bos Children's Festival, and host touring networks across Ireland including NASC and Strollers.

As such the Lime Tree and Belltable could be considered as one venue with two stages. There are challenges of location, and they are not based on the same site, but advantages in programming synergies, continuity in front-of-house and box office provision, and capacity-building potential for artists to develop from smaller to larger auditoria.

Both venues have a café / bar which operate on nights when there are events running.



#### **A4.6.2      Operating Model**

Lime Tree Theatre Limerick Ltd operates as a CLG, overseen by a board made up of eight directors. Directors serve terms of three years, with a maximum of two terms. They

are required to retire on a bi-annual basis, dictated by period served, and can be put forward for re-election.

Day-to-day operations are the responsibility of the seven core staff; theatre director, programme manager, technical manager and technician, marketing manager and assistant and box office manager. This team looks after programme, production, promotion and sales in both spaces supported by a part time staff of 24.

The Lime Tree Theatre is owned by Mary Immaculate College. The College is responsible for key capital considerations regarding the upkeep and maintenance of the venue. Belltable is owned by Limerick City & County Council and is under the management of the Lime Tree Theatre via a Service Level Agreement with Limerick City & County Council.

#### A4.6.3 Key Relationships

Belltable has had a consistent relationship with Limerick City & County Council and The Arts Council over its twenty-seven year history. In recent years, its most critical relationship has been that with the Lime Tree. The development of the Lime Tree has injected the live arts scene in Limerick with a much wider range of programming opportunities and, by extension, expanded the scope of Belltable.

With regard to current relationships with stakeholders and funders, the Lime Tree / Belltable operate as one organisation with two stages and, therefore, alongside the core funding relationships with The Arts Council and Limerick City & County Council, Mary Immaculate College and Higher Education Authority are key to the success of this model.

Artistically, the Lime Tree / Belltable collaborate regularly with the Irish Film Institute on its screening programme and present large-scale touring productions including shows by Druid Theatre Company, Rough Magic Theatre Company and Fabulous Beast Dance Theatre. Previously it would not have been possible for work of this scale and technical demand to tour to Limerick due to the gap in infrastructure.





#### **A4.6.4 Learnings**

- Capital reserves and experience are required for any capital programme.
- It is important to have capacity at Board level to govern arts centres with insight.
- Larger venues can play an important role in producing touring work, which benefits a wider network of venues as well as providing local employment.
- The LA plays an important role in creating and sustaining a cluster of arts facilities through its long-term vision, financial and other supports.
- Relationships between complementary, as well as larger and smaller, venues can benefit the venues as well as the local artists and communities.
- There is an over-reliance on community employment schemes to fill staffing gaps created by lack of funding.
- A café/bar can play an important role in animating a venue and providing an opportunity for community engagement.

#### **A4.7 glór**

##### **The Numbers**

- **Attendance:** 44,450 (2016)
- **Funding:** Revenue income €820,000 (2017); over 50% of income is earned, with approx. 8% coming from the AC and 30% from the LA; 12% comes from other sources.
- **Staffing:** It has 9 fixed term staff plus approximately 30 part-time / casual staff.
- **Capital Funding:** glór cost €6.5million to build in 2001. The venue has not been subject to any significant capital development since.





**A4.7.1 Mission and Role**

glór opened in 2001 with a remit as a centre for the performance of traditional Irish music, reshaping its remit a few years later to become a multidisciplinary community arts venue:

***'To establish glór as a centre of excellence for audiences, artists, performers, and the community, and as an integral resource for the traditional arts.'***

glór presents a year round mixed programme of commercial concerts, professional theatre, dance, cinema, classical concerts, visual arts, drama and music from the local community.

Currently at the mid-point in delivering objectives held within the organisation's Strategic Plan 2017 – 2019, the focus is on development in the following areas:

- The Arts and Artists
- The Audience, Participants and Communities
- Capacity and Delivery

In pursuit of the organisation's current mission:

*'glór's mission is to be a leading multi-disciplinary arts centre of excellence for our audiences, artists and communities, by presenting quality arts experiences to enhance Clare's rich cultural landscape, with a particular focus on the traditional arts. '*

The venue houses a main auditorium with a maximum capacity of 505, a 60-seat studio and a gallery space which, while not purpose-built, is in regular use showing a curated programme of local and national artists. A licensed premises with a busy café open during the day, glór is managed by a Director, Gallery & Marketing Manager, Technical Manager, Finance & Box Office Manager, Box Office Supervisor, Fundraising Associate, Front of House Manager, Operations Manager and Bar Manager. In 2018, glór presented 228 events and 275 days of exhibitions.



#### **A4.7.2 Operating Model**

The venue is owned by Clare County Council and leased to Glór Music Ltd, a company limited by shares and a registered charity. It is governed by a Board of nine Directors, four Council representatives and five external members. The company was set up in 1997 with the primary objective of establishing a national centre specialising in the performance of Irish music, and additionally to provide facilities for workshops, drama, music, theatre, comedy, art, children's events, community events, enterprise and cultural activities. The company now operates to this wider set of objectives.

#### **A4.7.3 Key Relationships**

Clare County Council is the key stakeholder for glór, providing annual funding plus maintenance and upkeep of the venue and its surrounds. The Arts Council have been a regular funder of the venues since inception. The grant offered by the Arts Council is modest relative to the scale of the venue and its regional prominence.

In spring 2019, construction is due to begin on a new County Library and Gallery adjoining glór which will re-house the current library and local history centre, and create a cultural complex for this area of Ennis. This is due to be built by 2021. Together, these two civic amenities offer a range of activities in the arts and cultural landscape.

glór has an impressive corporate membership which contributes to the venue's income as well as a loyal body of individual members.



glór Platinum Members



Michael Houlihan & Partners



glór gold members



glór silver members



#### A4.7.4 Learnings

- Planned adjacency with another civic amenity supports the potential development of a 'hub' for public engagement, participation, entertainment and leisure.
- Potential also exists for coordinated financial and operational planning, maximising expertise across both pieces of infrastructure in Local Authority owned public buildings.

- Clearer guidelines on programme related to financial awards is required as funding levels appear divergent from the quality of the curation and programming.
- Creative autonomy is critical to ensuring the venue meets its artistic potential to develop both programmes and the audiences for them.
- Access to skills in dramaturgy, producing and stage craft are key to ensuring quality across all types of productions.
- There are considerable benefits from embedding a venue in the local business community as contributing infrastructure to the life of the county.

## A4.8 Visual – Centre for Contemporary Art, Carlow

### The Numbers

- **Attendance:** 64,443 (2017)
- **Funding:** Turnover €1.2 million (2017); 46% is earned income, 41% Carlow County Council core and programme, 10% Arts Council and 3% other public funding.
- **Staffing:** 5 full-time and 5 part-time. Technical, maintenance, front of house and bar casuals up to 22 annually.
- **Capital:** €18 million
  - €3.7 million Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism (ACCESS)
  - €14.3 million Carlow County Council.



### A4.8.1 Mission and Role

Opened in 2009, VISUAL has 3,130m<sup>2</sup> of gallery space which includes the largest white-cube gallery space in the country (464m<sup>2</sup>), studio gallery, digital gallery and a transitional gallery space which links these spaces together. The 325 seat George Bernard Shaw Theatre is the largest theatre space in the County.

The principal purpose of VISUAL is to promote, develop and enhance the appreciation of the arts in County Carlow. Today, it operates to the following mission:

*'We enrich, inspire and improve the everyday through art.'*

and vision:

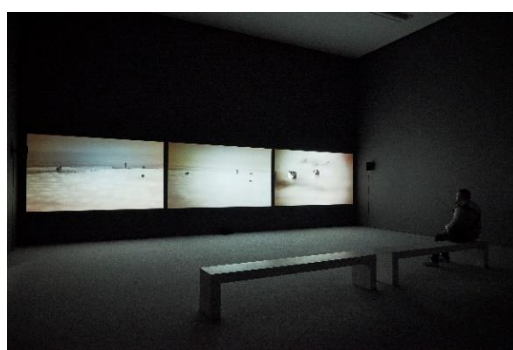
*'An international hub for realising the value of contemporary arts practice.'*

VISUAL commissions, produces and presents a programme of national and international contemporary art, performances and events across multiple art forms including theatre, dance, film, comedy, literature and music. It offers a unique set of high quality spaces for the presentation of works of all scale.

Presently, VISUAL is working to a set of objectives as set out in the organisation's Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021. These are:

- 1) Develop our audiences through inspiring, innovative and relevant artistic and engagement programmes based on excellence.
- 2) Create value with and for our many communities of interest through realizing the transformative benefits of the arts and creativity.
- 3) Contribute meaningfully to and develop the long term sustainability of the cultural sector, including VISUAL.

VISUAL focuses on developing thematic programmes which can engage and build loyalty with its catchment audience from Carlow, Kilkenny, Laois, Kildare, Wicklow and Wexford, and is mindful of its unique position to lead in the presentation of contemporary art, design and craft in the region.



#### **A4.8.2      Operating Model**

VISUAL is a project of Carlow Arts Centre Ltd. (CACL), a Company Limited by Share Capital, governed by a Board of Directors. Currently having a membership of thirteen, the Board is made up of Council members and executives, and members of the local and national business and artistic community. The €18 million development was a joint project of the Carlow Local Authorities, funded with the assistance of a grant of €3.17 million from the then Department of Arts, Sport & Tourism under the ACCESS Programme. The site was donated by Carlow College and Carlow County Council is the sole shareholder.

VISUAL is run by a team of 10. There is a full time CEO and Artistic Director, Curator and Galleries Coordinator, Marketing and Engagement Manager, Theatre Programme Coordinator, Front of House Manager, Box Office and Sales Manager and part time Facilities Manager, Production Manager, Financial Controller, Development Officer and Box Office Assistant. Operating under an entertainment license, the bar and front-of-house is serviced by casual staff. Technical work and maintenance are also serviced by casual staff.

Pre-theatre dining is available at Lennon's Restaurant, located next door and accessible via an adjoining entrance.

#### **A4.8.3      Key Relationships**

Clearly VISUAL's most critical relationship is with its primary stakeholder, Carlow County Council. As the only shareholder in the company, the Council is both funder and promotor with a vested interest in the trading performance of the venue which impacts on it recouping the initial capital outlay. Such a reliance on County Council annual funding can create vulnerability; reductions in local government funding get passed on and the impact is felt at an operational level. Local government funding is voted on annually which creates additional vulnerability in terms of political capital re funding for the arts versus other vital services. This can create critical pressure around funding decisions.

VISUAL's relationship with the Arts Council is also of great importance in providing financial support for programming.

Operating an active schools in-reach program, VISUAL works closely with Carlow IT, Carlow College, Carlow Kilkenny ETB, Waterford IT and other learning institutions and is active in connecting with local businesses associated with production, manufacturing and engineering where alignment can be found with artists' requirements.



#### **A4.8.4 Learnings**

- VISUAL is an example of the benefits of having key stakeholders with drive and ambition to deliver on a major capital project.
- It is also an example of how the legacy of delivering to a vision requires long term financial commitment and sustained investment.
- Competing priorities for funding within Council make it more difficult for smaller counties like Carlow to invest in art infrastructure.
- An over-reliance on one funder contributes to a more vulnerable operating model.
- VISUAL offers good learning in how a municipal cultural space can deliver on many social and community objectives through programme activity, which creates a stronger case for government funding at a local level.





## **Appendix 5:**

### ***International Case Studies***

## A5. INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDIES

### A5.1 The Albany Arts Centre, Deptford, London - Gary Barlow, Director

#### The Numbers

- **Catchment Area Population** (Lewisham) 286,000
- **Wider Catchment** (Lewisham, Greenwich, Southwark) 850,000
- **Audience** 70% from SE London; 30% Greater London
- **Total Centre Users** (2016) c. 270,000
- **Total Audience/tickets sold:** 33,112
- **Average B/O** 55%
- **Average ticket price** £6
- **Venue Rental** £70,000
- **Theatre hire and meeting room hire** £90,000
- **Office Rental** £225,000

#### A5.1.1 Funding

- Lewisham Council: core operational funding £267,290.
- Arts Council England arts programme funding £176,015 (the Albany also receives various “strategic” funds at different times).
- The Albany receives no Corporate Sponsorship, but its philanthropic receipts have risen from £5,000 to around £25,000 over the last couple of years.
- Ticket sales for Albany events (not hires) are usually about £130,000, and the café bar has a £360,000 turnover, but does not return a profit.

The Albany Arts Centre in Deptford, London responds to the cultural diversity and creative mix of South London. The Albany is about involving people through participation and partnership and describes itself as:

- 1) An artistic and community resource where diversity and creativity flourish.
- 2) A space where new talent is nurtured and exposed to ideas from across the world.
- 3) High quality creative experiences relating to the communities we serve.
- 4) A creative centre for learning within the community, contributing to the cultural, social and economic benefit of South East London.

The Albany has four performance spaces (the main space has a capacity of 300 seated and 500 for standing events). Its programme encompasses a range of music, theatre and spoken word, as well as many participatory projects. The programme includes non auditoria events such as festivals, community projects, 6 to 10 outdoor events over a summer season, three promenade performances and six community open days.

It has a café and bar as well as rehearsal, meeting rooms and office space for hire. The Albany views itself as a social enterprise, as a home and “seeding ground” for creative development in the performing arts.

The nature and design of the building allows it to support twenty-four resident companies, that all share a community development ethos with The Albany. For example, **Heart n Soul** who work with artists with learning disabilities, **Apples & Snakes**, the UK’s leading performance poetry organisation, and other arts and community organisations including **Entelechy Arts**, **The Independent Theatre Council**, **Stonecrabs Theatre Company**, **Yellow Earth**, **Kali Theatre**, **Lewisham Education Arts Network**, **Montage Theatre Arts** and **Headway**.

While the Albany does not produce original work, it does commission and co-produce work.

Currently the Albany earns over 50% of its own income. The breakthrough in its business model came when its current director realised that they were experts in community engagement and venue management and development, and that this expertise was a key asset held by the Albany. This led them to broker deals with – among others - Lewisham and Southwark Councils to provide management and engagement services for the Theatre and Meeting Rooms at Canada Water and the Deptford Lounge in Lewisham.

## **A5.2 Waterside Arts - Sale, Trafford, Manchester**

### **The Numbers**

- **Local Council Funding:** this is fluid and dependent on outcomes  
ACE £15,000 (project dependent)
- **Box office:** 63% of earned income
- **Venue Hire :** 12% of earned income
- **Sponsorship:** 0
- **Friends Scheme:** 0
- **Annual Visitors:** 115,353

Waterside Arts is situated in Sale, Trafford, a suburb of Manchester. It's a multi-purpose arts centre owned and managed by the Council. Although as they point out there are very few venues with this kind of ownership structure left in the UK.

Waterside has performance spaces, a gallery, and a workshop and studio space. Given its suburban location and its ownership structure, its programming is very focused on the local community, on families and local residents, and supporting local and national artists and arts development. The Council views and measures the Waterside in terms of enhancing the lives of residents and their general wellbeing, while at the same time identifying it as one of the area's principal tourism assets. The Waterside's location in the centre of Sale (a small town) makes it a central hub for locals and visitors alike.



As the venue operates as part of the Council, salaries are covered by its core funding along with a subsidy to deliver activity. The Council and venue are both ambitious in working towards greater self-sufficiency.

The Waterside is not an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation, so its funding from the Council is for project-based work. The venue receives Arts Council project grants for specific activity across all art forms. The Arts Council expects work to be delivered to a "certain standard" but accepts that there is a commercial aspect to the Waterside's work as it expects its clients to have a resilient business model, and that includes overtly

commercial programming choices. There have been significant improvements in this understanding in recent years.

The Waterside's arts development programme is primarily managed through Creative Industries Trafford (CIT) based in the Waterside and supported by Trafford Council and ACE. Consequently Waterside has a part-time Creative Industries Programme Co-ordinator programming talks, masterclasses, opportunities and mentoring for artists, to help artists build sustainable creative careers. The post-holder is supported by a team of freelance staff.

CIT at Waterside runs the Northern Lights Writers' Conference, and the Meet The Puppet Masters animation conference featuring international speakers and contributors. CIT also operates a programme of theatre commissions supporting developing theatre-makers – including Square Peg Theatre, Mighty Heart Theatre and Thick Richard – at Waterside. In 2017, CIT acted as creative producers for five new theatre commissions for the National Trust on the Live At Lyme project. This project was fully funded by the National Trust, including a management fee for the Waterside.

CIT Waterside works with Manchester's Castlefield Gallery to deliver portfolio surgeries giving critical feedback to visual artists. Throughout 2017 and 2018, CIT was running Curator Incubator, offering placements for emerging curators through practical opportunities on Waterside's visual arts programme.

In 2013 CIT built a partnership with Business Bolton and, through this partnership, has continued to deliver professional development activities for Bolton-based artists, including talks, workshops and short courses.

### **A5.3 Godsbanen, Aarhus, Denmark - Ole G. Jørgensen, Director**

#### **The Numbers**

- **Catchment Area Population** c. 250,000
- **Footfall/visits per year:** c. 100,000
- **Funding/Revenue Model:** Municipal (Local Authority) funding for core operational costs and salaries.
  - Rentals (c.€135,000 p.a.)
  - Small fundraising for "extraordinary projects".

#### **A5.3.1 Organisational / Operational Model**

- GDI – Building Management and maintenance (Local Authority owned and funded).
- DSIG – Responsible for rental, communication, content, cooperation, community engagement and development. (Local Authority Funded).
- Theatre and Music "venues" in the building are independently managed.

#### **A5.3.2 Vision / Mission - Arts Centre or Cultural Centre**

Godsbanen understands itself as both an arts centre and a cultural centre. It caters to professional artists, makers, cultural entrepreneurs etc., but at the same time its workshops are open to the public (you can't book time for yourself, you have to share). Godsbanen also houses a music venue, two theatres and a restaurant.

The arts centre strand in Godsbanen caters for a professional set of users – artists and creative entrepreneurs and does not host many "public events; on the other hand, the

cultural centre is focused on the public and on the facilitation of their citizen-led initiatives – whatever they may be.

Godsbanen defines itself as a centre for cultural production for the whole city and region, principally concerned with the development of cultural skills in its users. In the development of its programme, it prioritises collaboration, development, and facilitation of ideas and projects.

Programming decisions are informed by the twin strands of the quality of the art and the quality of the engagement. It's important that that artists develop and learn when they stay at Godsbanen, but it is also important that high quality artists provide inspiration to the local community.

### **A5.3.3      Governance, Organisation and Management Structures**

In terms of management, governance and ownership, Godsbanen was set up as two organizations. One is owned and run by the municipality (GDI) and was in charge of the whole building: rentals, technicians, apartments, workshops, maintenance, cleaning etc. The second organisation (DSIG) is the independent institution Godsbanen. This second organisation is responsible for communication, content, cooperation and development. This structure had some teething problems as, at first, GDI had 24 employees and DSIG 3. This led to an imbalance of power, despite the flat structure between the two organizations.

This issue was addressed at the end of the first 3 years in the course of an evaluation process. The process focused on whether this structure worked as intended or needed to change. The decision was that it needed to change, and this change was initiated at the start of 2017.

The result of this change was that GDI (the wholly owned municipal organisation) is now responsible for the workshops, cleaning, building maintenance and *all* the subsidised jobs. Seven employees were transferred to DSIG and that organisation now takes responsibility for all the rentals.

### **A5.3.4      History - Local Regeneration**

The Godsbanen Building (Godsbanen means freight yard) was built in 1923 and functioned as a freight yard until 2000. It was empty for some years and opened as a



cultural production centre in 2012. Aarhus is relatively small (250,000 people) but it has a student population of more than 50,000 students.

Godsbanen was the brainchild of a local councillor. The main idea behind the development of the centre was to create a place where artists could further develop their skills and establish themselves within the creative sector. Essentially it was an initiative to retain and attract creative talent within Aarhus, and remove the necessity of moving to Copenhagen/Berlin/Barcelona etc. The wider strategic thinking behind the centre was to *"strengthen the cultural food chain, and establish Aarhus an attractive city to establish yourself as an artist/ creative"*.

The restoration of the old freight yard was funded partly by the municipality and partly by national funds, but the whole process and project was managed by the municipality.

The design and development was informed by a lengthy process involving a wide range of different cultural agents, institutions and artists. These stakeholders were invited to give their input on how Godsbanen should be organized and on which facilities it should house.

## **Appendix 6:**

### ***Venue Survey and Summary Findings***

**A6. VENUE QUESTIONNAIRE AND SUMMARY FINDINGS****Table A6.1: List of Respondents**

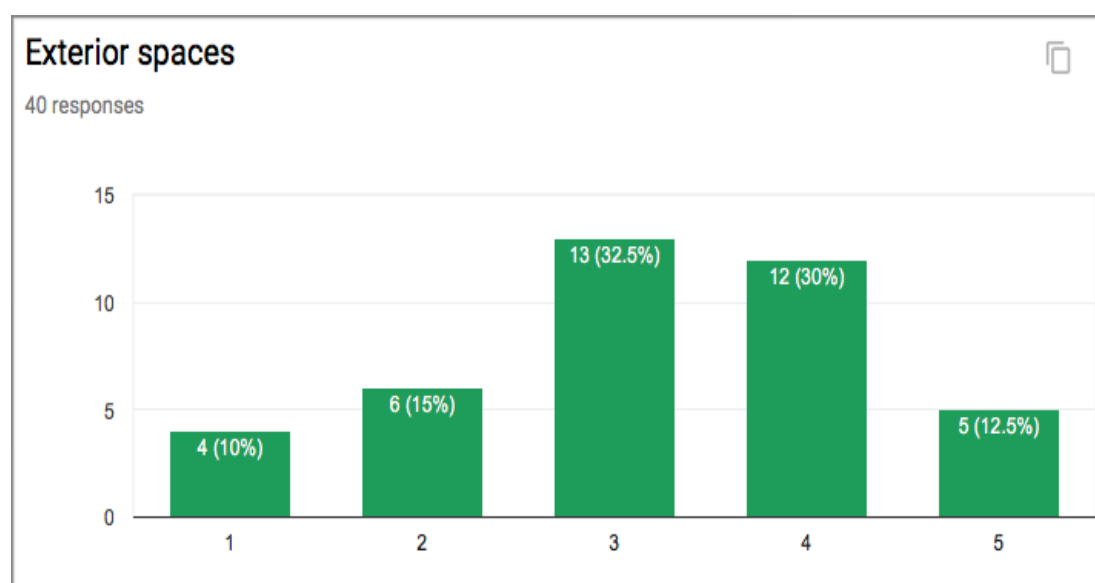
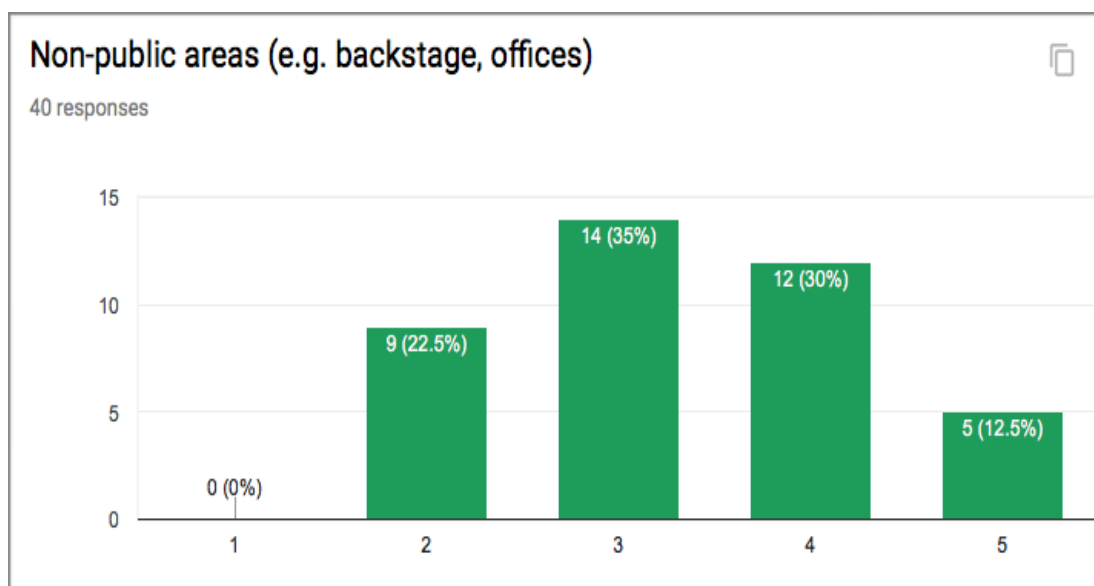
Venues - Returned Surveys	Cont.
Lime Tree Theatre	dlr LexIcon
Roscommon Arts Centre	Friars' Gate Theatre
Belltable	The Civic
The Courthouse Arts Centre	Tipperary Excel Arts Centre
Thurles Regional Arts Centre CLG t/a The Source Arts Centre	Siamsa Tíre
Garage Theatre	Theatre Royal, Waterford
Hawk's Well Theatre	Regional Cultural Centre Letterkenny
VISUAL Centre for Contemporary Art	Mermaid County Wicklow Arts Centre
Leitrim Sculpture Centre	Garret lane Arts Centre
Backstage Theatre	Glór
Draiocht	Balor Arts Centre
Pavilion Theatre	dlr Mill Theatre
Riverbank Arts Centre	The Model
Solstice arts Centre	Uillinn/West Cork Arts Centre
An Grianán Theatre	St. John's Listowel
Linenhall Arts Centre	Triskel Arts Centre
Rua Red	Iontas Arts & Community Resource Centre
axis Ballymun	The Glens Centre Manorhamilton
Birr Theatre & Arts Centre	The Dock
town hall theatre galway	Droichead Arts Centre
Project Arts Centre	

**A6.1 Please briefly describe the capacity and nature of the arts centre / venue that you manage and its buildings (40 responses)**

- Range of sizes: 50-100 x 5; 100-200 x 7; 200-300 x 9; 300-400 x 7; 400+ x 4
- Vast majority are multi-disciplinary.
- Theatre, visual arts, music, dance and provision of workshop/creative space are offered by over half.
- Other popular art forms/activities mentioned include film, literature, comedy and outreach.
- 11 of the 40 respondents mention having a bar/restaurant.
- Only six mention residencies.

**A6.2 How would you rate the current quality of your venue's infrastructure (40 responses)**

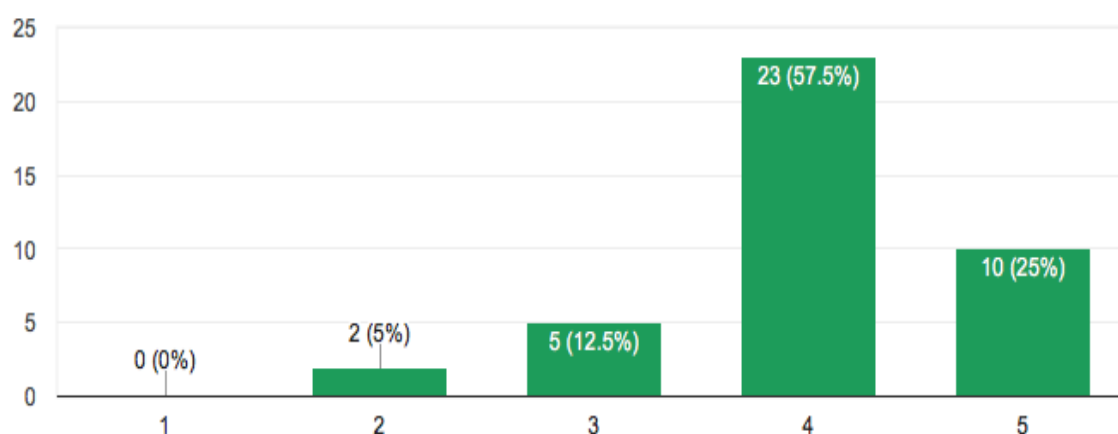
- Performance spaces are considered the best in terms of quality, while non-public and exterior spaces are rated relatively poorly.



Key: 1 = very poor, 5 = very good.

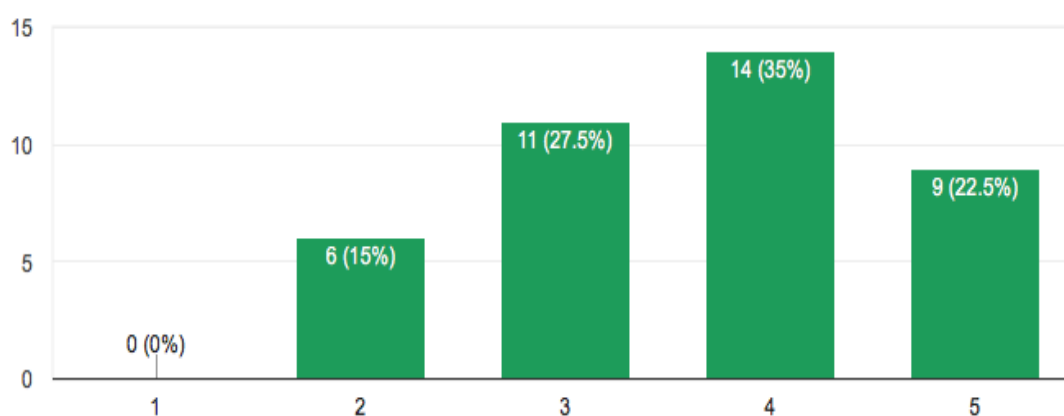
## Performance spaces

40 responses

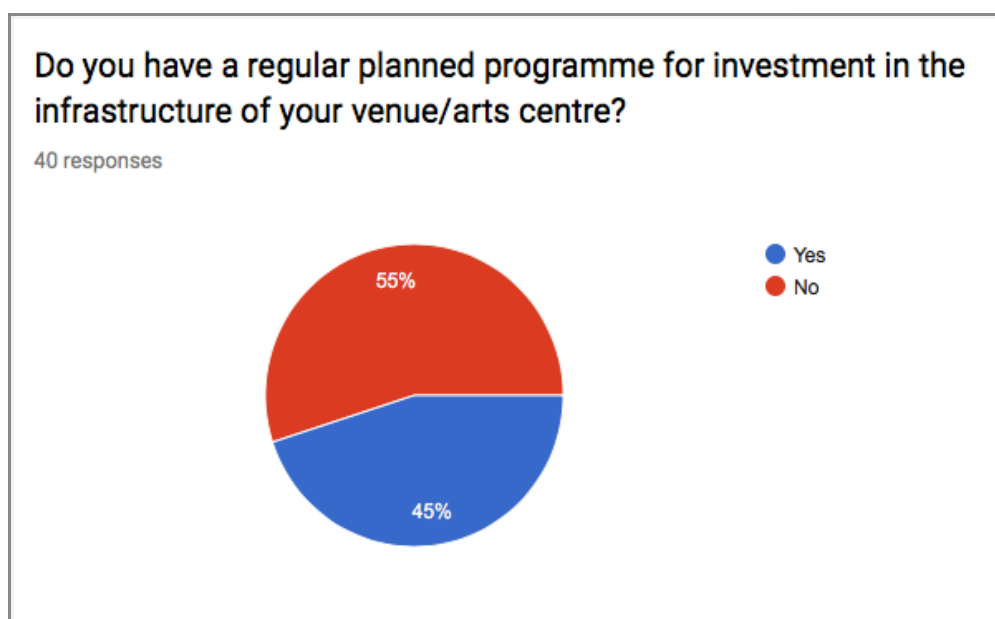


## Indoor public areas (e.g. foyer, toilets, cafe)

40 responses



Key: 1 = very poor, 5 = very good.



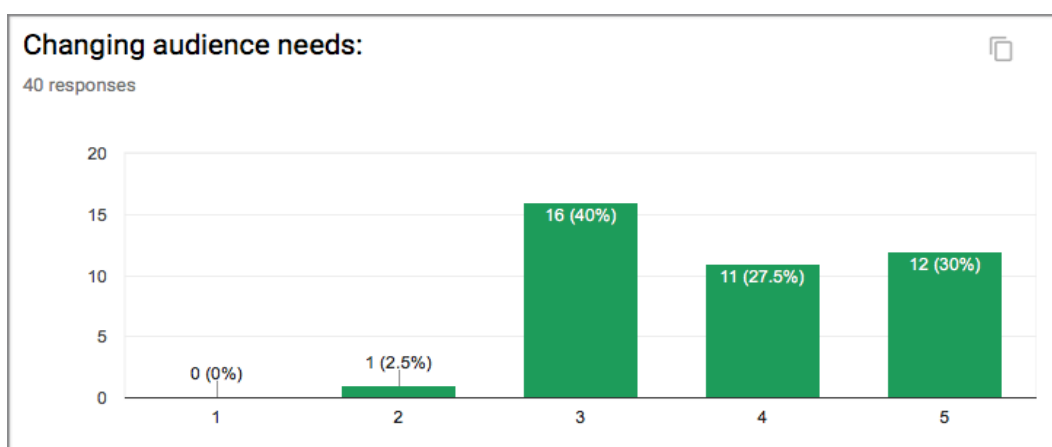
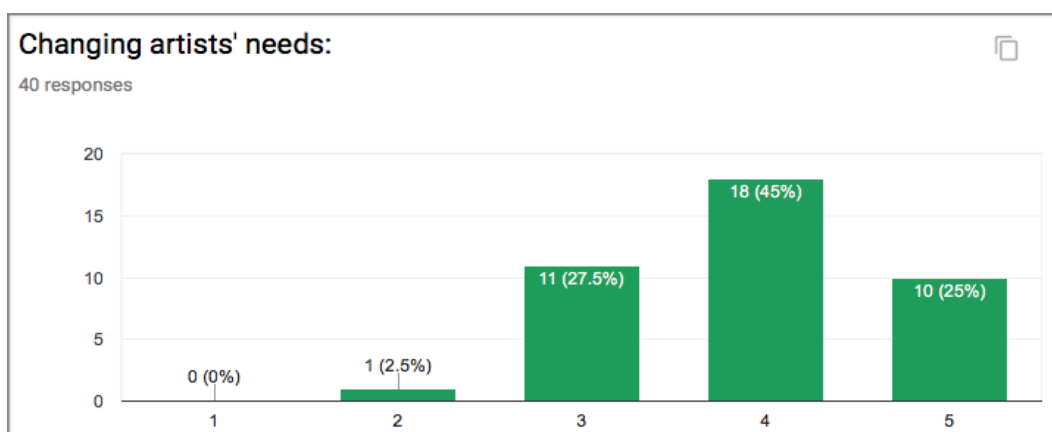
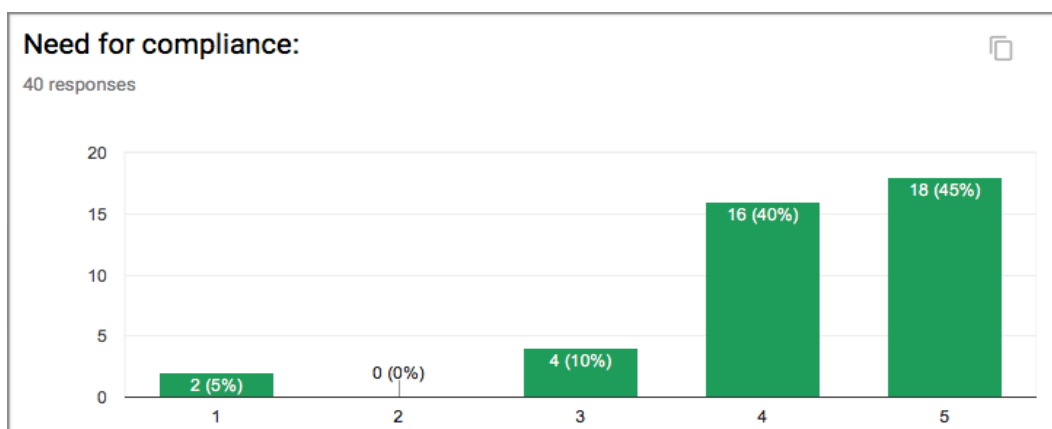
**A6.3 Please help us understand the approach taken to infrastructure investment at your venue. If 'Yes', please let us know approximately, why, how often and in what manner this investment is made. (24 responses).**

- Generally, budget is set aside by the venues from earned income for ongoing routine maintenance and upkeep.
- Investment plans are signed off by the venue's Board.
- Where a venue is under LA ownership and/or funding, they usually provide financial support for both routine and capital expenditure. Some of this is carried out as part of the LA's facility management programme, and some have formal agreements, e.g. a Cultural Use Agreement. However, the lines of responsibility for investment are not always clear.
- Strategic and capital investments are usually made on an ad-hoc basis, or on the basis of a long-term plan with the LA/building owner (where such exists) and are made through a combination of own funds and grants.

**A6.4 What most influences decisions to invest in infrastructure?**

- Availability of external funding/grants one of the most significant influences: 72% rating it of very high relevance.

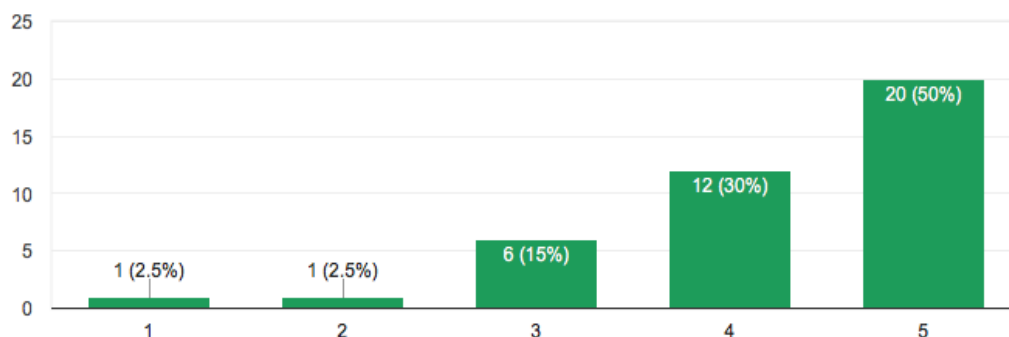
Key: 1 = no influence, 5 = very influential.





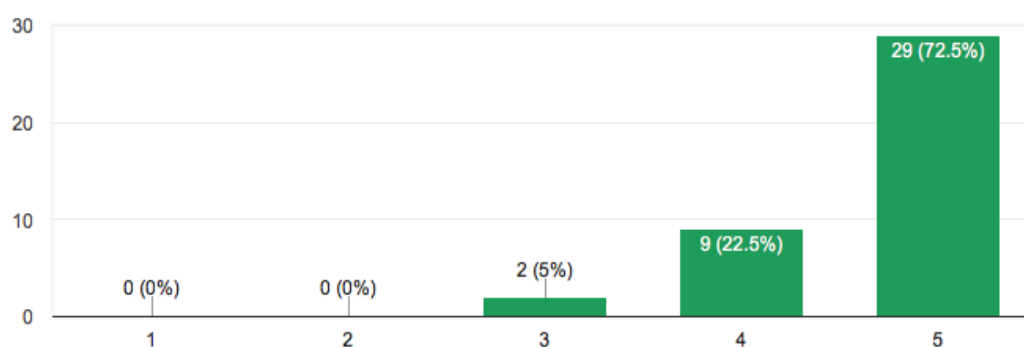
## Deteriorating quality:

40 responses



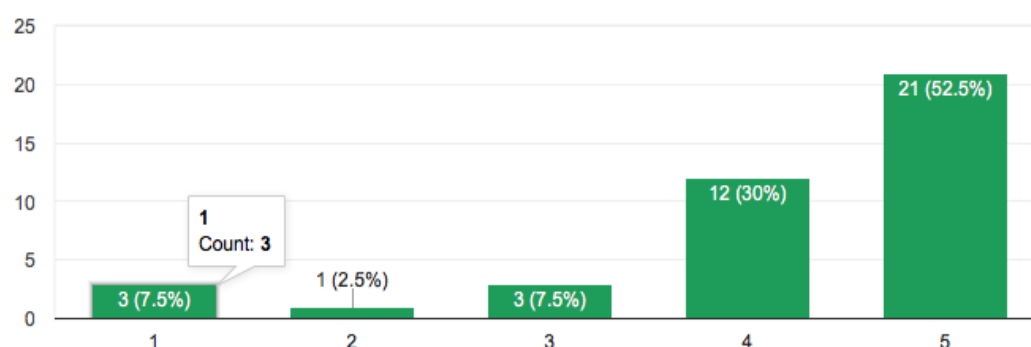
## Availability of external funding/grants:

40 responses



## Availability of own funds

40 responses



**A6.5 Please use the space below for further details you may wish to share regarding the quality of, and level of investment in, the infrastructure of your venue. (11 responses)**

- High use means the need for structural upkeep is high.
- Due to pressure on funds, much of investment is reactive: H&S issues, availability of grants.
- Old building in need of major refurb as no longer meets needs x 4
- Insufficient funds to truly create a C21st venue
- Easy to raise funds for 'sexy' items but not for everyday wear and tear, and smaller capital asks.
- Match-funding a problem.
- Managing cash flow on larger projects are not easy.
- Even when funds are available, they are insufficient x 3.

**A6.6 What most influences decisions around programming at your venue? Tick all that apply. (40 responses)**

- Programming strategy is considered the greatest influence on decisions around programming (90% of respondents ticked this option), followed by audience profile (82%), availability of artists (67%) and potential financial return (62%).

*(A small number of venues have a very thorough approach to programming, including detailed segmentation analysis and niche development. A few others, at the opposite end of the spectrum, are entirely reliant on availability and cost of touring 'product'.)*

**A6.7 Tell us a little about the mix of audiences that attend your venue? (40 responses)**

- Very mixed (almost all) - different audiences for different types of events (e.g. amateur dramatics, 'named' acts, children's performances/workshops, visual art, etc.), and active efforts to reach a wide audience. Audiences are format-driven.
- Capacity constraints mean we can't offer more commercial events although we have an audience for them.
- Increasing numbers of new communities x 3
- Disabled communities x 3

- Teen and young adults difficult to attract x 2
- Local, middle-aged, conservative x 2
- Some tourism business for a small number of venues.

*(Not all venues capture age/nationality at point of sale while some very actively use AIRO and Pobal mapping tools.)*

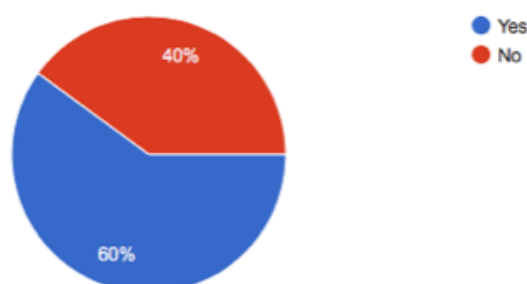
**A6.8 What changes (if any) have you noticed in the demographics / audience profile of the area? (40 responses)**

- No big change x 10
- More cultural diversity x 8
- Increase in children/family market x 5
- Ageing market x 2
- New urban dwellers.

## A6.9 Have changing demographics / audiences profile affected programming at the venue? (40 responses)

Have changing demographics/audience profile affected programming at the venue?

40 responses



### If 'Yes', please describe how? (26 responses)

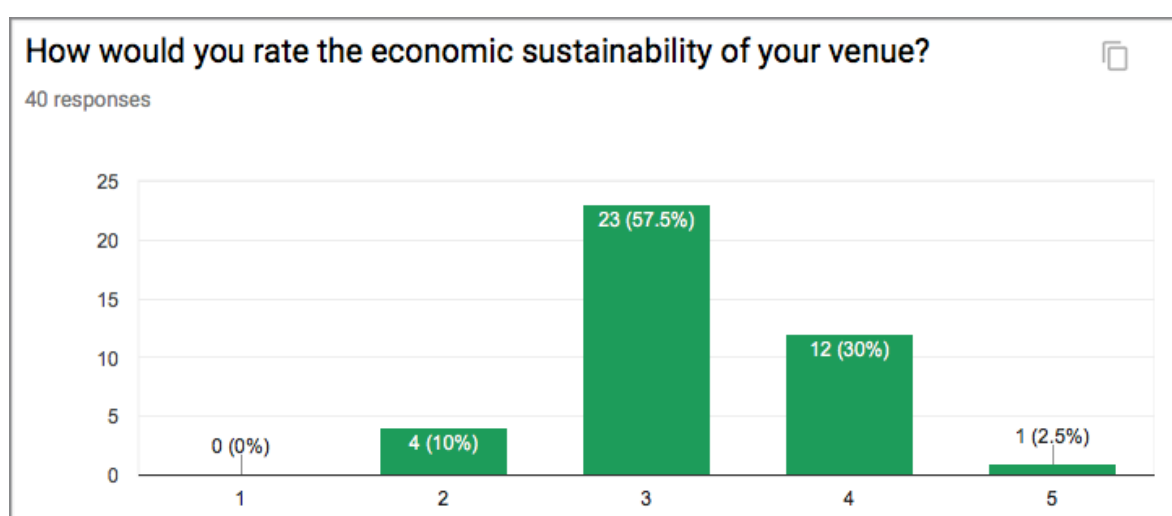
- Partner with other groups (e.g. Integration Forum, community organisations) to produce relevant work/deliver on mutual goals for specific audiences x 5
- Daytime programming for older audiences x 3
- Increased programming for families/children (x many).
- More conscious of reaching out to new communities (nationalities and special interest, e.g. engineering)
- Age of audience makes it difficult to get attendance for contemporary productions.

## A6.10 Please use this space to tell us anything further about what influences how you programme your venue? (31 responses)

- Desire to balance relevant work for a variety of audiences / art forms / niches - to create/present a mix of relevant work - diversification x 9
- Finance x 8
- Availability of product x 5
- Focus on artists development x 5
- Quality x 3
- Difficult to attract touring companies to small rural venues x 3

- Working in partnership x 3
- Low staffing numbers / reliance on casual staff for box office and bar
- Past experience
- The dynamics of the local catchment area was recognised by most venues as important in influencing programming.

**A6.11 How would you rate the economic sustainability of your venue? (40 responses)**

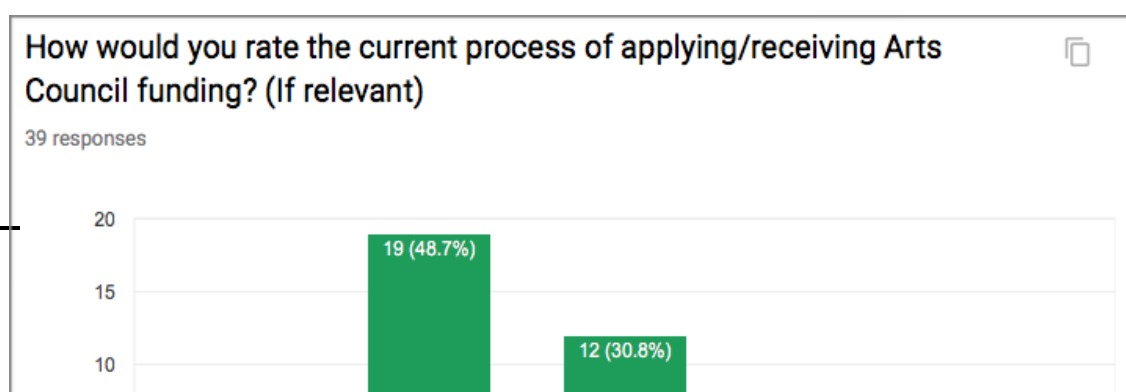


Key: 1 = unsustainable, 5 = very sustainable.

**A6.12 From which agencies has your venue received financial support in the last three years? Tick all that apply. (40 responses)**

- In addition to Arts Council and Local Authority funding, 15% are in receipt of HSE funding and 12% receive funding from their local ETB.

**A6.13 How would you rate the current process of applying/receiving Arts Council funding? (if relevant). (39 responses)**

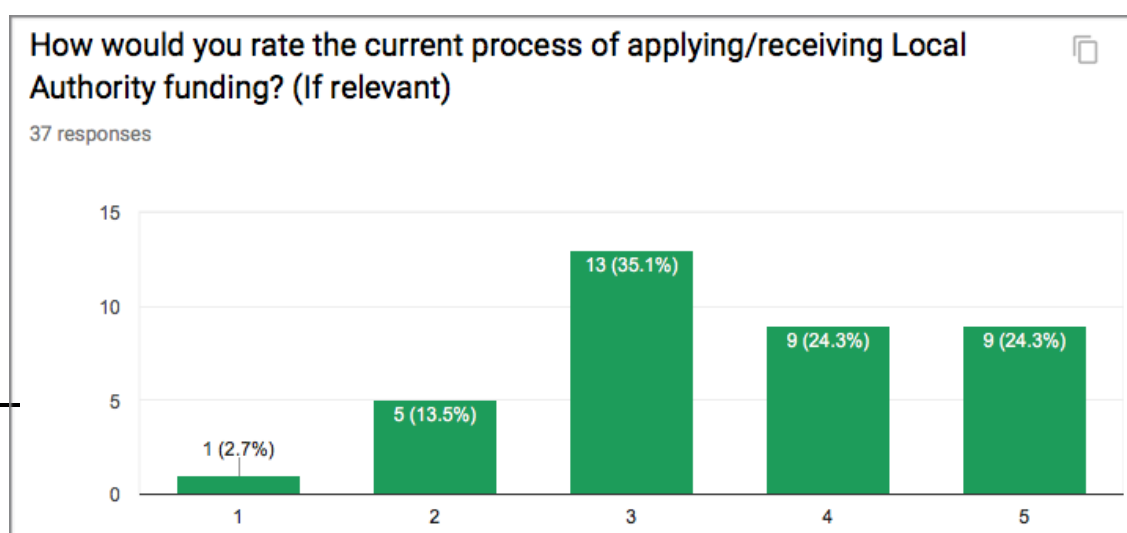


*Key: 1 = very difficult, 5 = very easy.*

**Please explain briefly why you have chosen the rating above. (39 responses)**

- The general view is that the recently-introduced application system is not suitable for a number of reasons.
  - It is a one-size-fits-all system that does not take account of venues with differing programmes, budgets, staffing structures, locations and resources.
  - It appears to have been developed with production companies in mind and is not suited to venues.
  - It is too complex and time-consuming, with too much data required - especially given that most venues are chronically under-staffed and overwhelmed in dealing with increasing compliance issues.
  - It has several components, some requesting a repeat of information, where one, interconnected, online form could suffice.
  - The financial information if requests does not correlate to venues' own operational and management structures.
  - The timing of the application is not in sync with venues' programming calendars. It should help to guide the following year's work rather than be a 'rush job'.
  - The window for application is too short.
  - Annual funding does not support long-term strategic development and programmes of ambition.

**A6.14 How would you rate the current process of applying/receiving Local Authority funding? (if relevant). (37 responses)**

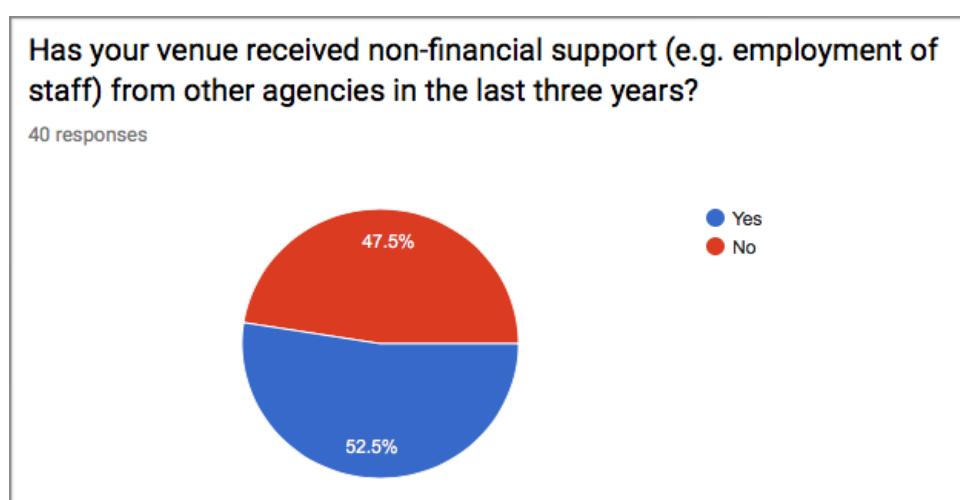


*Key: 1 = very difficult, 5 = very easy.*

**Please explain briefly why you have chosen the rating above. (38 responses)**

- Generally, venues find the process of applying/receiving LA funding much simpler than AC funding - usually a simplified application form at the beginning of the year along with annual accounts, and then a report at the end.
- In many cases, where the LA is the owner or a core funder, the regular and close working relationship with the Arts Officer or other LA staff smoothes the way for funding.
- However, there isn't a formal process in all jurisdictions and there are doubts about the quality of funding decisions in some cases, with a view that they can be arbitrary and open to political influence.

**A6.15 Has your venue received non-financial support (e.g. employment of staff) from other agencies in the last three years? (40 responses)**



**If 'Yes', please briefly describe the nature of this support (20 responses)**

- In the vast majority of cases, this relates to staff under a CE, Tús or JobsBridge scheme.

**A6.16 Please use the space below to provide further thoughts and suggestions regarding funding and support mechanisms for venues/arts centres in Ireland? (25 responses)**

Responses reflect a wide variety of perspectives and attitudes. These are some of the more interesting, and broadly-relevant, ones that haven't already been captured:

- The focus of AC funding should primarily be on artistic quality, while LAs should assist with core venue costs and also support local community and amateur work.
- Simplify the funding process for venues with established AC relationships.
- Allow venues to apply for core programming costs and then to apply separately for specific initiatives (e.g. audience development).
- Substantially more funding is required for an industry that is chronically over-worked, under-staffed and under-paid.
- The commercial models used to determine 'financial sustainability' are not relevant - need a system that reflects triple bottom line.
- A system that encourages resource-sharing is needed.
- Increase funding to venues with potential capacity to deliver essential structures and support artists' development/dissemination.
- Recognise the importance of the infrastructure network in rebuilding a healthy and sustainable ecosystem in Irish theatre - and in delivering AC policy. But only if properly resourced.
- Theatres need to be directly funded to co-imagine and lead on the production of work - artists shouldn't be tied up in red tape and need a 'home'. Creative Ireland funding could be used to generate opportunities for artists to work more closely with venues.
- Most venues operating within same amount of funding since before the recession although costs have risen. Also considerable more demands on time and staff.



- A system where the salaries of director/general manager and technical manager are funded would allow venues to then take responsibility for balancing commercial/artistic content and apply as necessary for key artistic strands.

## **Appendix 7:**

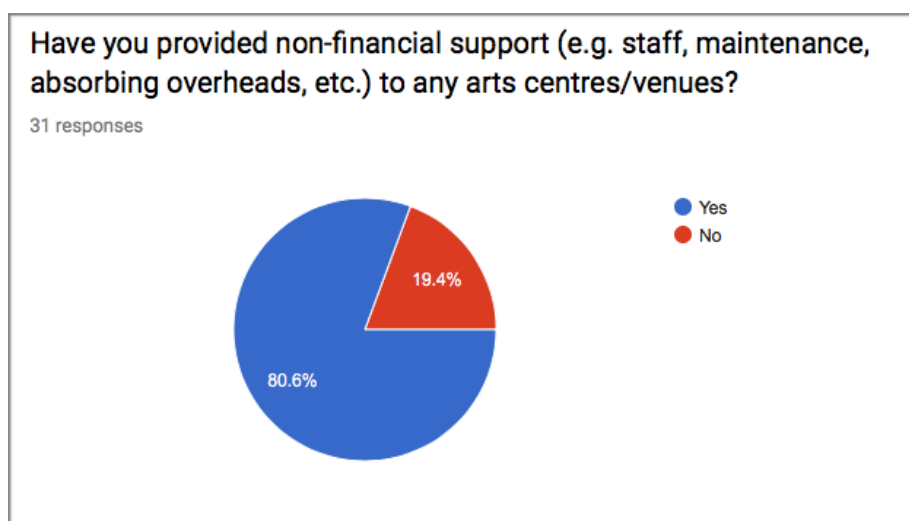
### ***Local Authority Survey and Summary Findings***

## A7. SUMMARY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY SURVEY FINDINGS

### A7.1 Please give a brief overview of the financial and non-financial Council supports regularly available to arts centres / venues in your area? (31 responses)<sup>27</sup>

- Almost all provide annual direct financial support in the form of core and capital funding.
- Over a third provide access to professional services, e.g. specialist advice, practical and admin support, IT, HR , etc.
- About a third provide funding via a funding programme, e.g. for festivals/events.

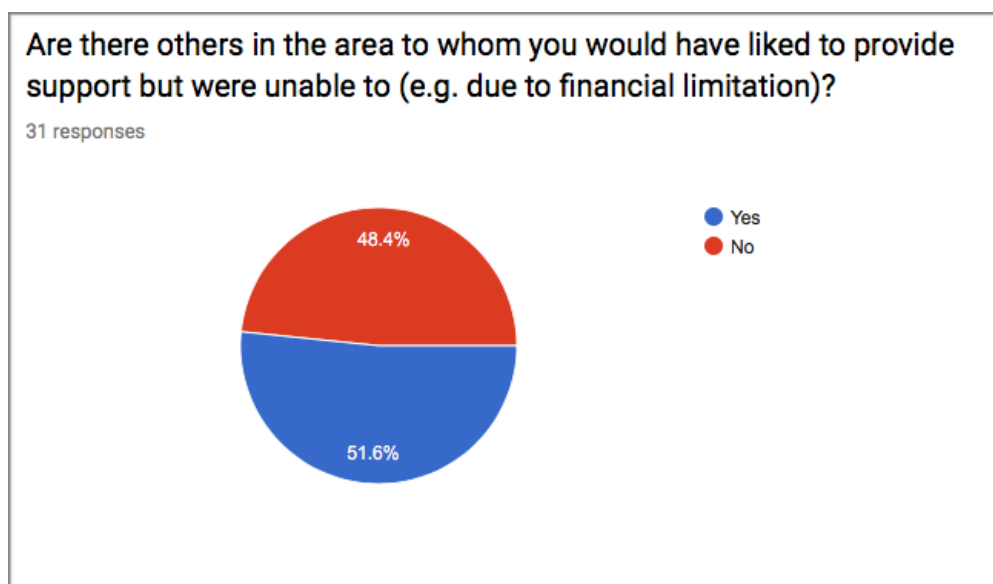
### A7.2 Have you provided non-financial support (e.g. staff, maintenance, absorbing overheads, etc.) to any arts centres/venues? (31 responses)



- Other supports are wide ranging and include: management assistance and advice (incl. running of some centres from the Arts Office), long term leasing of buildings, financial support for artists' studios and other facilities, promotion, waiving of rates, insurances, assistance with repairs and other costs.

<sup>27</sup> 29 LAs responded, with two respondents from two LAs.

**A7.3 Are there others in the area to whom you would have liked to provide support but were unable to (e.g. due to financial limitation)?**  
(31 responses)



**If 'Yes', please give an example of what you would have liked to support and why you were not in a position to do so (17 responses)**

- Many of those that answered this question would like to be financially able to provide more support to existing recipients of funding, often to support staffing in particular areas of expertise (e.g. management, finance). Some also wanted to develop new venues.

**A7.4 Please list any partnerships and/or funding sources for the arts that your Council regularly engages with? (31 responses)**

- Over half are involved with a variety of Arts Council schemes, including Invitation to Collaborate and Percent for Art.
- Almost half are involved with other State agencies/depts., e.g. Heritage Council, Dept. Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht, Dept. Education and Skills etc.
- Other partnerships include involvement with Creative Ireland, Music Generation, ETBs, Leader and other community development programmes, and Culture Night.

- There is also a wide range of partnerships that are relevant to only one or two LAs, ranging from formal initiatives such as Peace IV to partnering with schools, regional authorities, arts groups, Film Board, etc.

**A7.5 We would also welcome any feedback you would like to share regarding current mechanisms for capital and non-capital funding for arts centres / venues in your area. (23 responses)**

- Current funding structures and intermittent nature of funding (e.g. under ACCESS programme and successor) makes it difficult to plan and programme strategically, and to develop long-term relationships/supports for artists. A long-term view is needed. This was identified as the main issue among respondents.
- Capital grants are insufficient to address issue of ageing infrastructure and increasing need for maintenance.
- There is a need for more realistic and specific funding from Arts Council for operational costs if venues are to be maximised as cultural infrastructure.
- There are unrealistic expectations regarding match funding from LAs.
- A clear funding policy is needed.
- Rural areas should not be penalised for rolling out 'non high art forms' - a different approach is needed for venues with catchment populations of under 100,000. Rural centres are important to rural areas and have limited programming due, in part, to small grants.
- An individual issue: some arts centres are set up as Specific Purpose Companies in order to reclaim VAT on construction costs - and therefore are excluded from Arts and Culture Capital Scheme criteria. Needs to be reviewed.
- Individual: possibility of using rates relief scheme e.g. Vacant Premises Arts Scheme?
- Individual: a strong case can be made for extension of LA/DCHG capital co-funding partnerships into the realm of the revenue funding of venues.

**A7.6 Please rate the quality of the built infrastructure of the arts centres/venues in your area, as well as the quality and relevance of their programming. (31 responses)**

- Quality of infrastructure, programming and relevance is variable, but few are rated 'excellent' and many fall into the middle range.
- There are a few venues that require urgent attention and a few areas with specific capacity issues (lack of accommodation in Kilkenny and County Galway, lack of artists' accommodation in Waterford).

**A7.7 Please provide any additional comments on the overall quality of the arts centres/venues. (20 responses)**

- Funding required for professional staff x 6
- Funding for upgrade needed x 3
- More funding required for programming x 3
- Ongoing financial support for maintenance and upkeep required x 2
- Venues developed by LAs and professional bodies are the best spaces x 2
- More capacity required
- There is a need for designated development spaces
- Uncertainty re funding from year to year.

**A7.8 Please describe the role of the Local Authority in the governance of the arts centres / venues it supports (31 responses)**

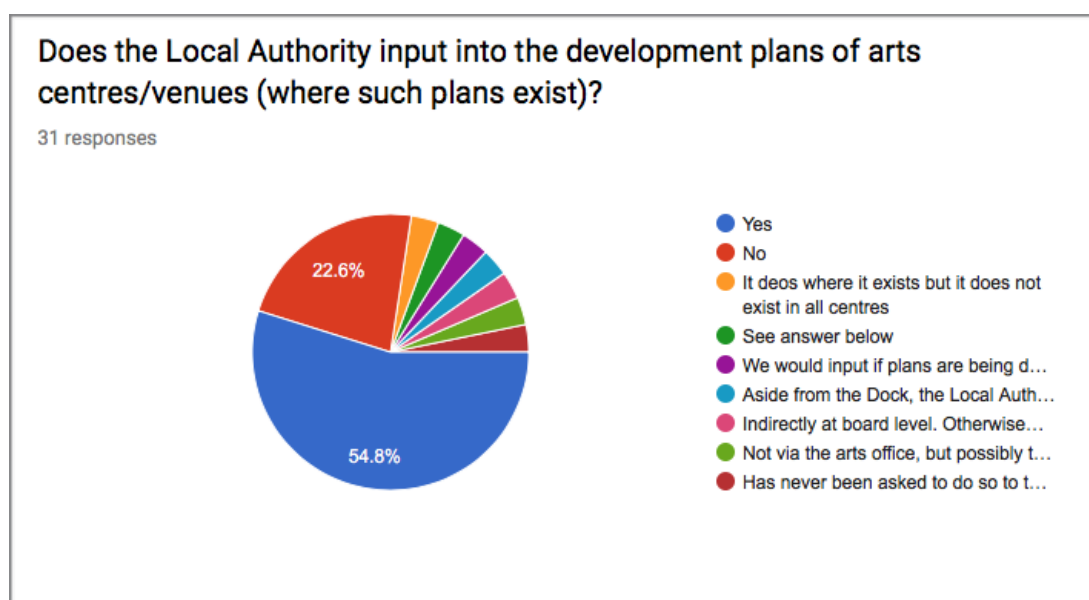
- Many venues are Council-owned. The main approach of LAs to governance of venues is to have elected members or officers appointed as directors to the Board, but to be hands-off with regard to day-to-day operations.
- But there are quite a few instances where the LA is completely hands-off other than providing funding.
- Agreed reporting structures with regular reports are common.
- Significant staff support in some cases.

**A7.9 Please describe the programming partnerships (if any) between the Local Authority and the arts centres / venues it supports.**

- A wide range of programmes agreed annually and delivered in partnership with the venues.

- Funding from the Arts Council for festivals using local venues on a co-funding and partnership basis.
- Exhibitions and other programme initiatives.
- Artists' residencies.
- Initiatives aimed at specific audiences (e.g. youth, disabled, cross-border).

#### **A7.10 Does the Local Authority input into the development plans of arts centres / venues (where such plans exist)? (31 responses)**



#### **A7.11 Please outline any new developments underway/planned by the Local Authority with arts centres/venues (29 responses)**

- Generally, where plans/intentions exist, they relate to the development of new venues - apart from a few individual examples of specific art form development, artists' residencies and redevelopments of existing venues.

#### **A7.12 Any other comments you would like to share? (12 responses)**

- Venues are important catalysts in their areas and should be developed to enhance public participation and engagement, not just as building projects to entice people to watch/listen.
- We also work with Creative Spark - a development, workspace and training hub.

- We co-fund arts workspaces/facilities and in-residence programmes.
- Artists' studios should be considered as part of arts/culture infrastructure.
- County boundaries limit the way in which we perceive and engage with venues, e.g. venues in Limerick serve Clare and Tipperary and consumers cross county boundaries.
- We fund non-dedicated venues through the running of arts series - this allows small villages to have part-time venues where a population would not support a year-round venue.
- An annual zero-based approach by AC to funding might be more appropriate to match the scale and ambition of individual centres.
- The international importance of the VISUAL should be acknowledged in the AC's future funding model.
- Lack of capital investment in current facilities is of growing concern as buildings and equipment age, and lack of staff means capital investment is not maximised.

## **Appendix 8:**

### ***List of all 138 Year-Round Venues included in AIRO Survey***



## A8. LIST OF ALL 138 VENUES YEAR-ROUND VENUES INCLUDED IN AIRO SURVEY

	Venue	Location
1	Visual Centre for Contemporary Arts, Carlow	Carlow
2	Ramor Theatre	Cavan
3	Townhall Cavan Arts Space	Cavan
4	Cois na hAbhna	Clare
5	Cultúrlann Sweeney	Clare
6	glór	Clare
7	Cnoc na Gaoithe	Clare
8	Briery Gap Theatre	Cork
9	Sirius Arts Centre	Cork
10	Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre	Cork
11	Ionad Cultúrtha an Dochtúir Ó Loingsigh	Cork
12	Yew Woods Venues Incorporating The Mall Arts Centre and St. Mary's Collegiate Church	Cork
13	Brú Na Sí Cultural Centre	Cork
14	Cork Arts Theatre	Cork
15	Crawford Art Gallery	Cork
16	The Everyman	Cork
17	Graffiti Theatre Company	Cork
18	Granary Theatre	Cork
19	The Glucksman	Cork
20	Firkin Crane	Cork
21	Triskel Arts Centre	Cork
22	Sample-Studios	Cork
23	An tSean Bheairic, Falcarragh Visitor Centre	Donegal
24	Abbey Arts Centre	Donegal
25	Artlink	Donegal
26	Letterkenny Regional Cultural Centre	Donegal
27	Glebe House and Gallery	Donegal
28	Balor Arts Centre	Donegal
29	An Grianain Theatre	Donegal
30	RUA RED South Dublin Arts Centre	Dublin
31	Civic Theatre	Dublin
32	Draóicht	Dublin
33	Seamus Ennis Arts Centre	Dublin
34	The LAB Gallery	Dublin
35	Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane	Dublin
36	Black Church Print Studio	Dublin
37	Project Arts Centre	Dublin
38	Smock Alley Theatre 1662	Dublin
39	Temple Bar Gallery & Studios	Dublin
40	Gallery of Photography Ireland	Dublin
41	The Ark	Dublin
42	Irish Film Institute	Dublin
43	Axis Ballymun	Dublin
44	The Helix	Dublin
45	The New Theatre	Dublin
46	Bewley's Café Theatre	Dublin
47	Theatre Upstairs	Dublin
48	The Teachers' Club: Theatre@36	Dublin
49	Liberty Hall Theatre	Dublin
50	The Complex	Dublin
51	Abbey Theatre	Dublin
52	The Gate Theatre	Dublin
53	dlr Lexicon	Dublin
54	Pavilion Theatre	Dublin
55	dlr Mill Theatre Dundrum	Dublin
56	Grainstore, dlr Youth Arts Facility	Dublin
57	Lambert Puppet Theatre	Dublin

58	Cultúrlann na hÉireann	Dublin
59	Clasac	Dublin
60	Royal Hibernian Academy	Dublin
61	DanceHouse	Dublin
62	The Douglas Hyde Gallery	Dublin
63	Fire Station Artists' Studios	Dublin
64	Graphic Studio	Dublin
65	Irish Writers Centre	Dublin
66	Town Hall Theatre, Galway	Galway
67	Galway Arts Centre	Galway
68	Taibhdhearc na Gaillimhe	Galway
69	126 Artist-Run Gallery	Galway
70	Áras Éanna	Galway
71	Siamsa Tíre	Kerry
72	St. Johns Theatre and Arts Centre	Kerry
73	Carnegie Arts Centre	Kerry
74	An Lab Theatre	Kerry
75	The Moat Theatre	Kildare
76	Riverbank Arts Centre	Kildare
77	The Barn	Kilkenny
78	Watergate Theatre	Kilkenny
79	Butler Gallery	Kilkenny
80	Kilkenny Collective for Arts Talent	Kilkenny
81	Dunamaise Arts Centre	Laois
82	The Laois Arthouse and Library	Laois
83	Solas Art Gallery	Leitrim
84	Leitrim Sculpture Centre	Leitrim
85	The Glens Centre	Leitrim
86	The Dock	Leitrim
87	Dance Limerick	Limerick
88	Belltable	Limerick
89	Lime Tree Theatre	Limerick
90	University Concert Hall	Limerick
91	Limerick City Gallery of Art (LCGA)	Limerick
92	Ormston House Cultural Resource Centre	Limerick
93	Friars' Gate Theatre	Limerick
94	Backstage Theatre	Longford
95	An Táin Arts Centre	Louth
96	Oriel Centre Dundalk Gaol	Louth
97	Highlanes Gallery	Louth
98	Droichead Arts Centre	Louth
99	Ballina Arts Centre	Mayo
100	Linenhall Arts Centre	Mayo
101	Custom House Studios	Mayo
102	Town Hall Theatre Westport	Mayo
103	Áras Inis Gluaire	Mayo
104	Solstice Arts Centre	Meath
105	Toradh Gallery	Meath
106	Garage Theatre	Monaghan
107	The Market House	Monaghan
108	Íontas Arts & Community Resource Centre	Monaghan
109	Birr Theatre & Arts Centre	Offaly
110	King House	Roscommon
111	Roscommon Arts Centre	Roscommon
112	Theatre Company (The Factory Performance Space)	Sligo
113	Hawk's Well Theatre	Sligo
114	Coleman Music Centre	Sligo
115	Brú Ború Heritage Centre	Tipperary

116	The Source Arts Centre	Tipperary
117	Tipperary Excel Arts Centre	Tipperary
118	Nenagh Arts Centre	Tipperary
119	Damer House Gallery	Tipperary
120	South Tipperary Arts Centre	Tipperary
121	Old Market House Arts Centre	Waterford
122	Lismore Heritage Centre	Waterford
123	Garner Lane Arts Centre	Waterford
124	Greyfriars Municipal Gallery	Waterford
125	Theatre Royal Waterford	Waterford
126	Lismore Castle Arts	Waterford
127	Dean Crowe Theatre & Arts Centre	Westmeath
128	Luan Gallery	Westmeath
129	Mullingar Arts Centre	Westmeath
130	Dún Na Sí Amenity & Heritage Park	Westmeath
131	Áras an Mhuilinn Midlands Regional Resource Centre	Westmeath
132	The National Opera House	Wexford
133	Wexford Arts Centre	Wexford
134	St. Michaels Theatre Centre for the Arts	Wexford
135	The Presentation Centre	Wexford
136	Mermaid County Wicklow Arts Centre	Wicklow
137	Courthouse Arts Centre	Wicklow
138	The Courthouse Studios and Gallery	Wicklow

## **Appendix 9:**

### ***List of Venues in Receipt of Arts Council Venue Funding, 2018***

## A9. LIST OF VENUES IN RECEIPT OF ARTS COUNCIL VENUE FUNDING, 2018

1	Aras Eanna
2	Axis Arts Centre
3	Backstage Theatre
4	Ballina Arts Centre
5	Balor Arts Centre
6	Birr Theatre & Arts Centre
7	Civic Theatre
8	Cork Opera House
9	Courthouse Arts Centre
10	Dock, The
11	Draiocht
12	Droichead Arts Centre
13	Dunamaise Arts Centre
14	Everyman
15	Friars' Gate Theatre
16	Galway Arts Centre
17	Garage Theatre
18	Garter Lane Arts Centre
19	Glens
20	Glor - Irish Music Centre
21	Grianán Theatre
22	Hawk's Well Theatre
23	Lime Tree Theatre/Belltable
24	Linenhall Arts Centre
25	Mermaid Arts Centre
26	Mill Theatre, The
27	Model The
28	Mullingar Integrated Arts
29	Pavilion Theatre
30	Project Arts Centre
31	Ramor Theatre
32	Regional Cultural Centre
33	Riverbank Arts Centre
34	Roscommon Arts Centre
35	Rua Red
36	Siamsa Tire
37	Sirius Arts Centre
38	Smock Alley
39	Solstice Arts Centre
40	Source Arts Centre
41	St John's Listowel
42	Táin An
43	Theatre Forum
44	Tipperary Excel
45	Town Hall Theatre
46	Triskel Arts Centre
47	VISUAL & GB Shaw
48	Waterford Theatre Royal
49	Watergate Theatre
50	West Cork Arts Centre Uillinn
51	Wexford Arts Centre



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