



Briefing Document – 2023 *Creative Communities Economic Action Fund*

Background

The Creative Ireland Programme commits to collaboration; between central and local government, between culture and industry, between artists and policy makers, and seeks to place creativity at the centre of public policy.

The Programme invests in local communities through a strategic partnership with local government. *Creative Communities* delivers across key policy areas such as climate action, enterprise, tourism, youth, urban, rural and community development, and community health and wellbeing. The impact of *Creative Communities* across these areas has enabled a shift in how creativity is valued within local authorities, and by communities, as a strategic support for broader societal issues.

An [interim review of Creative Communities](#), published in 2021, recognised the success of the partnership in delivering across local authorities and in supporting wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development. **However, it was noted that a stronger focus in relation to economic development was required.** The establishment of the first [Creative Communities Economic Action Fund](#) in January 2022 sought to strategically target the development of the creative economy.

The completion of new Regional Enterprise Plans (REPs)¹ to 2024 has also brought the importance of the creative industries into focus. All nine REPs highlight the creative industries, or sub-sectors within the creative industries, as integral to the economic viability of their region. Alongside this, Ireland's three Regional Assemblies also underpin the creative industries through implementation of their Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies

The Programme for Government, *Our Shared Future*, commits to the development of a digital creative industries roadmap. Building on this commitment and on the strength of regional ambition, this **Creative Communities Economic Action Fund 2023 (CCEAF 2023)** seeks to further develop creative economies at local level, as a pilot initiative, to target identified sectors within the creative industries.

Targeted sectors:

The CCEAF aims to support Local Authorities and Local Enterprise Offices in the development of the creative economy at local level through targeted support for design and digital creative industry sectors, namely:

- **Design sectors** including industrial design, product design, visual communications, graphic design, Ui/Ux (User-interface/User-experience) and interaction design, service design and strategic design;

¹ <https://www.enterprise.gov.ie/en/what-we-do/the-business-environment/regional-enterprise-plans/>

- **Digital creative sectors** including software design and games sectors; and
- **Content creation sectors** including advertising and brand agencies, visual and audiovisual content for commercial social media, multimedia content for mobile applications ('apps'), and content for newer and emerging platforms such as AR/VR/XR (Augmented Reality / Virtual Reality / Mixed Reality).

Eligible Areas and Priorities

1. **Projects proposed under this fund must target design, creative and content creation sectors (identified target sectors above).**
2. **Projects proposed must be focused on activities that seek to support resilient domestic employment and export growth.**

Eligible projects should address one or more of the following priorities:

a) **Strengthening Creative Regions**

Strengthening design, creative and content creation industries through:

- Identified target sectors in your Regional Enterprise Plan, supported by local/regional level data;
- Collaborative actions between enterprise partners, further and higher education and/or other local or regional partners and representative organisations in delivering enterprise and innovation supports for the identified target sectors;
- Local/Regional initiatives which strengthen readiness to export by creative businesses, within the identified target sectors.
- Opportunities for these targeted creative industries to make linkages with wider industry.

b) **Innovation**

Tackling barriers to growth for creative micro, small and medium sized enterprises and their engagement in innovation, through initiatives such as:

- Capacity building programmes, which inform and upskill targeted businesses in relation to the impact and potential of new technologies (such as artificial intelligence and the emergence of new platforms and distribution channels) on their business models;
- Support for collaborative ideation for new product/market opportunities, across the identified sectors, and between creative businesses and those engaged in new technologies;
- Support for innovation and development in new creative products/services – from prototyping, through to development and commercialisation of existing prototypes with associated intellectual property/patenting processes;

c) **Low Carbon and Circular Economy**

Strengthening the potential within design and creative businesses to support the transition to a low carbon and circular economy, such as:

- Capacity building programmes which inform and upskill creative businesses in relation to circular design;
- New product/service development.

The examples outlined within each priority are not intended as exhaustive. Other initiatives may be considered where they deliver against the eligibility and priorities of the Creative Communities Economic Action Fund 2023. Applicants may also choose to develop proposals which seek to address two or more priorities in an integrated manner. This is acceptable if that is appropriate to their approach and to the potential of their local/regional creative economy.

Guidance for Applicants:

1. A local authority must be the lead partner in all applications, working with their local enterprise offices (LEOs).
3. Local authorities may choose to collaborate with other local authorities and/or external partners (e.g., in further or higher education, research or innovation) as appropriate to their application. Such collaboration should be clearly structured and outlined within applications.
4. Collaborations with regional agencies such as the Western Development Commission and Údarás na Gaeltachta are welcome.
5. Applicants (and their partners) are strongly encouraged to collaborate with the industry body/bodies relevant to the sectoral focus of their project, to ensure that applications are informed by the needs and potential of the creative industries across Ireland. These include - but are not limited to - [IAPI](#), [IMIRT](#), [Eirmersive](#), [IDI](#), [ICAD](#), [Service Design Network](#). Such collaboration should be clearly structured and outlined within applications.
6. All applications must set out how their project and process will seek to identify learnings that can strengthen the impact that local stakeholders can have, in stimulating the development of the creative industries and related economic development.
7. Investment in design-driven innovation for non-design sectors will only be considered where it is integral to a project that is primarily focused on building the capacity of design firms.

Ineligible activities include:

- Costs not directly related to the project
- Retrospective costs i.e. expenditure which has taken place prior to the project approval date
- Feasibility studies
- Capital projects – although the implementation of projects and proposals under the scheme may seek to guide or inform potential future investment (e.g., from National, EU or other funding)

Budget:

In order to achieve partnerships of relevant scale and to realise the ambition of this initiative, only applications seeking €50,000 to €90,000 will be considered and evaluated. We envisage that the indicative overall fund will be €400,000.

Drawdown of Funding:

Once funding is agreed, the successful local authority may then begin to draw down the funding, on a vouched expenditure basis. The Grant Recoupment form should be accompanied by a printout from the Local Authority's financial management system showing expenditure. The final date for drawdown will be **17th November 2023** in line with all other streams of funding from the Creative Ireland Programme to local authorities.

Creative Communities Economic Action Fund 2023 Application and Evaluation Process

Applications will be reviewed by the Creative Ireland Programme and external assessors as follows:

Criterion	Marks Available
Quality of eligible proposals in terms of delivering on the objective and priorities of CCEAF 2023	35
Experience and expertise of the team/partners and the quality of the collaboration	35
Anticipated outputs and impact/outcomes	30
Total	100

Timelines

19 January - Fund Opens for Applications. The online application portal will open for submissions.

31 January – 1pm Online Briefing Session. An online webinar which will provide an overview of the fund and a Q&A session. Register [here](#).

28 February - Closing date. Proposals should be submitted through submit.com by 6pm.

14 March – Applicants will be informed by this date if they have been successful.

17 November – Grant Recoupment form submitted to Creative Ireland

Clarifications:

If you have any queries on the Creative Communities Economic Action Fund or the application process, please email creativeireland@tcagsm.gov.ie using the subject heading 'Creative Communities Economic Action Fund'.