



Easy Read Version

Creative Communities on a Shared Island

2026–2028

Local Authority Partnerships with
Creative and Community Organisations
Information For Applicants



The Main Points to Note

When does this Fund run?	The Creative Communities on a Shared Island Fund runs from mid 2026 to November 2028.
What funding is available?	Strand 1: Total of €750,000. Awards of up to €250,000 each for a maximum of three large-scale proposals. Strand 2: Total of €600,000. Awards of up to €150,000 to individual local authorities in Ireland. Strand 3: Total of €250,000. Five awards of €50,000 for small scale-projects.
How do I apply for funding?	You can apply online only. The online application portal opens on December 1st 2025 and closes at 1pm, Friday 27th February 2026.

Artist Farm Walk.
Photo: Brian Farrell





Who is running the Creative Communities on a Shared Island Fund?

Creative Ireland runs this Fund. Creative Ireland is a culture and wellbeing programme supported by the government. We are based in the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport. We inspire and transform people, places and communities through creativity. We believe every person in Ireland should have the chance to realise their full creative potential.

We aim to:

- Set up a community to share skills and information.
- Help people understand the value of creativity.
- Gather information and check the results of our work.
- Make creativity part of public policy.

The Creative Ireland Programme has five pillars:

1. Creative Youth
2. Creative Communities
3. Creative Health & Wellbeing
4. Creative Climate Action
5. Creative Industries

The Ties That Bind Project.
Photo: Alison Miles

What is the Creative Communities initiative?

Creative Communities is a partnership initiative between the Creative Ireland Programme and Ireland's 31 local authorities. It is supported by the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport, and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Creative Communities and local authorities use creativity to encourage wellbeing, social cohesion and economic success. Each local authority has a Culture and Creativity Team, led by a Director of Service. These teams bring together expertise from across the entire local authority and deliver the Creative Communities projects in their area.

What is the Shared Island initiative?

The Shared Island Initiative was set up in 2020 and aims to harness the full potential of the Good Friday Agreement. It encourages people and communities to connect and get to know each other's traditions and culture.

What is the Shared Island Creative Ireland initiative?

The Shared Island Creative Ireland initiative encourages people to be creative.

It aims to:

- Connect people and connect communities.
- Use culture and creativity to promote wellbeing, social connection, and local economic development.
- Give communities all over Ireland the opportunity to work with artists and experience different forms of creativity.
- Use arts and culture to help people understand why working together is important for Ireland's shared future.
- Work together on projects which will have positive benefits in the long term.

Has the Creative Communities on a Shared Island initiative been run before?

Yes. The first Creative Ireland Shared Island initiative ran from 2024–2025. A total of €1.5m was given in grants. Local authorities, cultural and creative organisations and community groups across the island of Ireland worked together to co-design and deliver projects. [Visit Creative Ireland to explore these projects.](#)

These projects had many good outcomes. Evidence shows that creativity helps generate safe, accessible, and peaceful spaces where different groups can connect, share experiences, and learn to work together.

This Creative Communities on a Shared Island Fund builds on this experience and the expertise of local authorities' existing north-south and east-west (Ireland-Britain) ambitions and skills. This Fund helps people across the island of Ireland use their creativity to work together.

What do we mean by 'creativity'?

At Creative Ireland, we believe that creativity is a mix of natural human talent as well as skills which people can learn. Everyone is able to take part in creative activity and enjoy it. Creativity gives people the freedom to take risks and imagine different things. Using imagination to create new ideas brings extra value to human activity.

Types of creativity may include:

- Animation
- Architecture
- Augmented/Virtual/Mixed Reality
- Circus
- Coding
- Comedy
- Cooking
- Creative Digital Technology
- Creative Writing
- Cultural Heritage
- Dance (all types)
- Design (all kinds)
- Digital Art
- Digital Games
- Fashion
- Film
- Irish Language Arts
- Literature
- Multidisciplinary Arts
- Music (all genres)
- Participatory Arts
- Podcasting
- Street Arts and Spectacle
- Theatre
- Traditional Arts
- Visual Arts
- Storytelling

What sort of proposals is this Creative Communities on a Shared Island Fund looking for?

Your proposal should build on existing local authority networks or relationships or create new community collaborations led by the local authority. We want creative projects that grow cooperation and ways to work together between communities of place and/or practice.

We want proposals that:

- Connect people and connect communities.
- Use culture and creativity to work together in new ways.
- Give communities the opportunity to work with artists and experience different forms of creativity.
- Encourage active mobility across the island, including north-south and/or east-west (Ireland-Britain).
- Use arts and culture to help people and communities understand why working together is important for a shared future.
- Work together on shared island projects which will have positive benefits in the long term.

Use the values behind Creative Communities to help develop your project ideas.

- Make it easier for people to take part in cultural and creative activities locally.
- Use culture and creativity to help people work together in new ways.
- Strengthen the ways in which local authorities bring culture and creativity into place-making, regeneration, renewal, and the development of vibrant, creative, and lasting places.
- Invest in culture and creativity to support environmental, social, and economic returns which help deliver local authority plans at local, regional national and international levels.
- Build on the agility and combined approach of culture and creativity teams in local authorities to keep up the delivery of targeted shared programmes.

Who can apply for funding?

Local authority Culture and Creativity Teams in Ireland in partnership with local or national community, cultural and creative organisations working with north-south and/or east-west (Ireland-Britain) partners.



Birds of a Feather project.
Photo: Emilija Jefremova

Does a proposal need a lead applicant?

Yes. The lead applicant must be a local authority based in Ireland. Applications with both east-west (England, Scotland and Wales) and north-south dimensions are welcome. Funding should be shared fairly with partners, with worthwhile activity with north-south and/or east-west (Ireland-Britain) partners.

Partners can include:

- Arts and cultural organisations or institutions.
- Creative organisations, networks and collectives, including all-island networks.
- Public sector bodies, including local authorities in Northern Ireland, or established networks.
- Charities or not-for-profit organisations.
- Social enterprises.
- Community groups and networks.
- Business, commercial companies.
- Philanthropic and research bodies including universities.
- Communities of place and communities of practice.
- Individuals with a local authority (Strand 3 only).

What funding is available?

Three strands of funding are available during 2026–2028. Local authorities in Ireland may apply under all three strands:

Strand 1

We can award up to €250,000 each for a maximum of three large-scale proposals. At least one grant will be awarded to a partnership specific to the border region (involving one or more of local authorities in Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan and Louth). One application in Strand 1 will be considered for each lead local authority. You may also be included as part of a proposal led by another local authority.

Strand 2

We can award up to €150,000 each for a maximum of four medium-scale projects to individual local authorities in Ireland. Two applications led by local authorities can be submitted, and you may be included as part of a collaboration led by another local authority.

Strand 3

We can award €50,000 for five small scale-projects. Each lead local authority can make two applications, and you may be included as part of a collaboration led by another local authority.

When must the project take place?

Projects must be delivered between May 2026 and November 2028.

How does the payment of funding work?

Funding will be offered to local authorities to administer under the current five-year Service Level Agreement (SLA). Exact outputs will be added to an appendix to the Service Level Agreement.

Because the Creative Ireland Programme is administered through the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport, the administration of the grant must adhere to: [Circular 13/2014 – Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds](#). You must read and be familiar with this information before your project begins.

How are project proposals evaluated?

Shortlisted applications will be assessed using the following criteria. This is a competitive fund, and we expect many high-quality applications. Unfortunately, we will not be able to fund all projects.

We want to produce a balanced programme which represents people across the island. We are looking for projects which are unlikely to receive funding under other schemes; and projects with a clear creative and cultural approach and strong creative partners who deliver on the aims of the Shared Island initiative.

You must give details of all partners. Show how these partners working together strengthen working on a shared island and or a north-south or east-west collaboration.

Criterion	Marks Available
Community-to-Community Engagement & legacy	50
Creative and Cultural Approach	50
Partners and Project Team	50
Evaluation Plan	15
The overall project and its aims	15
Feasibility	20
Total	200

How to apply

Applications can be made online only.
Please complete the online application form at:
<https://creativeireland.submit.com>
no later than 1pm, Friday 27th February.

All personal data you submit to us as part of the application process, will be processed in accordance with the [Department's Data Protection Policy](#).

We will not consider:

- Applications received after the above deadline.
- Applications submitted by post, e-mail, hand or courier.
- Applications with a status of 'draft' at the closing date and time.

Clarifications and queries can be sent between now and the closing date to creativecommunities@ccs.gov.ie. Please use 'Creative Communities on a Shared Island' in the subject title of the email so that we can direct your query.

Shared Histories Diverse Views
Photo: Photo Museum Ireland

How to use the application portal

- Clarifications and additional information will be provided on the application portal.
- You can save your application form in draft on the online portal and return to it later.
- If you need to move away from your current page, please make sure you have saved your progress.
- When you submit your application, you will receive an email notification.



Please note these important dates

Phase	Details	Date
Fund Opens for Applications	Online application portal opens for submissions.	1st Dec. 2025
In-Person Networking Session	Two in-person networking sessions will be held (Wednesday 14th January at the MAC, Belfast; and Thursday 22nd January at Radisson Blu Royal Hotel, Dublin) to provide an overview of the available funding. This will allow prospective project partner applicants to ask questions. Further details on registration. Belfast Link . Dublin Link .	January 2026
Clarifications	Queries can be submitted by email to creativecommunities@ccs.gov.ie . Please use the subject heading 'Shared Island Creative Communities'. We will try to update the FAQ on the application portal as queries come in, however all final clarifications will be made by Friday 20th February.	January – February 2026

Phase	Details	Date
Clarifications	Only applications received before 1pm on this date will be considered.	27th Feb. 2026
Evaluation of Applications	The evaluation panel, including representatives from the Creative Ireland Programme and Shared Island Unit, together with independent experts, will evaluate applications according to the criteria listed in this document.	March – April 2026
Applicants Notified	All applicants are notified of the outcome of their applications.	May 2026

Important information about your project team, budget and application

When putting together your budget, make sure you have discussed individual fees and project budgets as a team. All members of your project team or project partners must agree your budget **before** Creative Ireland allocates funding.

What costs must a budget include?

- **Project Management.** For Strand A and Strand B, you must engage a project manager. Associated costs should cover administrative (for example to cover project management and/or financial administration), as well as any contribution towards overheads or other reasonable costs required to deliver the project.
- **Remuneration.** Your transparent and competitive budget must pay individuals and organisations properly for their time. Fees for artists should be in line with recognised industry guidelines. (See: [Paying the Artist: Arts Council policy on the fair and equitable remuneration and contracting of artists](#)).
- **Materials.** We favour low carbon solutions and environmentally friendly practice in project planning and delivery, and in your choices of partners and suppliers.

- **Evaluation.** We expect important learning to emerge from these projects. The cost of project evaluation and reporting should be included.
- **Communication and engagement.** These costs should form part of your budget.
- **Travel and accommodation.** Shared Island projects will incur additional costs for project teams and project participants to travel and stay overnight as part of the project. Include these in your budget.
- **FX rate fluctuations.** Allow for these if you are transacting in multiple currencies.

Other costs you may need to factor in include:

- Costs to convene all island or cross-border community events.
- Documentation costs.
- Evaluation costs.
- Networking/showcasing of initiatives awarded funding.

What costs cannot be included?

You may not include the following in your budget:

- Costs not directly related to the project (including capital expenditure).
- Expenditure which takes place before the project approval date.
- Capital requests for building improvements to workspaces and venues.
- Standalone conferences.
- Youth projects.*

*The Creative Youth Nurture Fund (2026–2028) is supporting children and young people.



Shared Histories: Diverse Views Project.
Photo: Photo Museum Ireland

Appendix 1: Useful Shared Island Material

- **Government of Ireland:**
- [Creative Ireland Shared Island Evaluation Report.](#)
- [Shared Island Initiative Report 2024 – Action on a Shared Island](#)
- [Collaborating on Healthcare on an All-Island Basis: A Scoping Study](#)
- [Shared Island Youth Forum Outcome Statement](#)
- [Shared Island Initiative Report 2022 – Action on a Shared Future](#)
- **National Economic and Social Council:** [Shared Island; Shared Opportunity: NESO Comprehensive Report Council Report No 157, April 2022](#)
- **Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI):** [Sharing the Island: Economic and social challenges and opportunities: Evidence from an ESRI research programme](#)

Other useful information:

- **Cavan County Council and UCD:** [Building Capacity for the Cultural Industries: Towards a Shared Island Approach for Dance and Theatre](#)
- **International Journal of Nursing and Health Care Research :** [Evaluation of Social value of the Creative Ireland Health & Wellbeing Project – The Art of Life in the International Journal of Nursing and Health Care Research](#)
- **Donegal County Council & Derry City & Strabane District Council:** [Collaborative Audience Development](#)
- **iCommunity A Vision for Addressing Challenges on our Shared Island:** [Community and Voluntary Sector](#)
- **The Future of cross-border cooperation in the arts:** [Policy Briefing and Executive Summary](#)

Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme



An Roinn Cultúir,
Cumarsáide agus Spóirt
Department of Culture,
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Shared Island
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Creative Ireland Programme

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#SharedIsland

Birds of a Feather Project
Photo: Emilija Jefremova