INFORMING
THE FUTURE OF
CULTURE NIGHT
EVIDENCE REVIEW,
RESEARCH AND
CONSULTATION
REPORT

JANICE McADAM ● HEATHER MAITLAND ● ANNETTE NUGENT

Image courtesy of Culture Night Dublin, 2017. Photographer: Michael Nolan

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1 INTRODUCTION

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In 2019 responsibility for Culture Night, the annual all-island event that celebrates culture, creativity and the arts, moved from the then Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to the Arts Council.

In assuming this new role the Arts Council, in concert with key Culture Night partner Dublin City Council, sought to undertake a comprehensive programme of review, research and consultation to inform their management and development of the event. Specifically, in this work the Arts Council sought to:

→ chart the evolution of Culture Night, explaining the key drivers;
→ understand Culture Night's current and potential public value;
→ provide recommendations on its future vision and delivery.

Given its recent policies on *Paying the Artist* and *Equality, Human Rights and Diversity* the Arts Council also sought to gather accurate information about the payment of artists participating in Culture Night and to understand the diversity and inclusivity of the event.

This report presents the findings from a comprehensive programme of work and sets out recommendations to inform the management and development of Culture Night by the Arts Council into the future.

CONTEXT

BACKGROUND

An initiative of Temple Bar Cultural Trust / Dublin City Council, Culture Night began as an innovative but relatively modest local event in 2006 receiving €20,000 from the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism. Over the intervening years, with increased support from central government, Culture Night has grown in scale and profile. It is now an established and popular part of our national cultural calendar, with international participation in Irish centres and overseas missions growing year on year.

The timeline below charts the evolution of Culture Night from its inception in 2006 to 2020. The key drivers of its development are identified and the policy context in which the event operates is set out.

The advance of the event is marked by a number of key points of inflection, such as when it became nationwide, appointed a National Co-ordinator, partnered with RTÉ. The Arts Council assuming responsibility for Culture Night in 2019 and attending to its development may be seen as another milestone of significance for Culture Night.

EVOLUTION

2006

→ Culture Night begins as an initiative of Temple Bar Cultural Trust / Dublin City Council with 40 venues opening free and late in the evening in Dublin's Temple Bar.

2007

→ Culture Night becomes a citywide event with over 82 cultural venues in Dublin participating.

→ Dublin Bus provides free transport linking the venues.

2008

→ Culture Night expands to include Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford.

2009

→ Culture Night takes place in Dublin and ten other cities and counties (Tralee, Roscommon, Limerick, Cork, Letterkenny, Galway, Waterford, Mayo, Wexford and Sligo).

→ Culture Night takes place in Belfast.

2010

→ Culture Night takes place in 20 different places throughout the Republic, including the islands of Tory and Inis Meáin.

→ Gaeltacht regions host Culture Nights for the first time.

→ Derry joins Belfast in hosting Culture Night.

2012

→ Irish Culture Nights held in London, Leeds, Newcastle and Liverpool.

→ Culture Night Dublin app launched.

2013

→ National Co-ordinator appointed.

→ Nationwide Culture Night app launched.

→ First RTÉ concert and live broadcast. RTÉ Concert Orchestra performs in Meeting House Square, Temple Bar, Dublin with live broadcast on Arena, RTÉ Radio 1.

2015

→ Culture Night celebrates its tenth edition with over 1,500 events.

2016

→ Culture Night Ambassador programme begins.

→ In partnership with Ireland 2016, Dublin City Council and the OPW, RTÉ presents a Centenary special series of live and broadcast events in Dublin Castle for Culture Night.

→ Approximately 3,000 events take place across 40 towns, cities and regions.

2017

→ Events held in Paris (Centre Culturel Irlandais) and New York (Irish Arts Centre) for the first time.

→ Culture Night Trailblazers appointed by the Minister for Culture.

2018

→ Culture Night podcast series introduced.

→ RTÉ Concert moves to National Museum at Collins Barracks.

2019

→ Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht moves responsibility for Culture Night to the Arts Council.

2020

→ Culture Night programme becomes hybrid of digital and in-person events due to Covid-19.

→ No RTÉ concert; instead special broadcasts, commissioned performances and live concerts across television, radio and online.

→ Department of Foreign Affairs' Cultural Unit involved. Events held in London, Paris, Berlin and New York missions.

→ The Arts Council encourage events aligned with their *Equality, Human Rights and Diversity* policy and practices in keeping with their *Paying the Artist* policy.

Image courtesy of Culture Night Carlow, 2018. Photographer: AKN Photography

KEY DRIVERS OF CULTURE NIGHT

The following factors have impelled the development of Culture Night.

Local Authority partnership

The nationwide roll-out of Culture Night has been enabled by partnership with local authorities, and specifically with the Arts Offices of city and county councils.

The involvement of local authorities grew incrementally from 2008 as support became available from national government and councils around the country were invited or made the decision to participate in Culture Night. The Arts Council's Framework for Collaboration Agreement with the County and City Management Association (CCMA) assures this partnership until 2025.

This partnership is critical to the success of Culture Night in the future.

Partnership with RTÉ

The national broadcaster's involvement with Culture Night dates back to 2013 when the first concert and live broadcast took place in Temple Bar's Meeting House Square. RTÉ continued to work with Dublin City Council to stage a flagship Culture Night concert in Dublin until 2020, when Covid restrictions forced a different but no less impactful approach. RTÉ's contribution to the Culture Night programme, its broadcast and general promotion and coverage of Culture Night extends the reach of the event and amplifies its presence and profile.

National government investment

National government has invested in Culture Night from its inception, seeding aspects of the programme such as events for children, young people and senior citizens in 2007 as well as incrementally supporting its nationwide roll-out.

Image courtesy of Culture Night Donegal, 2019. Photographer: Paul McGuckian

KEY DRIVERS OF CULTURE NIGHT

National Co-ordination

The appointment of a National Co-ordinator for Culture Night in 2013 brought cohesiveness to the event and its communication, increasing awareness and engagement.

Digital

The exigencies of 2020 forcing much of the Culture Night programme online opened up new and innovative approaches to events and also extended the reach and lifespan of events. Digital is seen to be a driver of the event for the future.

Intangible drivers

Bord Bia Consumer Lifestyle Trends research identifies a number of behavioural and attitudinal trends relevant to Culture Night. Advancing 'health and well-being' continues to be a significant trend. They note people's desire to express and celebrate what is unique and true in their own lives and about their community ('community and identity') and for 'moments of discovery' and for 'sharing exciting stories and places with others' ('engaging experiences').

POLICY CONTEXT

Culture Night can be understood within the context of several important policy frameworks and strategies by the State, state bodies and the EU in the field of arts and culture.

Project Ireland 2040, published in 2018, is a €116 billion National Planning Framework which aims to guide Ireland's development over the next 22 years. It identifies 'Culture, Heritage and Sport' as one of its ten Strategic Investment Priorities, particularly in relation to improving quality of life and adding to a sense of place.

Culture 2025, the Government's framework policy for culture, aims to 'enrich the lives of everyone through engagement in the cultural life of the nation', and to 'create opportunities for increased citizen participation.' It sets out the basis for deeper engagement between Government, the citizen and relevant cultural stakeholders to achieve this and more.

In defining culture, Culture 2025 notes that in its broadest sense, culture describes everything we do as a society and how we behave. For the purpose of the policy framework, its definition of culture includes all the following fields – the arts, the creative industries, cultural heritage and creativity, while recognising that culture and creativity are, by their nature, fluid and evolving.

Creative Ireland (2017-2022), the all-of-Government culture and wellbeing programme, organises its work around five pillars, the second of which is 'enabling creativity in every community.'

Making Great Art Work (2016-2025), the Arts Council's ten-year strategy, published in 2015, maintains a twin focus on the artist and on public engagement. The objectives set out in the strategy work toward the goals: 'Artists are supported to make excellent work which is enjoyed and valued' and 'More people will enjoy high-quality arts experiences.'

The Arts Council's **Equality, Human Rights and Diversity Policy** launched in 2019 'strives to respect, support and ensure the inclusion of all voices and cultures that make up Ireland today, from all sections of society, from existing and new communities, and from all social backgrounds, ethnicities and traditions.'

In their **Paying the Artist Policy**, launched in 2020, the Arts Council 'recognises its role in promoting equitable and fair remuneration and contracting within the arts' and furthermore 'in leading change through undertaking and sharing research, through supporting developmental actions that improve capacity and transparency, through the requirements we place on funding recipients and through our partnership and advocacy work.'

3 METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

A review, research and consultation framework encompassing both quantitative and qualitative methodologies was created. It utilised various data sources including the Arts Council's annual general population survey and responded to the relevant strategic contexts in which Culture Night operates. It enabled responses from a broad base of existing and potential stakeholders and ensured a depth of consultation with expert informants. It was designed to provide necessary benchmarks for review and evaluation of Culture Night in the future. The scope of the work was Culture Night in the Republic of Ireland.

Overview of methodology

RESEARCH	EVIDENCE REVIEW	CONSULTATION
Surveys Case Studies Programme Analysis	Desk Research Comparator Study	Depth Interviews Key Informant Workshops

Artists | Arts Organisations | Arts Audiences | Culture Night Audiences | Culture Night Organisers | Cultural Providers | Expert Informants | General Population | Local and National Government Representatives | Media Partners

Details of the review, research and consultation methodology including information on those consulted and surveyed are included in Appendix I.

Sequence

The programme of review, research and consultation was sequenced. Information and insight gathered in Phase 1 was analysed and reported. A set of key considerations was defined which informed the inquiry and engagement in the second phase of work.

Phase 1: Information and insight gathering	Phase 2: Close inquiry
Desk research	Desk research
Depth interviews	Case Studies
Programme analysis	Comparator Study
Surveys	Key informant workshops

Steering Group

A stakeholder Steering Group was established to guide, inform and champion the review, research and consultation programme. The consultants engaged with the Steering Group at key stages in the course of the work.

Image courtesy of Culture Night Dublin, 2017. Photographer: Michael Nolan
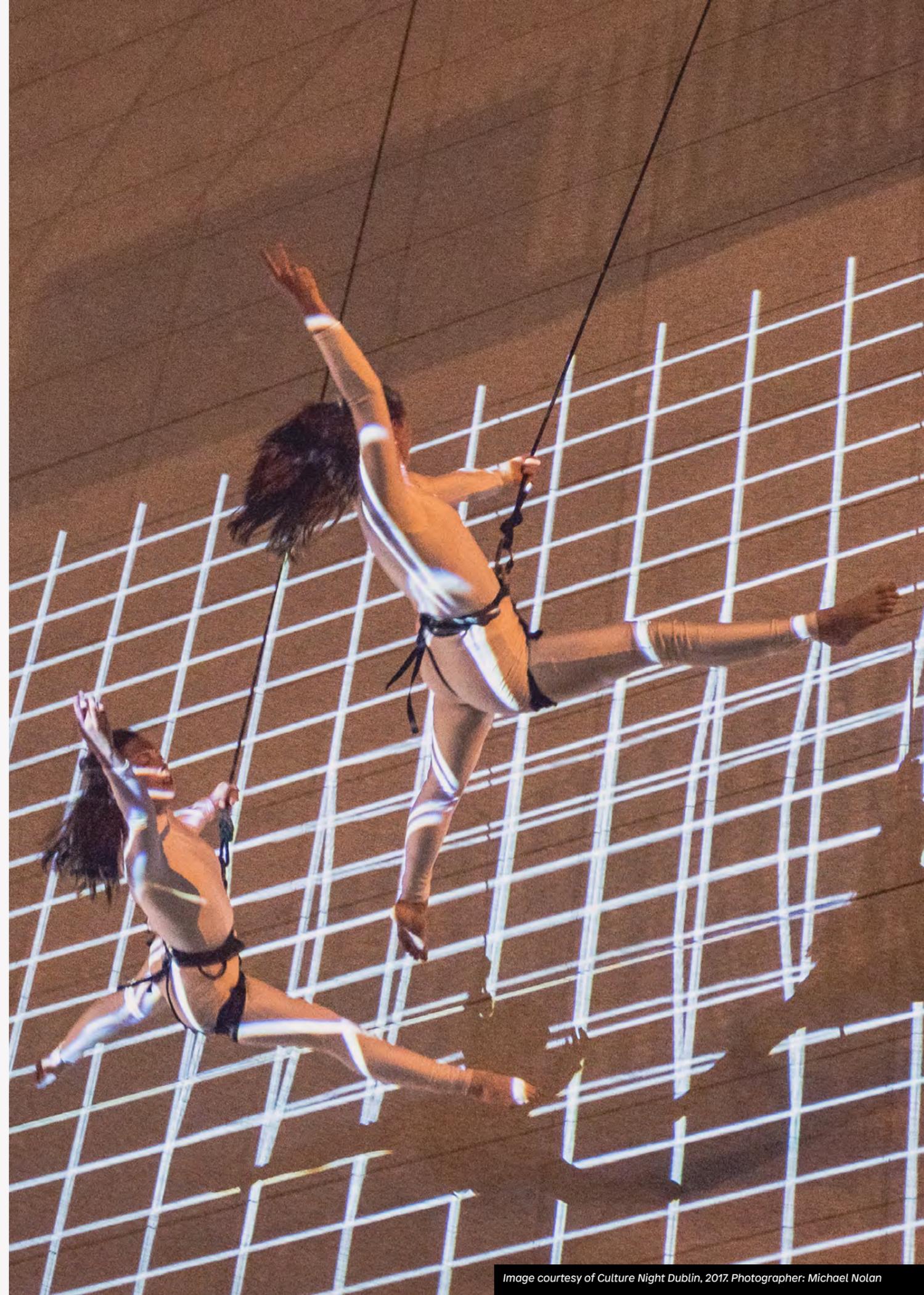
KEY FINDINGS

KEY FINDINGS

Information from the research and consultation activities was collated and analysed. The following key findings emerged in relation to the perception of Culture Night, the form and content of its programme, current and future participation, the brand and purpose of the event, its governance and management and the ambition for its future.

The results of specific inquiry into the payment of artists, the diversity and inclusivity of Culture Night and its role in audience development are also reported here.

PERCEPTION OF CULTURE NIGHT

What are people thinking about Culture Night?

B&A

A national survey conducted in 2020 by Behaviour & Attitudes for the Arts Council found that 57% of the general population are aware of Culture Night.

Overall Culture Night was positively perceived and widely recognised

It was considered important that Culture Night exists and that it continues to do so. The event was perceived it to have 'cachet' and 'purchase' and to be an 'important set piece' and a highlight of the cultural calendar. Many expressed their enthusiasm for and commitment to the event and its future.

72%

of respondents to the audience survey were satisfied or very satisfied with their overall experience of Culture Night 2020.

PERCEPTION OF CULTURE NIGHT

Culture Night is about fun, discovery, 'the buzz', a shared experience

Top of mind perceptions of Culture Night by audiences, organisers and artists coalesced around ideas of fun, discovery and trying new things, celebration, access, a moment in time, a coming together for a shared experience. It was compared to Daffodil Day, one 'spotlight' day when the people nationally come together with a sense of common purpose.

Seen to be 'more right than wrong' about Culture Night

It was recognised that many aspects of Culture Night are working well, with scope for clarification and strengthening of some areas of its organisation and operation. While resolving these issues, the Arts Council was encouraged 'not to throw the baby out with the bathwater'.

Enthusiasm about the future of Culture Night

On the whole, there was a sense of optimism and anticipation about the evolution of Culture Night. Key partners including local authority Arts Officers and RTÉ stated their ongoing commitment to supporting Culture Night and are ambitious for their role in its future.

Image courtesy of Culture Night Kerry, 2020. Photographer: Maurice Supple of Blue Shed Productions

PROGRAMME

What's happening, where, how and who's involved?

In-depth analysis of the events submitted to the Culture Night website in 2019 and 2020 revealed the following about the Culture Night programme.

Culture Night is genuinely nationwide

Some counties such as Cork, Dublin, Galway, Leitrim and Sligo 'punch above their weight' relative to the population. Conversely, there are fewer events in some other counties relative to the population. This is because:

→ A small number of local authorities do not currently participate in a formal capacity. Some organisations in those counties present events independently;

→ Some local authority Arts Offices such as those in Carlow and Donegal focus on enabling a smaller number of impactful experiences.

2019

→ 1,560 Events
→ 21% in Dublin City
→ 17% in Cork City and County

No. of Culture Night events (no. of local authority areas)

- 29 & below (15)
- 30 to 59 (8)
- 60 to 99 (5)
- 100 to 299 (2)
- 300 & above (1)
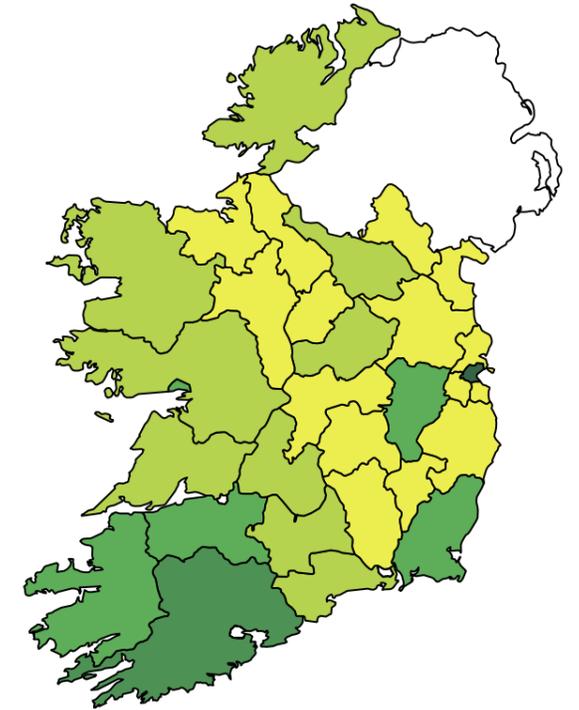
2020

→ 896 Events
→ 31% in Dublin City
→ 16% in Cork City and County
→ 567 Online Events (63%)

No. of Culture Night events (no. of local authority areas)

- 18 & below (17)
- 19 to 39 (9)
- 40 to 69 (3)
- 70 to 199 (1)
- 200 & above (1)
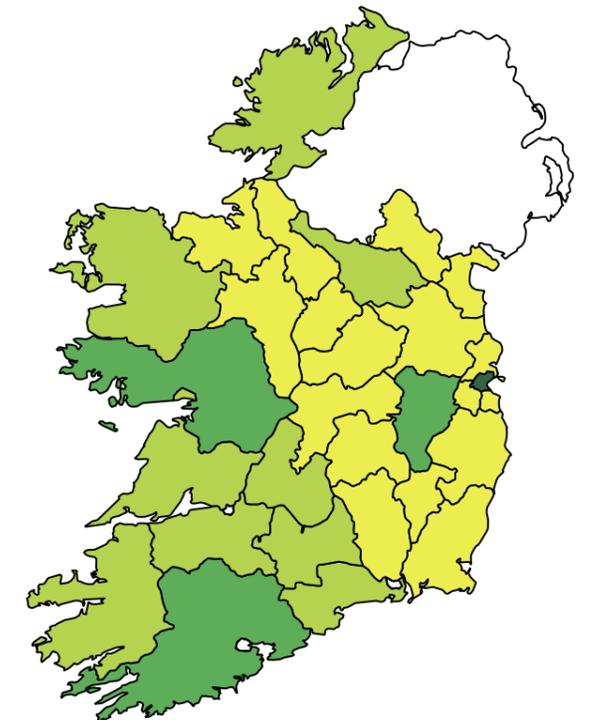
PROGRAMME

At its best when local

Culture Night was generally considered to be at its best when 'hyper local', creating shared experiences for people in their community, neighbourhood or local area. In this regard, it was noted that the rural experience of Culture Night has to be considered and managed differently.

Wide range of those organising events

The lead organisers identified crossed a wide range of sectors including culture, arts, heritage, education, hospitality, tourism, health and commercial and corporate enterprise. Despite this breadth and diversity of organiser profile, it was felt that there is scope for Culture Night to extend its reach further, specifically beyond the arts sector.

Range & diversity of those involved in Culture Night (lead organisers events 2019)


214 Independent creatives & artist-led cultural practitioner groups

180 Professional museum & heritage organisations

7 Science

21 Cultural production

25 Cultural enterprises

168 Voluntary arts & heritage groups & organisations

103 Libraries & other local authority lead organisers

140 Shops, cafés, pubs, hotels etc.

13 Corporate

29 Visitor attractions

15 Other

40 Cultural festivals

140 Voluntary groups & organisations: not primarily arts & heritage

RTÉ

13 Cultural

9 Embassies & missions

147 Professional building centred arts organisations e.g. arts centres, theatres, galleries, artists' workspaces

29 Community youth arts

23 Health sector

23 Arts development

**47** Education Institutions

PROGRAMME

Extraordinary range of event types

There is an extraordinary diversity of the types of events in Culture Night. In 2019, music (41% of events) and visual arts (25%) dominated the programme. In 2020 this reversed, with more events focused on visual arts (33%) than music (28%) and there was an increase in the percentage of events classified as heritage (from 19% to 26%). It may be assumed that restrictions in relation to Covid-19 had an influence on the types of events offered in 2020.

Culture Night 2019 by genre

Genre	%
Music	**41%**
Visual Art	**25%**
Heritage	**19%**
Performance	**18%**
Arts & Crafts	**14%**
Tour	**13%**
Talk	**13%**
Dance	**12%**
Literature	**10%**
Workshop	**10%**
History	**9%**
Storytelling	**9%**
Film	**7%**
Theatre	**7%**
Poetry	**6%**
Spoken Word	**4%**
Live Demo	**4%**
Design	**3%**
Museum	**3%**
An Ghaeltacht	**3%**
Other	**3%**
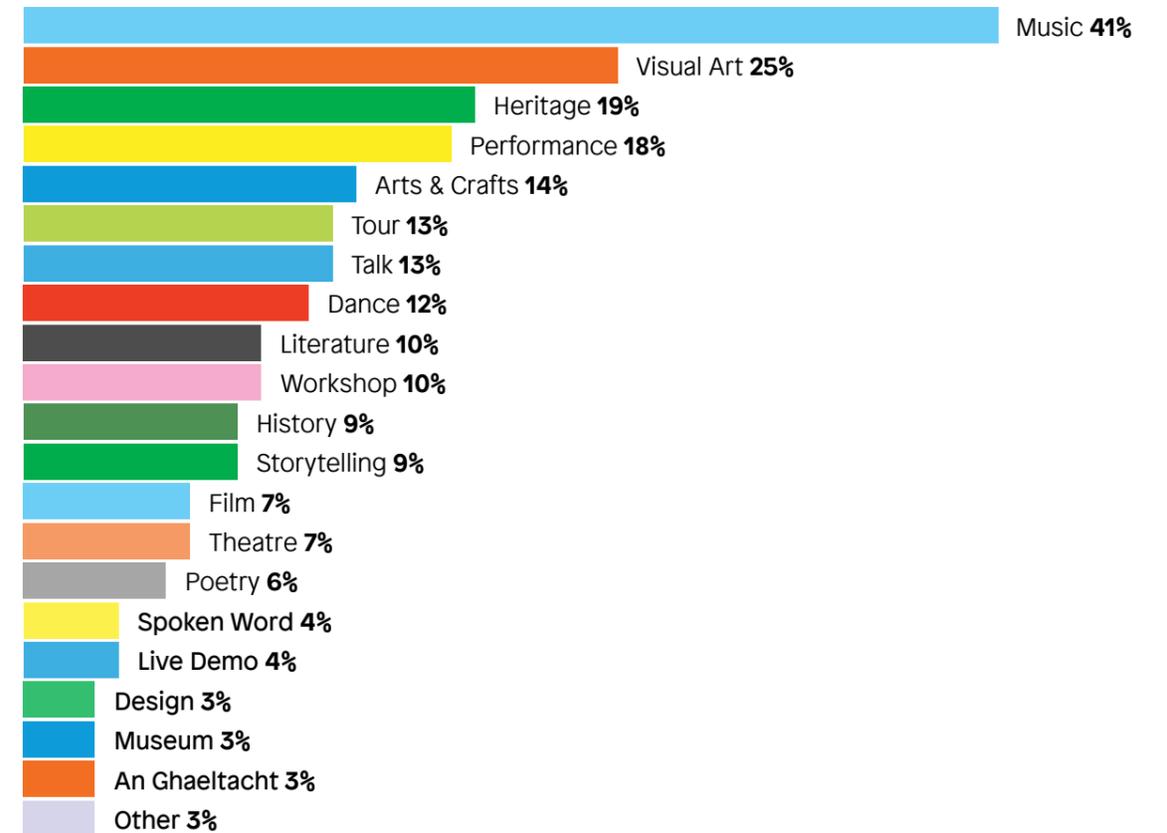
Culture Night 2020 by genre

Genre	%
Visual Art	**33%**
Music	**28%**
Heritage	**26%**
Talk	**15%**
Arts & Crafts	**14%**
Tour	**14%**
Performance	**14%**
Film	**12%**
History	**11%**
Literature	**11%**
An Ghaeltacht	**9%**
Workshop	**9%**
Theatre	**7%**
Storytelling	**7%**
Audio Visual	**7%**
Spoken Word	**7%**
Dance	**7%**
Poetry	**5%**
Museum	**5%**
Visuals	**5%**
Other	**1%**
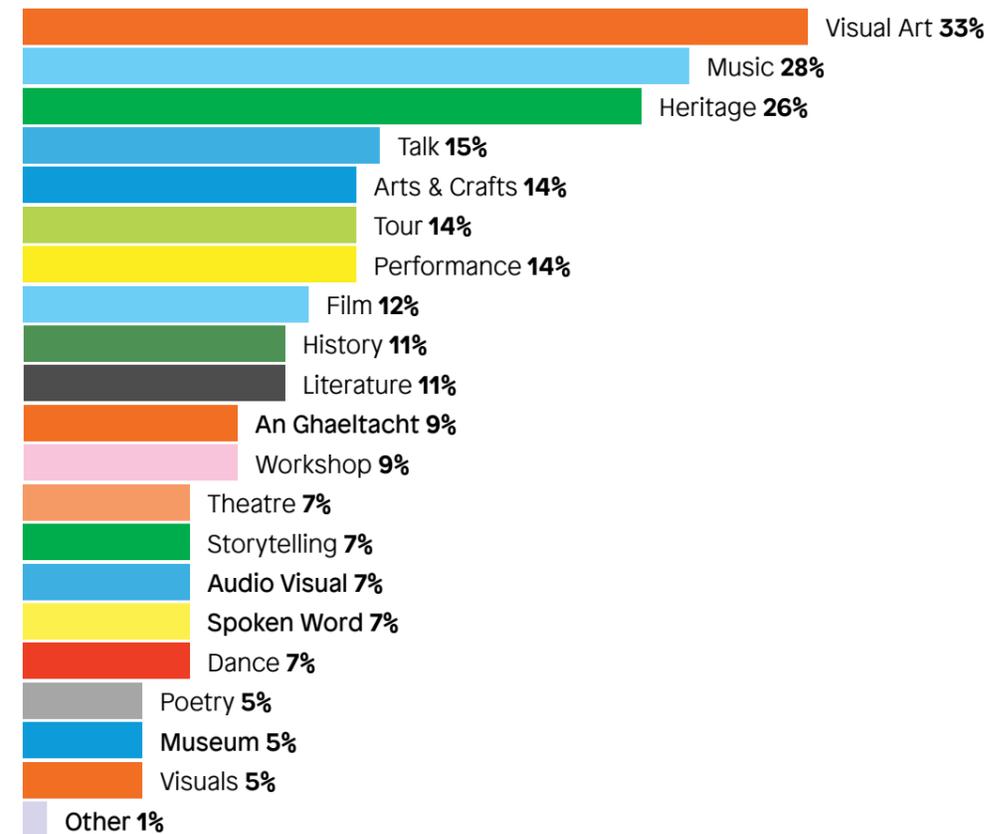
PROGRAMME

Openness of programme important

There was strong support for continuation of Culture Night's openness of opportunity and lack of prescription around programming. Culture Night was encouraged to continue to be both 'popular' and 'pioneering'. However, it was commonly thought that the framing device to bring an overarching coherence to the programme should be the Culture Night brand i.e., its vision, purpose and values rather than any nationally curated theme. However, the proactive, targeted curation of programme elements to advance local or national strategic objectives was encouraged for the future.

Mixed views on RTÉ flagship event

RTÉ has produced and broadcast a concert as part of Culture Night from 2013 until 2019. While some, including RTÉ, were enthusiastic about a signature event of this nature, others believed it eclipsed other events in Dublin and nationwide, and 'did not reflect the values' of Culture Night. Many were keen for the event to move out of Dublin or to be conceived differently. This is understood to be budget dependent.

High percentage of events created, produced or revived especially for Culture Night

Culture Night was seen to be a catalyst for activity and is generating and opening up opportunities for people to engage with culture.

	2019	2020
Events created, produced or revived especially for Culture Night	81%	85%

Even spread of programmed and 'drop in' events

Culture Night was perceived to have evolved from an 'open door' event to one which requires specific programming. An analysis revealed an even spread of 'drop-in' events and programmed events across both years.

	2019	2020
Drop-in events	43%	49%
Programmed events	54%	50%

Drop in: *events which specifically invite people to drop-in or which have no defined start time or where the given start and finish times indicate a duration of more than 2½ hours or which take place outdoors or informal spaces.*

Programmed: *events lasting less than 2½ hours with a defined start time and a format and location that makes it inappropriate to come in and out at will.*

Image courtesy of Culture Night Kerry, 2020. Photographer: Michael Kelly

PROGRAMME

Few events starting after 8.30pm

Most events on Culture Night happen between 6pm and 8pm. Both organisers and audiences expressed frustration at this. There was a desire for more co-operation and co-ordination of schedules on the night. Some also wanted Culture Night itself to be extended – to start earlier in the day or to run over the weekend. However, most recognised the strength and distinction of Culture Night lies in its being a defined 'moment' in time.

	2019	2020
Events starting after 8:30pm	9%	5%

Huge increase in events online in 2020

Covid pushed many Culture Night events online in 2020.

	2019	2020
Online events	2	567 (63%)

This opened up opportunities for organisers to extend the reach and lifespan of their events.

However, it was widely acknowledged that Culture Night is about the 'buzz' and 'communion' of an in-person experience. The digital experience of Culture Night was said to 'change a collective experience into a personal one'. The cost of creating work online and the capacity to create compelling digital experiences for Culture Night were raised as issues. Audience satisfaction with Culture Night events online was lower than that for in-person events.

> **Audiences gave the online events they attended in 2020 an average score of 6.9/10 (with 40% giving a score lower than this).**
>
> In-person events averaged 7.5/10 with 26% giving a lower score than this.

PARTICIPATION IN CULTURE NIGHT

Why are people getting involved and would they recommend getting involved in Culture Night to others?

> ### AUDIENCES

Culture Night audiences have distinct motivations for participation

The motivations of Culture Night audiences were compared to those of arts attenders as expressed in the Arts Council's survey of the general population carried out by Behaviour & Attitudes.

The motivations of Culture Night audiences were found to be much more likely to be about:

→ discovering new cultural experiences (61% compared to 10%);

→ learning something new (54% compared to 9%);

→ their own wellbeing (49% compared to 9%);

→ being inspired (40% compared to 10%).

Both surveys showed that just over half of audiences engage with cultural events to have fun.

64%

of audiences likely to recommend getting involved in Culture Night in the future to friends and family.

64% of audiences are likely to recommend to their friends and family to get involved in Culture Night in the future. However, 22% are 'sitting on the fence' and ambivalent about the event. 14% are unlikely to recommend participation in Culture Night to others.

Audiences' responses to the survey question about a vision for the future of Culture Night indicates some issues affecting their experience.

→ a preference for in-person events;

→ concerns about the quality of online events;

→ frustration that the events they wanted to attend were fully booked;

→ difficulty in navigating the event information;

→ not getting information in time.

> ### ORGANISERS

Multiple reasons for event organisers' participation in Culture Night

There was no singular reason for participating in Culture Night. Many believed it was important to be part of Culture Night (29% in 2020, 43% in 2019) and the event was frequently seen as an opportunity to:

→ Try out new things e.g. online work (21% in 2020);

→ Engage with existing and new audiences;

→ Spotlight particular work or activity.

49%

of organisers likely to recommend to other organisations to get involved in Culture Night in the future.
However, 38% unlikely to do so.

More than 1 in 3 (38%) of organisers are unlikely to recommend getting involved in Culture Night to other organisers. This is despite 76% of organisers' top-of-mind perception of Culture Night being wholly positive. Reviewing information provided elsewhere in the survey revealed discontent about the amount of work involved in Culture Night, the lack of recognition of that effort, and the lack of support to make it a strategic opportunity.

PARTICIPATION IN CULTURE NIGHT

There was a variety of reasons given for artists' involvement in Culture Night: 20% were motivated by payment, 20% got involved because they were asked. 15% saw Culture Night as an opportunity for exposure or to try something out (13%). A further 12% of artists participated because of the nature of the event: 'a joyful, exciting event that brings the community together'.

54%

of artists <u>unlikely</u> to recommend to other artists to get involved in Culture Night in the future.

Despite 62% of artists' top-of-mind perceptions of Culture Night being wholly positive, only 30% of artists are likely to recommend participation in Culture Night to other artists.

22% of artists' perceptions of Culture Night were wholly negative. Responses to a range of questions within the survey showed that these artists' negativity about Culture Night focused on three issues:

→ the exploitation of artists;

→ concern that free events devalue the arts;

→ belief that culture should be celebrated on more than just one night.
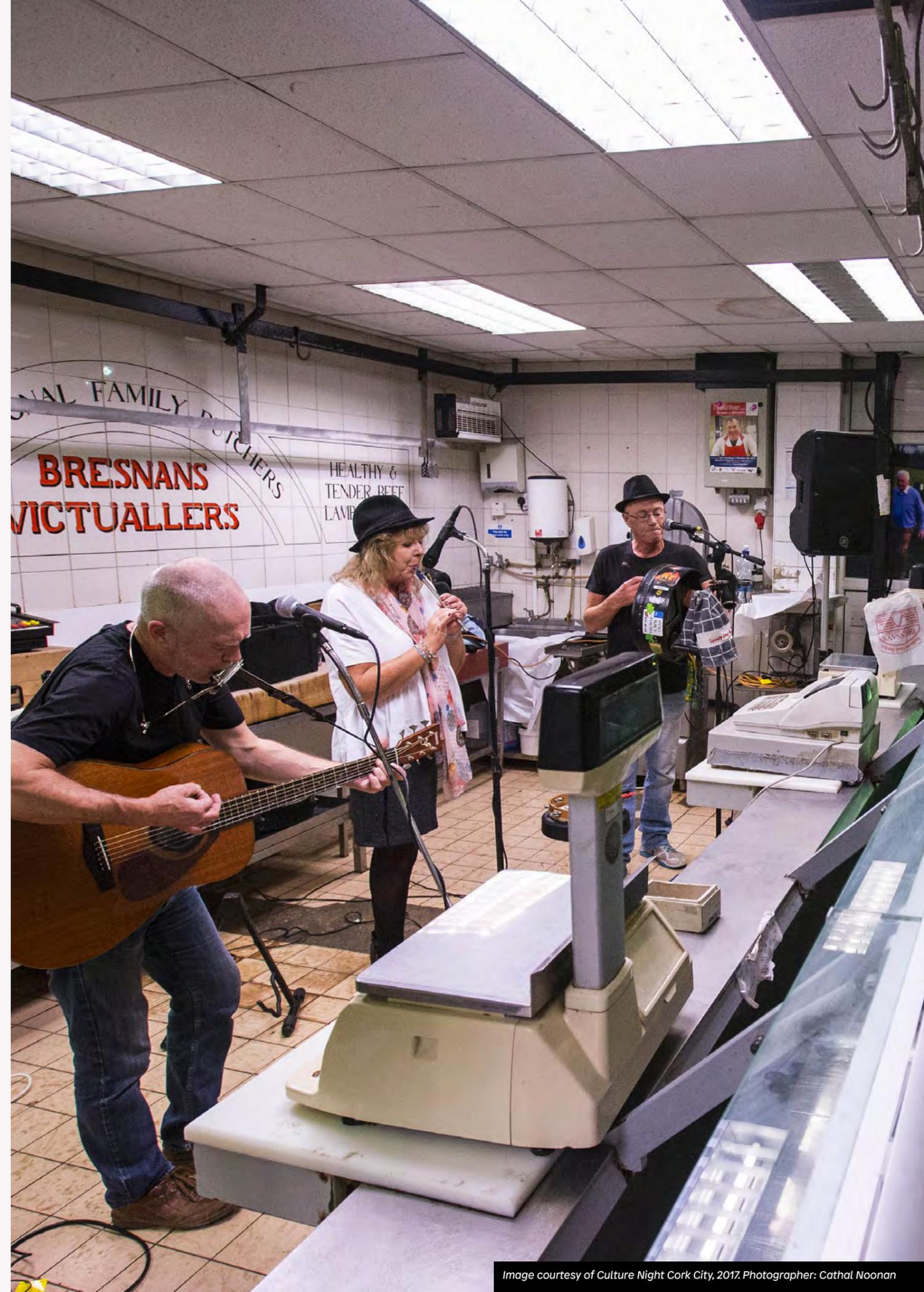
ARTISTS AND CULTURE NIGHT

Are artists being paid for their participation in Culture Night?

A close analysis of artists' pay for Culture Night from both artists' and organisers' perspectives was undertaken to provide accurate information on this issue.

Most artists are paid

→ The percentage of artists saying they were paid for their work on Culture Night has increased significantly from 54% in 2019 to 77% in 2020.

→ In 2019 organisers said they paid 53% of artists. This rose to 59% in 2020. (Note: 13% of organisers that responded were from the amateur and voluntary sector and, comparing organisers' responses to the programme analysis, other organisers appear to have counted unpaid community participants as artists. 80% of organisers said they paid at least some of those they counted as artists, with local authorities and professional arts organisations most likely to do so).

Payment has increased

→ Almost all payments were flat fees. The median fee increased by 500% between 2019 and 2020.

→ In 2019, 5% of artists were paid more than €1,000. This rose to 33% in 2020.

Flat Fees	2019 €	2020 €	Increase
Maximum	2,000.00	5,000.00	250%
Mean	342.73	1,163.11	339%
Minimum	50.00	25.00	-50%
Median	200.00	1,000.00	500%

Participation based on payment varies

→ 26% of artists responding to the survey said they did not participate in Culture Night because they would not have been paid.

→ Five artists were paid less than €50 for their work on Culture Night in 2020. A closer look showed that all five were contributing to a talk, interview or podcast (one also had an exhibition on that month). All said they made the decision to accept the low fee because they wanted to support their artist-led group or the cultural organisation and little time and expense was involved.

→ Visual artists were least likely to be paid specifically for Culture Night. Their comments indicated that this was because Culture Night happened to take place during a longer run of their exhibition or because payment would come through selling work, rather than a fee.

DEVELOPING AUDIENCES

Does Culture Night develop audiences?

Most audiences for Culture Night engage with cultural organisations throughout the year with just 4% saying they had not been to a museum or historic building, visitor attraction, art exhibition, live performance or cinema screening in the past 12 months.

27% of Culture Night audiences are cultural enthusiasts engaging with a wide range of cultural activities at least once a month. 37% of Culture Night audiences engage relatively regularly and 31% engage with a narrow range of these types of cultural organisations infrequently.

Belief Culture Night has a role in audience development

Organisers believe that Culture Night:

→ helps them raise their profile (82%);

→ deepens their relationship with existing audiences (73%);

→ reaches new audiences (75%);

→ diversifies their audience base (65%).

Mixed views about efficacy; potential skills gap

51% of organisers said they believed Culture Night audiences return at other times of the year. However, 16% said they knew Culture Night audiences did not return, with 33% unsure.

There appeared to be a gap in skills and knowledge around audience development with just 31% of organisers undertaking audience development activities on Culture Night that were likely to be effective.

Further exploration of the issue through case studies of six organisations that undertake audience development activities around Culture Night showed that the format of Culture Night makes it difficult to initiate a relationship with audiences. Four of the case studies provided evidence that in spite of the audience development activity Culture Night attenders did not return.

Image courtesy of Culture Night Dublin, 2019. Photographer: Ste Murray

DEVELOPING AUDIENCES

Culture Night persuades people to try something new

Places: 47% of Culture Night attenders in 2020 visited at least one venue, building or space they had not been to in the past five years. 56% of these attenders said they were likely to return within a year or so. So, 26% of all those attending at least one event in-person visited a new place and said they were likely to return.

Type of event: 44% said they saw or participated in a type of cultural event or activity they had not experienced before. 49% of these attenders said they were likely to seek out this event type again within a year or so. Overall, 22% of all those attending at least one event in-person tried a new event type and said they were likely to return.

Culture online: 43% of those who attended at least one online event had not gone online for a cultural event or activity before Culture Night. 58% said they were likely to do it again. So, 25% of all those attending an online event were doing so for the first time and said they were likely to do it again.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Does Culture Night reflect culture in Ireland today?

Understanding and expressing the diversity of who we are is seen to be more important than ever

It was commonly noted that the cultural map of Ireland has changed significantly in the last decade or more. Culture Night was seen to be very well-placed to explore, share and showcase what culture looks like in Ireland today and to 'look at what unites us'. This was a reason for some organiser's participation in the event. The Arts Council's focus on its *Equality, Human Rights and Diversity* policy in 2020 was viewed positively. It was said to have encouraged organisers to think about the artists and communities with whom they engage and to have made a difference to programme content and participation.

Fewer than 10% of events may be categorised as diverse

Despite this intervention, a close analysis of the event descriptions submitted to the Culture Night website showed that in 2019, 86 of 1,560 events (6%) could be categorised as diverse or inclusive. In 2020, this was 82 of 871 events (9%).

The types of events identified include the following:

→ cultural diversity (particularly intercultural encounters and the experiences of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants);

→ D/deaf culture or arts and disability;

→ Irish Traveller culture;

→ gender equality;

→ under-represented groups.

(Note: It is possible that event descriptions submitted did not mention aspects of a particular event's content, creators, performers and participants that would have led to their categorisation as diverse or inclusive.)

Culture Night audiences comparable with diversity of population

The audience survey respondents are a little more diverse in terms of cultural background than the population. 12% are from other White backgrounds (compared to 10% of the population) and 3% are from mixed and other ethnic groups (compared to 2% of the population). Other ethnic groups are under-represented or not represented at all. 6% of respondents identify as being D/deaf or as having a disability.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The national survey conducted in 2020 by Behaviour & Attitudes for the Arts Council found the following information about awareness of and participation in Culture Night across ethnicity, social and disability profiles.

Awareness

In 2020, 48% of non-Irish nationals had heard of Culture Night compared to 58% of Irish Nationals. (Up from 29% and 52% respectively in 2019)

ABC1s more likely than C2DEFs[1] to have heard of Culture Night. 59% compared to 40% (2019) 63% compared to 52% (2020)

In 2020, people with disabilities or long-term health conditions were a little more likely to have heard of Culture Night (61% compared to 56% of people without these conditions).

Participation

Non-Irish nationals who have heard of Culture Night less likely to have watched an event on TV or online (9% compared to 20% of Irish nationals) but more likely to have seen an event in-person (10% compared to 6%).

In 2020 little difference in ABC1s/C2DEFs who have heard of Culture Night seeing events in-person (8% compared to 6%) or online/on TV (19% compared to 20%).

No difference in the percentage of people with disabilities or long-term health conditions watching events on TV or online (19%) or in-person (7%).

[1] *Social grade is a classification system widely used in market research. It classifies a household and all its members according to the occupation of the household's chief income earner.*

Capacity building needed to ensure diversity and inclusion

It was commonly considered that for Culture Night to be truly diverse and inclusive, the following is needed:

→ committed, proactive or targeted programmes of engagement at local level;

→ better understanding of diversity and inclusion practices and how to work in intercultural contexts;

→ increased visibility of the diversity and inclusivity of Culture Night (RTÉ's approach to and coverage of Culture Night in 2020 was praised in this regard).

28%
of organisers cited 'widening and diversifying audiences' in their vision for the future of Culture Night.

Image courtesy of Culture Night Dublin, 2018. Photographer: Liam Karma

PURPOSE AND BRAND

What is the purpose of Culture Night? Does it have a strong brand?

No clear sense of purpose

There is a lack of clarity about the purpose of Culture Night: why it exists and its unique contribution. Some considered Culture Night to be about audience development, but for most there was an understanding that the event is about a shared experience, welcome, celebration, invitation, discovery, permission, opportunity, creating connection with and through culture, with a strong emotional rather than a functional quotient.

It was commonly considered that a cogent statement of purpose would help the Arts Council effect the development of Culture Night, motivate and enable buy-in within the Arts Council and with external stakeholders, cohere programming and provide clear parameters for the evaluation of Culture Night.

A logo not a brand

Culture Night was perceived to have an attractive identity (logo) but not to be a coherent brand (reputation) with a commonly understood and powerfully communicated proposition and promise. It was reported to 'have invented itself' rather than been actively managed. There was seen to be scope to 'simplify, humanise and energise' the brand so that all that is positive about it may be understood, amplified and activated.

It is understood that Dublin City Council owns the Culture Night brand but details of the registration, protections and permissions for use were unclear.

OPPORTUNITY AND IMPACT

Is Culture Night an obligation or an opportunity? What is its impact?

Strategic potential of Culture Night 'untapped'

While it was recognised that Culture Night can be perceived as an annual obligation, it was widely considered to be a strategic opportunity. The event was seen to have significant, if yet unrealised, potential to advance local and national objectives in particular around public engagement, place-making, social cohesion, well-being.

Impact not known

The impact of Culture Night is currently not known. A strategic role for Culture Night was considered to depend on effective processes of evaluation against relevant defined metrics. It was requested that information and insight is shared to support case-making and programme development.

GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

How is Culture Night governed, managed and delivered? Does it work?

Scope to clarify and strengthen the governance of Culture Night

Prior to the Arts Council's involvement, Culture Night was the responsibility of the government department holding the arts and culture brief and Dublin City Council as owner of the Culture Night brand. Governance under these two parties was characterised as 'light touch', operating with 'understanding' rather than formal agreement. There was a call for a stronger framework of governance with greater transparency and accountability; also for the relationship between, and roles and responsibilities of, the brand owner and the Arts Council as 'custodians' of Culture Night to be defined.

Opportunities for Culture Night under Arts Council

On the whole there was curiosity and optimism about Culture Night under the aegis of the Arts Council. There was some concern that Culture Night may be constrained or become 'Arts Night' and some questioned how the Arts Council will reconcile its specialist remit with the broader mandate of Culture Night. Most, however, looked forward to the Arts Council bringing leadership, leveraging its existing programmes and relationships and brokering new ones at local and national level, within and beyond the arts. The Arts Council was encouraged to facilitate closer engagement with and between stakeholders. Engagement within the Arts Council was also encouraged to enhance the understanding and use of Culture Night as a strategic asset.

Devolved model of delivery working well

Culture Night is managed and delivered through local authority Arts Offices with the support of a National Co-ordinator, to date a third-party event management company contracted to manage both event logistics and its promotion. This devolved model of operation was considered to be working well, ensuring agency and ownership of Culture Night locally. The fit with the Arts Council's Framework for Collaboration Agreement with the CCMA has been of benefit to Arts Offices who now receive Culture Night funding earlier in the year, as part of their overall Arts Council allocation, and with that have more flexibility re their spend on the event.

GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

Arts Offices key to the success of Culture Night

There was energy and enthusiasm for Culture Night amongst Arts Officers especially those outside of Dublin. In turn, their work and commitment to the event was acknowledged and applauded, especially given the 'constant draw' on their time and resources. Arts Offices were said to be critical to the success of Culture Night.

There is no common approach to Culture Night. Several Arts Officers now contract a Culture Night Co-ordinator to deliver the event, others continue to manage it themselves. Some Arts Officers said that they use Culture Night strategically within their programme of work: curating and investing in specific events, whilst also extending an open invitation for participation. Others simply invite participation. Most have a process of application for participation in Culture Night.

For the future, 'manpower' was seen to be more important than money, though it was agreed that additional resources would be necessary to achieve targeted extension of Culture Night within counties. Arts Officers welcomed the opportunity to come together and valued the findings and insights made available to them in the course of this consultation. They wished for such information and engagement to continue in the future to support the evidence-based and the collaborative development of Culture Night.

Budget

Year	2019	2020
Department	€420,000 budget line + additional expenditure	
Arts Council	€10,000	€205,000 co-ordination* €225,000 programme
Local Authorities	€378,720	€416,755
Total	€808,720	€846,755

*Includes €70,000 increased investment into EHRD priority.

In most cases, participating Local Authorities have increased their investment in recent years. In 2020, they collectively invested 1.85 times the required match funding. This increased the overall programme budget by 43%, and equated to 65% of the total programme budget.

RTÉ enthusiastic about ongoing partnership

RTÉ's relationship with Culture Night is of long-standing and set to continue. There was said to be strong alignment between RTÉ's corporate priorities, its brand objectives and the purpose of Culture Night. RTÉ is keen to continue to be both a platform for and producer of Culture Night content and to commission work.

Increased investment necessary

Current funding for the management and delivery of Culture Night was said to fall short of the ambitions for the event and that additional funding will be required if Culture Night is to achieve its strategic potential. Many local authorities reported investment in the event at levels significantly more than the match funding required, discreetly drawing on other sources of funding to supplement that available for Culture Night. Under-investment was said to be 'hampering impact'.

Image courtesy of Culture Night Dublin, 2017. Photographer: Itziar Tellextea

AMBITION FOR THE FUTURE

When asked to imagine Culture Night at its best in the future, the following themes emerged, many of which were common across all those surveyed and consulted. In many respects they represent continuation, refinement or extension of current attributes of Culture Night, rather than new activities or emphases.

→ Accessible: 'open to all', 'welcoming', 'inclusive', 'easy'

→ Busy and buzzy: a multiplicity of events and diversity of experiences

→ Live: in-person events preferred, with better quality online experiences

→ Fun: enjoyable, 'joyful', with a 'sense of celebration'

→ Discovery: an ability to 'wander', to have 'things to stumble upon', 'random'

→ New and novel: encouraging new audiences, organisers and experiences

→ Coming together: 'people from all walks of life together'

About 10% of audiences and 13% of artists wished that Culture Night was longer. This was not an ambition for organisers or those consulted. The payment of artists featured in both organiser and artist ambitions.

Consultation participants also sought a future wherein Culture Night:

→ Was working strategically and leveraging opportunities created by the Arts Council;

→ Included the diaspora, achieved coherence with Northern Ireland and 'never lost focus on the local';

→ Had resources and supports in place to build local capacity;

→ Had a 'strong brand' and 'sophistication of messaging';

→ Was well resourced with a 'strong framework' to manage and develop it;

→ Had new metrics and effective means of evaluation in place.

LEARNING FROM OTHERS

The comparator study provided some key learnings for Culture Night. Primarily, it demonstrated that Culture Night is a truly unique event with no direct comparator. Its nationwide reach, the breadth of cultural activity it encompasses and the scale of engagement, across urban and rural contexts, is not replicated elsewhere.

Events reviewed

A clarity of purpose

Having a clear understanding of purpose was shown to inform strategic and programmatic decisions and to encourage confident engagement. It contributes to brand strength and enables consistent messaging and cogent communication.

Daffodil Day's purpose "a day for us all to give hope to people affected by cancer" is engaging, motivating and used consistently across all communications, particularly their calls to action.

Transparency of opportunity

The provision of unambiguous information about participation is important for event organisers, as is the clear communication of expectations and consistent application of the supports available.

Kulturnatten provides very clear definitions of organiser categories and supports available within each category, all of which is time-lined well in advance.

LEARNING FROM OTHERS

Programming to context

Clustering and scheduling of activities - particularly beyond city settings – is used to protect events and experiences from becoming isolated.

Open House Dublin ensures no event venue is geographically on its own, and has developed tools to help attenders navigate the programme by geography and time to plan their ideal day in advance.

Focus on the audience experience

Managing audience expectations and behaviours are a central aspect of ensuring a good experience for attenders.

Kulturnatten seeks to optimise attenders' experience by providing advance information on what to expect and how to behave, good crowd management, transport options and real-time advice (via app) to encourage people to move from busy sites to neighbouring events.

Year-round stakeholder engagement

Ongoing engagement and relationship-building with event organisers and other stakeholders was said to be effective to build capacity, confidence and buy-in.

The Heritage Council Social organise activities such as media training, networking events and award programmes year-round for National Heritage Week event organisers.

Investment in resources

While overall budgets for the events in the study varied widely, from €200,000 to over €1 million, each initiative here prioritised and made significant investment in communications (marketing, PR and stakeholder engagement). In addition, it was made clear that the growth of strategic development ambitions need the support of a year-round team.

Oversight by singular entity

The operating model of the events studied ranged from a member-led association (Kulturnatten) and non-profit organisation (Seachtain na Gaeilge) through to industry-led initiatives (Tourism Day, First Saturdays New Orleans), to programmes run by charities/limited companies (Daffodil Day, Open House Dublin, Poetry Day Ireland) and programmes run by municipal or state bodies (Nuit Blanche, Long Night of Ideas, Cruinniú na nÓg, National Heritage Week). However, a single organisation has the overall responsibility for the oversight and strategic direction of the event in all cases.

Image courtesy of Culture Night Dublin, 2017. Photographer: Eoin O'Neill

5

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

A number of key considerations emerged from the process of review, research and consultation

What is the Arts Council's ambition for Culture Night?		
How does Culture Night not become Arts Night?	How do we enable all Arts Offices to be at their Culture Night best?	How do we ensure a programme that is open and coherent?
How does Culture Night become a strategic opportunity, rather than an obligation?	How do we win over the hearts and minds of all of the arts sector and motivate other sectors to get involved?	How do we better understand and improve the audience experience of Culture Night?
What is the Culture Night brand? Its purpose, vision, values and essence?	How do we diversify engagement: artists, audiences, organisers?	
What needs to be in place to ensure the very best future for Culture Night? **Governance, Management, Resourcing, Communications**		

These considerations provided a framework for further inquiry with relevant stakeholders and, ultimately, shaped and informed the recommendations for the development of Culture Night into the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Image courtesy of Culture Night Clare, 2018. Photographer: Joan O'Hanrahan

The following recommendations identify where investment or focus is needed to ensure the optimum future for Culture Night.

The recommendations we put forward are bounded by an ambition to bring clarity and coherence to the event, by a belief in its potential and by respect for the democratic impetus at the heart of Culture Night.

They acknowledge that the key drivers of the success of Culture Night to date have been partnership, investment and the geographic extension of the event and that these continue to be important in propelling the event forward.

The recommendations also recognise the role Culture Night may play as an enabler of local and national policy priorities.

Finally, they seek to safeguard the unique attributes of Culture Night and to sustain and expand the range and diversity of those involved in Culture Night.

1

RECOMMENDATION 1

DEFINE CULTURE

Why this recommendation?

There is no clear, shared understanding of what is meant by 'culture' and thus of all that Culture Night may embrace. Moreover, given the role of the Arts Council in relation to Culture Night, there is a need to demonstrate an understanding of culture that includes, but is by no means limited to, the arts.

Recommended definition of culture

The following broad definition of culture formulated at UNESCO's World Conference on Cultural Policies is recommended. This definition of culture is widely used by local authorities.

Image courtesy of Culture Night Kilkenny, 2020. Photographer: Freddie Greenall

"A set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs."

— UNESCO, Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity

2

RECOMMENDATION 2

DEFINE THE PURPOSE, VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Why this recommendation?

The purpose, vision, mission and values of Culture Night need to be clearly defined and understood to ensure coherent communication of the event, to inform aligned programming and to encourage and motivate involvement across a broad base of organisers, participants, audiences.

Recommended definitions of the purpose, vision, mission and values of Culture Night

PURPOSE
(The reason Culture Night exists and its unique contribution to others)

Culture Night invites everyone everywhere, on one joyful night, to discover and celebrate all that our culture is today.

VISION
(The ideal Culture Night is working towards)

Our rich and varied culture is alive, treasured and nurtured in people's lives today and everyday.

MISSION
(What Culture Night sets out to do to achieve its vision)

To be a national moment celebrating all that makes up the richness and diversity of culture in Ireland today, connecting everyone to cultural activities locally and nationally and opening up pathways to ongoing engagement.

VALUES
(What Culture Night stands for and believes in)

Openness	For everyone. Everywhere.
Discovery	For curiosity and adventure. For giving things a go.
Celebration	For fun.
Belonging	For feeling I am part of this, and this is part of me.

3

RECOMMENDATION 3

CLARIFY AND STRENGTHEN CULTURE NIGHT BRAND AND MESSAGING

Why this recommendation?

The Culture Night brand (reputation) was said to have 'evolved' rather than been actively defined and managed. Investment in brand and communications strategies for Culture Night will bring cogency and coherence to the event. It will enable all those involved in Culture Night to bring it to life and promote it in ways that affirm and strengthen its reputation and amplify its appeal.

Recommended actions

→ Work with a brand agency to devise and effect a brand strategy that builds on the purpose, vision and values as defined here.

→ Create and promote guidelines to build internal and external stakeholder understanding of and buy-in to the brand reputation we want to build for Culture Night.

→ Develop, resource and effect a purpose-led, year-round communications strategy that animates and promotes the event in all its diversity and reach across traditional and new media but also seeks to affirm and amplify the strategic value and impact of Culture Night.

→ Invest in regional promotion supports online and offline.

→ Develop tools that help the public navigate the programme: by interest, location, schedule.

→ Utilise the internal resources of the Arts Council and other partners to amplify the brand and key messages

Image courtesy of Culture Night Dublin, 2013. Photographer: Conor Clinch

4

RECOMMENDATION 4

POSITION CULTURE NIGHT AS A STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY

Why this recommendation?

There is significant scope for Culture Night to be considered and used as a strategic asset contributing to national and local policy objectives within and beyond the context of culture, including public engagement, social cohesion, creativity and well-being. There is an obvious consonance with the Arts Council's own objectives in relation to public engagement, the amateur and voluntary sector, equality, human rights and diversity, and spatial and demographic planning; there is also potential synergy with discrete programmes such as Creative Schools and Creative Places.

Recommended actions

→ Strengthen understanding of Culture Night within the Arts Council - at executive and Council level - to safeguard its distinct attributes and to support and strengthen its use as a strategic asset.

→ Share the re-cast purpose, vision and values, and information and insight gathered in this report, to open up conversations about the potential strategic value and impact of Culture Night with existing and prospective stakeholders. Specifically seek to strengthen buy-in at a senior level across the cultural sector.

→ Incentivise programme activity / interventions in areas of deficit and policy priority.

→ Invest in evaluation of Culture Night across identified strategic indicators.

5

RECOMMENDATION 5

ENABLE PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

Image courtesy of Culture Night Dublin, 2014. Photographer: Kasia Kaminska

Why this recommendation?

Strong and sure partnerships such as those with local authorities, RTÉ and the National Cultural Institutions have contributed to Culture Night's success over the years. There is significant scope for the Arts Council to assert its influence and broker new and different partnerships and alliances for Culture Night. The Arts Council is also encouraged to respond to the appetite amongst Arts Officers and local organisers for greater co-ordination and collaboration.

Recommended actions

→ Secure and advance the commitment of the City and County Management Association to Culture Night through the Framework for Collaboration agreement.

→ Deepen engagement with the National Cultural Institutions and Local Authority Arts Officers, including instituting a preview and review of Culture Night every year to share and discuss opportunities, insight and learning.

→ Encourage and enable organisers and participants at local and regional level to come together to advance collaborations and the co-ordination of their Culture Night efforts.

→ Sustain and develop the relationship with RTÉ; work together to innovate and extend the broadcast experience of Culture Night, particularly outside of Dublin.

→ Identify and broker national partnerships which would have positive impact for Culture Night organisers locally e.g., with Office of Public Works, Heritage Council, GAA.

→ Identify potential for collaboration with Creative Schools and with other programmes or agencies with an existing relationship with the Arts Council.

→ Sustain and develop existing partnerships e.g., with Ealaín na Gaeltachta, Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin Bus, An Post, Bus Éireann.

6

RECOMMENDATION 6

CAPACITY AND EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Why this recommendation?

There is affection, enthusiasm and ambition for Culture Night. Organisers and audiences alike want their experience of Culture Night to be the best it can be. There is scope to develop the capacity of organisers to create Culture Night experiences that capture the hearts and minds of audiences, motivate future engagement and deliver on strategic goals.

There are three strands of action proposed under this recommendation. Research and evaluation are critical to inform and improve the experiences created. Skills, experiences and understanding need to be built and shared. Specific opportunities and approaches in relation to programming may need to be created.

Recommended actions: research and evaluation

→ Invest in research and evaluation of the audience and organiser experience.

→ The Arts Council to lead on the aforementioned research and evaluation, using benchmarks created by this work, by Behaviour & Attitudes nationally representative survey and by other relevant research, to inform decision-making.

→ In consultation with stakeholders, establish new and more qualitative metrics and means for reporting Culture Night activity and impact.

→ Share data and insight from organisers and audiences about Culture Night to inform experience development.

Recommended actions: capacity development

→ Develop a Culture Night Charter which clarifies and secures a collective commitment to the purpose, values and practices, including the payment of artists, that ensure Culture Night is a positive experience for all those involved.

→ Build the know-how and skills to support:

  · the creation of compelling audience experiences online as well as in person;

  · the use of Culture Night as a tool in audience development;

  · the increased involvement of communities currently under-represented in Culture Night;

  · the increased involvement of children and young people in Culture Night;

  · by providing the examples of best practice, a mechanism to share information and advice and the practical toolkits that will support Arts Offices to continue their capacity building work.

→ Specifically seek to use digital opportunities well to enhance or expand (not replace) the public experience of Culture Night - including for children, young people, the diaspora, and those unable to engage in person - and to extend the lifetime and reach of Culture Night activities.

Recommended action: programme

→ Sustain and strengthen the current programming approach that combines Open Call with curated activity.

→ Utilise the Arts Council's unique remit and responsibility in order to:

  · Commission a number of signature events across the country that either exemplify the purpose and values of Culture Night or advance a policy priority and clearly demonstrate the geographic democracy of the event;

  · Create specific Culture Night awards, commissions or residencies for individuals or organisations in both the professional arts community and community / voluntary sector.

7

RECOMMENDATION 7
ENSURE A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Why this recommendation?

Everyone consulted in the course of this inquiry considered it to be important that Culture Night continues to exist. For Culture Night to be at its best with a secure and sustainable future it is necessary to clarify and strengthen the governance and management of Culture Night.

Recommended actions

→ Establish a Stakeholder Stewardship Group made up of existing and aligned stakeholders with clear terms of reference and authority.

→ Create a year-round National Co-ordinator post with clear strategic, developmental remit including positioning and resourcing of Culture Night, relationship development and management with, within and on behalf of the Arts Council.

→ The National Co-ordinator role to be supported by expert marketing and communications support and by logistical, event management support on a contract basis.

→ Make provision for Culture Night Co-ordinators to be in place to support each Arts Officer in the development and delivery of Culture Night.

→ Alongside the Framework for Collaboration agreement with local authorities, develop a discrete Culture Night Charter with Arts Offices which clarifies and secures a collective, coherent commitment to the purpose, values and consistency of practice that ensure Culture Night is a positive experience for all those involved.

Image courtesy of Culture Night Dublin, 2019. Photographer: Ste Murray

7

INDICATIVE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR STAKEHOLDER STEWARDSHIP GROUP

→ **Primary purpose:**
To guide and champion the development of Culture Night as custodians of its core purpose and values.

→ To support the Arts Council and Culture Night National Co-ordinator in the delivery on the recommendations / actions set out in this report.

→ To create new points of connections for Culture Night.

Term

→ Three-year commitment with meetings four times per annum.

→ National Co-ordinator in attendance at all meetings.

→ Review the remit and composition of Stewardship Group after two years.

INDICATIVE COMPOSITION OF STAKEHOLDER STEWARDSHIP GROUP

→ Chair - Arts Council, Council member
→ Head of Local, Place and Public Art
→ National Cultural Institution representative
→ Local Authority representative – Association of Local Authority Arts Officers
→ RTÉ representative
→ Community / 'Third Sector' representative
→ Heritage sector representative
→ Museums sector representative
→ Irish Tourism Industry Confederation (ITIC) representative
→ Local enterprise representative
→ Department of Culture representative
→ Audience advocate

INDICATIVE STRUCTURE AND REPORTING LINES

Arts Council
Ultimate accountability for Culture Night

Stewardship Group	**Head of Local, Place & Public Art**
→ Guide and inform future of Culture Night as custodians of purpose and values.	→ On Stewardship Group.
→ Work with Arts Council and National Co-ordinator to deliver recommended actions.	→ Reports to Council as Arts Council Executive charged with responsibility for Culture Night.
→ Chair reports to Council.	

National Co-ordinator

→ Responsible for overall development and delivery of Culture Night, including networking, partnership building engagement with all key stakeholders and management of third-party logistical and comms supports.
→ Reports to Head of Local, Place and Public Art.

Arts Officers	**Local Co-ordinators**
→ Responsible for development and delivery of Culture Night in local area.	→ Responsible for delivery of local events on Culture Night.
→ Works with local and National Co-ordinators.	→ Reports to Arts Officer.
	→ Close liaison with National Co-ordinator.

Recommended actions: longer-term sustainability

Having refreshed understanding of Culture Night, established clear governance and effective management and strengthened its delivery, the long-term future of Culture Night needs to be considered, within the context of a new national cultural policy, the review of Making Great Art Work and other relevant policies and developments.

It is recommended that such consideration explores the setting up of Culture Night as an independent entity with national government support by:

→ Working with partners across the range of cultural sectors to design an independent governance model for Culture Night that reflects its reach and influence far beyond the arts and will enable its further development.

→ Setting up a board with a broad and diverse range of expertise, experience and influence that reflects Culture Night's strategic power and purpose across societal indices.

→ Establishing a broad funding base for the new organisation by building upon the diverse income streams developed in the first five years of the Arts Council's leadership and exploiting the funding opportunities opened up by independence.

8

RECOMMENDATION 8

SECURE INCREASED INVESTMENT

Why this recommendation?

This inquiry has uncovered the significant potential of Culture Night to contribute to key local and national policy objectives. Investment is necessary to unlock this potential and to optimise its impact.

Recommended actions:

→ Engage with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media to present the Arts Council's ambition for Culture Night, to strengthen understanding of the event's strategic potential, aligned with national policy objectives, and to secure enhanced funding.

→ Engage with the City and County Management Association to present the Arts Council's ambition for Culture Night, to strengthen understanding of the event's strategic potential, aligned with local government objectives, and to secure enhanced funding.

→ Engage with existing partners to secure and enhance their investment in Culture Night.

→ Leverage cross-sectoral alliances that generate diverse income streams.

→ Explore opportunities for corporate sponsorship of discrete elements of Culture Night.

→ Build evidence of the value and impact of Culture Night to make the case for investment, taking account of a range of outcomes relevant to key policy priorities e.g., social impact, economic impact, well-being.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2021

The following actions are put forward as both possible and important to progress in 2021. They prioritise ensuring that the information in this report is shared to build understanding and to mobilise actions consonant with the direction proposed, as appropriate. They also seek to begin the process of securing an effective governance and management structure and empowering processes for Culture Night. They identify strengths to build on and immediate areas for development.

Recommended actions:

→ Ensure incoming National Co-ordinating team are apprised of findings and recommendations from this programme of review, research and consultation.

→ Publish report and present plan for 2021 to key stakeholders.

→ Ensure Arts Council members and senior management understand the unique attributes of Culture Night and its potential to be a strategic asset for the Arts Council and cultural sector.

→ Share report and recommendations with all Arts Council staff and explore with Heads of Team how they can support Culture Night in 2021.

→ Establish Culture Night Stewardship Group.

→ Continue the approach taken in 2020 with focused programming into areas of policy priority.

→ Work with RTÉ to continue the imaginative approach and nationwide programming that had such a positive impact last year.

→ Develop the Culture Night brand and amplify strategic messaging.

→ Start developing tools to support audiences in navigating the programme.

→ Put in place research framework for 2021 based on benchmarks now developed.

→ Review Culture Night 2021 with key stakeholders. Share research findings and insights.

→ Begin process to recruit a year-round Culture Night Co-ordinator.

→ Engage with Recovery Taskforces to promote potential role for Culture Night.
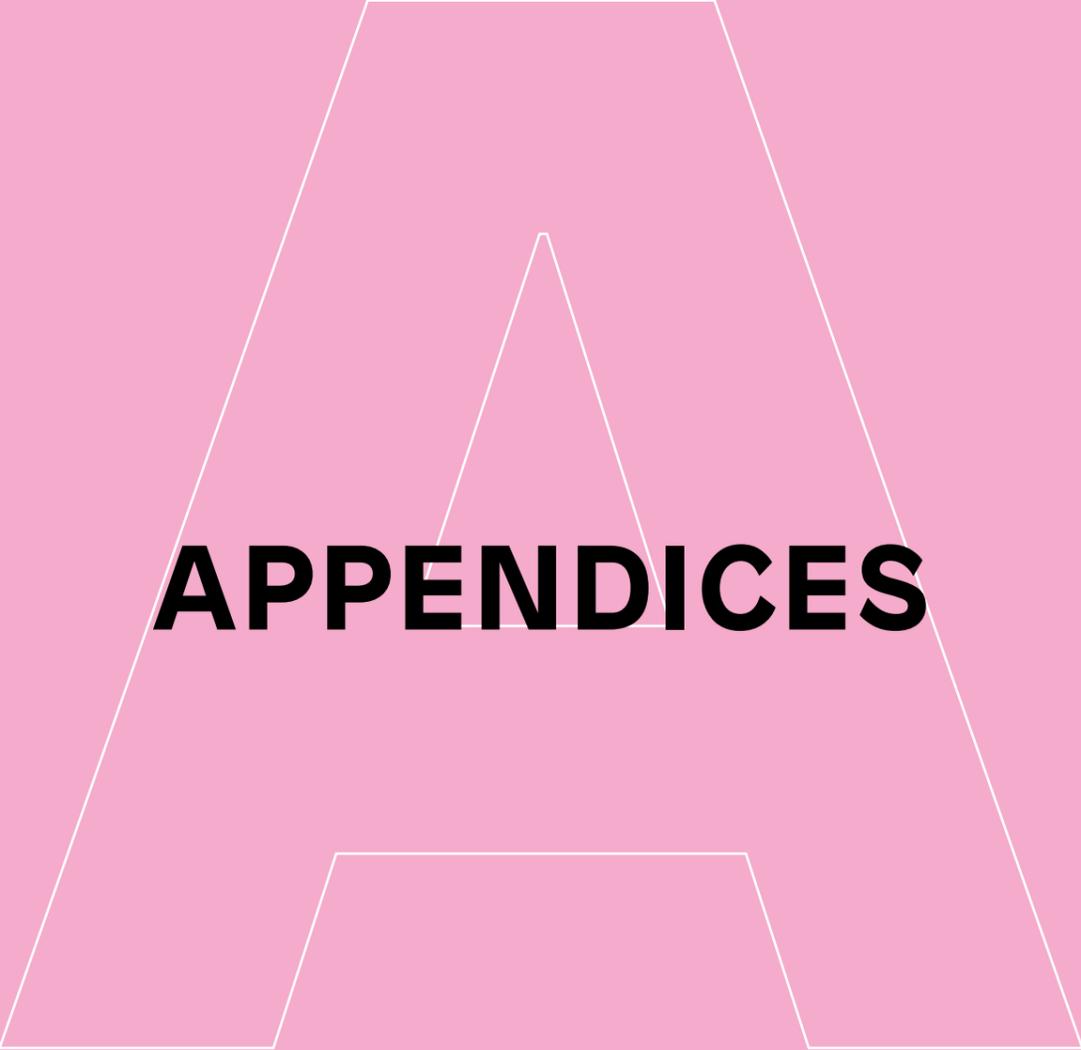
APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

DETAIL OF METHODOLOGY AND CONSULTATION PARTICIPANTS

DETAILS OF METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH

Programme analysis

i. A detailed review of the programme of events for 2019 and 2020 (a 'normal' and an 'exceptional' year) to provide an accurate analysis of:

- Event numbers, types and genres.
- Geographic spread of events (indexed against population).
- In-person versus digital events.
- Programmed versus 'open door' events.
- Scheduling.
- Range of cultural providers (identified as lead organisers) involved in Culture Night.
- Level of participation by voluntary organisations and community groups.
- Extent of events and opportunities that manifest diversity and inclusion.

Surveys

i. Discrete online surveys to artists, Culture Night attenders and Culture Night organisers to understand:

- Perceptions of Culture Night.
- Participation in Culture Night.
- Motivations for participation.
- Satisfaction with Culture Night.
- Net Promoter Score (likelihood to recommend).

Also, specific inquiry into:

- Scale and rate of artist remuneration.
- Audience development focus and activity.
- Level of diversity and inclusion.

Audience survey 437 respondents	Artist survey 174 respondents	Organiser survey 128 respondents
74% female 72% aged 45+	57% female 23% aged under 35 55% aged 35-45	38% professional cultural organisations 16% Local Authority organisers 13% voluntary/amateur groups 5% individual promoters
84% White Irish 12% White other 3% Mixed/other ethnicity 6% D/deaf or disabled	Ethnicity in line with population 91% perceive themselves as professional artists	
93% from Ireland 6% from overseas	28% from Dublin city	16% from Dublin city 15% Cork city

ii. Access to results of Behaviour & Attitudes national arts surveys 2019 and 2020 to understand:

- Levels of awareness of Culture Night.
- Levels of attendance at Culture Night (2020 only).
- Motivations of arts attenders compared with Culture Night attenders.

RESEARCH

Case studies

i. With eight venue-based organisers to understand Culture Night's role and efficacy in relation to audience development, seeking evidence that those who attend Culture Night return at least once within one year.

14 Henrietta Street	**Dublin**
Dorothée Roberts Gallery Studios	**Cork**
National Concert Hall	**Dublin**
Pavilion Theatre	**Dun Laoghaire**
Pearse Lyons Distillery	**Dublin**
Riverbank Arts Centre	**Newbridge**
Solstice Arts Centre	**Navan**
The Ark Children's Culture Centre	**Dublin**

ii. With three Arts Offices to gain a deeper understanding of the delivery of Culture Night at a local level.

Donegal County Council
Limerick City and County Council
Wexford County Council

Image courtesy of Culture Night Dublin, 2016. Photographer: Cristina Del Moral

EVIDENCE REVIEW

i. Desk research

A review of existing information, audience research, reports and policies to chart the evolution of Culture Night and identify drivers to its development and to situate Culture Night within the contemporary cultural landscape and policy context.

ii. Comparator study

A review of ten events or initiatives, in Ireland and abroad, looking at their purpose, programming approach, operational model and resourcing.

Cruinniú na nÓg	Ireland
Daffodil Day	Ireland
First Saturdays	New Orleans, USA
Kultturnatten	Copenhagen, Denmark
Long Night of Ideas	Berlin, Germany
National Heritage Week	Ireland
National Tourism Day	Ireland
Nuit Blanche	Paris, France
Open House Dublin	Ireland
Poetry Day	Ireland
Seachtain na Gaeilge	Ireland

CONSULTATION

i. Interviews

Semi-structured depth interviews conducted with existing stakeholders as well experts in the areas of brand, engagement, cultural policy, diversity and inclusion, community, creativity and culture.

Stakeholder	Kevin Rafter	Arts Council
Stakeholder	Maureen Kennelly	Arts Council
Stakeholder	Sinéad O'Reilly	Arts Council
Stakeholder	Aimée van Wylick	Boxroom Productions (National Co-ordinator 2013-2020)
Stakeholder	Ray Yeates	Dublin City Council
Stakeholder	Colm Lundberg	Department of Tourism, Culture Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
Stakeholder	Tracey Diamond Vanessa Gildea Anne-Marie Power Kay Sheehy Derek O'Connor John O'Kane	RTÉ
Stakeholder	Melanie Scott Philip Delamere	Tipperary County Council Leitrim County Council
Culture beyond the arts	Virginia Teehan Gina O'Kelly Rosemary Collier	Heritage Council Irish Museums Association Office of Public Works
Diversity and inclusion	Lorraine Maher	#IamIrish
Local / rural context	Sarah Clancy Michelle Horrigan	Artist and Clare PPN Askeaton Contemporary Arts
Community context	Carolann Courtney Johnny Sheehan	Creative Places Tuam The Wheel
Brand and communications	Ciarán Ó Gaora	Zero-G
Cultural policy	Martin Drury	Independent Consultant
International	Angela Byrne Eugene Downes	Department of Foreign Affairs

CONSULTATION

ii. Key informant workshops

To consider discrete strategic issues arising from Phase 1 findings and consultation.

Workshop	Artists and arts organisations via the National Campaign for the Arts (NCFA)
Workshop x 2	Local Authority Arts Officers
Workshop	The Arts Council – Policy and Strategy Committee
Workshop	The Arts Council – Heads of Team
Workshop	National Cultural Institutions – Heads of Marketing, Operations, Audiences, Public Engagement, Education and Outreach

Image courtesy of Culture Night Donegal, 2019. Photographer: Paul McGuckian

APPENDIX II
STEERING GROUP

STEERING GROUP

In order to ensure the best outcome for this project, the Arts Council established a small Steering Group comprised of stakeholders critical to the success of Culture Night now and in the future.

The Steering Group's primary purpose was to guide, inform and champion the project by:

→ Working with the consultants to agree clear objectives and outcomes for the project and a realistic timeframe for delivery;

→ Providing insights and expertise to support the successful delivery of the project;

→ Building support for the project with their immediate stakeholder base and other relevant stakeholders;

→ Assisting with the discovery phase of work (research and consultation) by advising on interview participants, comparator initiatives, models of best practice etc.;

→ Contributing their best thinking to the consideration of the purpose, vision and strategic goals of Culture Night in the future.

The Steering Group met five times over the course of the project.

The Steering Group members were:

Deirdre Behan	Arts Council, Strategic Development Director
Philip Delamere	Leitrim County Council, Arts Officer
Aideen Howard	The Ark, Director (National Campaign for the Arts)
Orlaith McBride (Jan – April 2021)	National Archives, Director (Chair, Council of National Cultural Institutions 2021)
John O'Kane	RTÉ, Executive Director of RTÉ Orchestras
Sinéad O'Reilly	Arts Council, Head of Local, Place and Public Art (Project Manager)
Sean Rainbird (Oct – Dec 2020)	National Gallery, Director (Chair, Council of National Cultural Institutions 2020)
Melanie Scott	Tipperary County Council, Arts Officer
Ray Yeates	Dublin City Council, Arts Officer

APPENDIX III

MCADAM MAITLAND NUGENT

ABOUT

Leading cultural consultants Janice McAdam, Heather Maitland and Annette Nugent came together as a consortium to deliver this project.

Between them, they have over 60 years of experience of working in and beyond the arts sector, specialising in projects involving research, data analysis, consultation design and facilitation, stakeholder engagement, audience development, organisational development and strategic planning.

Janice McAdam

has been helping people and organisations think strategically and engage effectively for over twenty years. Since qualifying as a coach in 2011, she has also helped them consider and manage change.

After working with leading management consultancy Genesis, Janice set up her own business in 2015 as a strategy and engagement consultant, specialising in projects that involve change. A skilled facilitator and award-winning researcher, Janice works within and beyond the arts sector, supporting clients to think clearly and courageously about their futures.

Heather Maitland

is an arts consultant, author, trainer and Associate Fellow with the Centre for Cultural Policy Studies at the University of Warwick. She has been working in Ireland for over fifteen years.

Heather specialises in helping cultural organisations understand their audiences through collaborative research and data analysis. In all her projects she takes a user-led approach, helping clients identify their information needs and the ways they would interface with the information and collaborating to provide information relevant to their day-to-day work and their strategic planning.

Annette Nugent

is a consultant specialising in the Irish cultural sector since 2005. She advises on communications and public affairs activity at a strategic level, and works with organisations to amplify their impact, through optimising their stakeholder engagement, audience development and public engagement activity.

An organised pragmatist as well as a strategic thinker, Annette is also an experienced project manager and has led a number of complex projects with multiple partners and diverse stakeholders, many with a research and consultation focus.
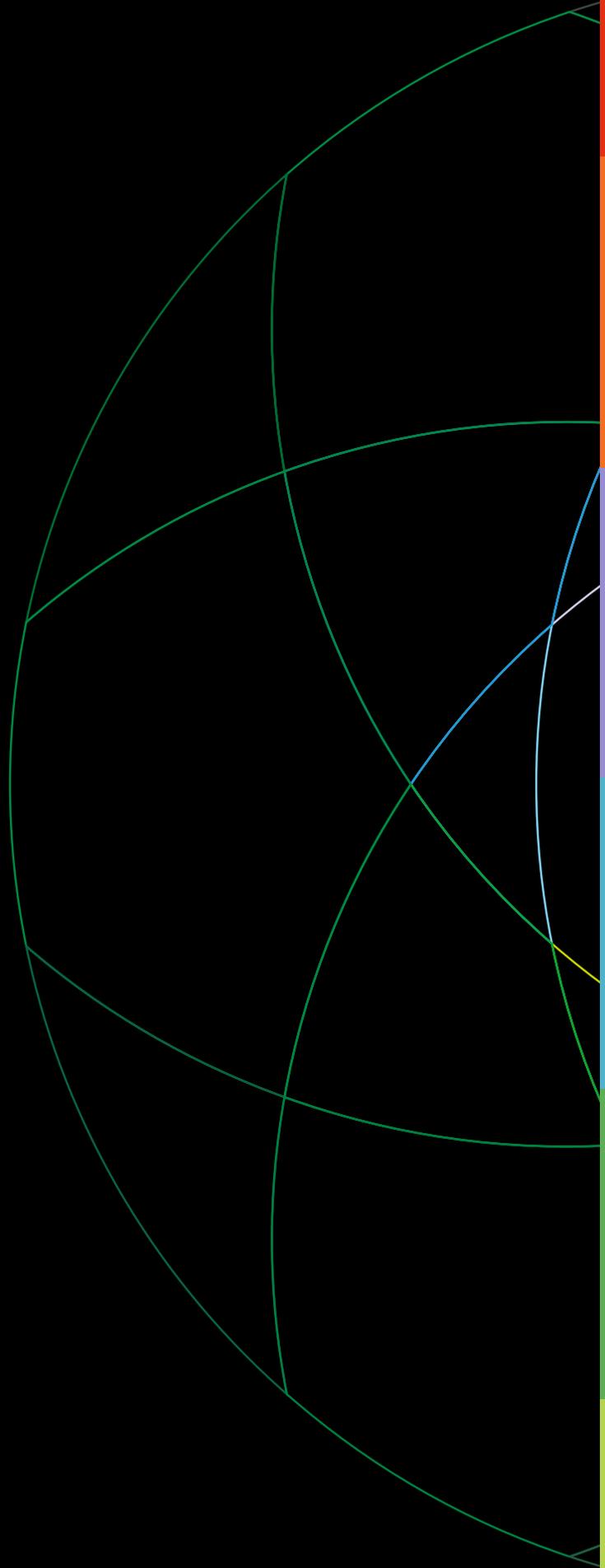
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