THE FUTURE OF
CROSS-BORDER
COOPERATION
IN THE ARTS

Commissioned by ARINS
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the audience agency

ARINS

Analysing and Researching
Ireland, North and South

A project of

RIA Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann
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Executive summary

Introduction to the research

ARINS (Analysing and Researching Ireland North and South) is a joint project of the Royal Irish Academy, an all-island body, and the Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies at Notre Dame's Keough School of Global Affairs, a research institute of international standing. The project engages recognised experts across the spectrum of disciplines, perspectives and points of view, inviting contributions in the form of academic papers, blog posts, and proposals for partnerships.

The primary aim of ARINS is to generate research into questions about the future relationship of Ireland and Northern Ireland beyond Brexit. The ARINS project commissioned The Audience Agency to write a report on *The Future of Cross-Border Cooperation in the Arts* to investigate the interconnections between the arts sectors in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The purpose of the report was to provide a starting point for further research and policy development to enable greater cooperation between the arts sectors in both jurisdictions. In mapping cross-border cooperation, the full report offers an assessment of the existing policy landscape and practice on the ground.

Alongside providing a brief commentary on the cultural economy in Northern Ireland and Ireland, the report maps cross-border cooperation in the arts at three levels – the local, national and international. The project involved both extensive desk research and a mixed-methods study including semi-structured interviews, focus groups and discussions with artists and practitioners, academics, consultants, policymakers and staff at a range of levels in both Arts Councils.

Why engage in cross-border cultural cooperation?

The **Cross-Border Cooperation in the Arts (CBCA) Development Model** was produced as part of this work. It presents a typology of the varying reasons, drivers and rationales for cross-border cooperation in the arts that were expressed to us during our research. The table both summarises and interrogates some of the rationales as to why such engagement might be important.

Area	Focus	Benefits
Professional Development	Artist and Arts Manager	Skills & knowledge transfer, networking, exchange of best practice
Artform Development	Theatre, music, dance and other art forms	New work, artform hybridity, genre exploration
Audience Development	Attendance, engagement, participation	Different and new audiences: diversity, scale, frequency
Economic Development	Revenue generation, economies of scale	Income, efficiency savings, shared risk
Civic Development	Social realm, public sphere	Empathy, mutual understanding, better relations within and between traditions

Findings of the review:

- **Learning from/impact of Brexit and Covid-19** Both have a major impact on current cross-border cooperation, so require addressing in this context. It was difficult for many interviewees to see past their impact when discussing barriers to cooperation.

- **Absence of a policy framework** Cross-border cooperation in the arts is signalled at various administrative levels, yet it lacks clear formalisation. An overall framework or stand-alone policy document for cross-border cooperation in the arts is absent.

- **North/South ambivalence** Perceived attitudes of ambivalence and indifference between communities and arts sectors suggest the need for increased cross-border cooperation is not a given. This was especially apparent amongst those with direct experience of working and living on both sides of the border.

- **Cultural value** Culture is understood as a resource, source of pride, social tool, tourism vehicle and an integral element of national identity. However, differing approaches – North and South – reveal questions of cultural value to be subjective, political, and highly contextualised.

- **Psychogeography of the border** 'Cross-border' activity takes place on a capital-to-capital basis, in the borderlands as part of daily life, and via relationships between other parts of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Policy responses should recognise these very different dynamics and that 'cross-border cooperation' is not commonly used terminology.

- **Resource disparity** Funding disparities between Northern Ireland and Ireland at a departmental, Arts Council and local council level – and resulting resource challenges in Northern Ireland – create ecological differences between artforms on the island.

- **Structures, mechanisms and platforms for exchange** Formal structures to facilitate cross-border cooperation in the arts would be welcomed by the arts sector. Knowledge and information exchange, sharing of learning and identifying opportunities for creatives would assist in network development for those without pre-existing contacts.

- **Lack of data** There is a lack of data available to inform a thorough understanding of the current and potential benefits of cross-border collaboration in the arts sector. The focus of currently available data is on quantitative outputs, not qualitative outcomes and on production rather than consumption (including audience experience).

- **Mobility and visibility** Mobility of audiences is a key concern for commercial concert promoters of scale, whereas for jointly funded Arts Council schemes mobility of the artist is paramount. Several interviewees articulated the importance of creating a visible public profile for cross-border collaborations, perhaps by operating at a much larger scale.

- **Audience focus** Reconciliation (or what we more broadly call in the CBCA Development Model, 'Civic Development') was not considered to be a driver for cross-border cooperation in the arts. Any future policy that sought to align funding for these activities with a broader social development agenda should focus on outcomes, not outputs. If the purpose of cross-border cooperation is civic development, then the question of cultural consumption – who is engaging and participating – becomes important.

Key recommendations for policy and future research

A strategic framework document – developed jointly by both Arts Councils and with departmental level input – would ensure a more consistent and impactful approach to cross-border cooperation and address concerns from the arts sectors in both Northern Ireland and Ireland.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION ▶	Develop a Strategic Framework for Cross-Border Cultural Cooperation

Local government is an important tier in the subsidised arts ecology in both Northern Ireland and Ireland that has not received adequate attention in research studies.

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATION ▶	Engage in depth with Local Authority Arts Officers and Arts Managers to understand attitudes and practices

Different artforms have different structural models and therefore encounter different realities when engaging in cross-border work.

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATION ▶	Map the administrative and logistical issues that arise for different artforms in undertaking cross-border cooperation to provide an understanding of the scales and ranges of support needed
RESEARCH RECOMMENDATION ▶	Explore the dynamic between on-island and off-island opportunities for collaboration and cooperation
POLICY RECOMMENDATION ▶	Fund identified supports within the context of the Strategic Framework

The cultural sector exists within the wider context of the creative industries. Whilst a full mapping exercise would be a very significant undertaking, some initial steps should be taken to inform cross-border cooperation in the arts.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION ▶	Map the 'ecology' within which the subsidised arts sector sits, and the current and potential synergies between public and private cultural enterprise. Questions to be addressed should include access to, and comparability of, data re: cross-border cultural consumption
POLICY RECOMMENDATION ▶	Establish clear parameters for the use of conceptual categories, so that terms such as 'arts', 'culture', 'cultural industries' and 'creative industries' are used in a consistent and coherent manner

Knowledge and information exchange and sharing of learning and identifying opportunities for creatives would all assist in network development for those without pre-existing contacts. A key element of this work would be a comparative analysis of the networks, touring consortiums and bodies working on an all-island basis (see e.g., Visual Arts Ireland in the Case Study section of the main report).

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATION ▶	Map existing supports and networks to assess and understand whether there are imbalances of funding and/or provision by artform
POLICY RECOMMENDATION ▶	Create formal, regular and funded structures and mechanisms to facilitate cross-border cooperation in the arts
POLICY RECOMMENDATION ▶	Provide direct funding provision for artistic project development on a cross-border basis

Enabling cross-border partnerships within EU-level funding opportunities would help the Arts Councils to put their joint approach onto a new footing and may off-set implications arising from Brexit.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION ▶	Both Arts Councils to jointly enable and facilitate cross-border collaborative opportunities for client organisations within schemes such as Horizon Europe and PEACEPLUS

As the relative lack of an evidence base overall is an important issue for understanding the subsidised arts and cultural sector in Ireland, the establishment of a robust, empirical base for understanding the audience for the subsidised arts is crucial.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION ▶	Jointly scope and implement an all-island audience data infrastructure for both Arts Councils

Large-scale arts events can engage the general public beyond the typical arts audience and prompt wider conversations about the dominant cultural and social issues of the day.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION ▶	Devise a pilot funding scheme for a small number of cross-border events of significant scale, one which incorporates a rigorous and adequately resourced evaluation process

Working and travelling across national boundaries involves onerous bureaucracy that stifles innovation, creativity and collaboration. Digital (non-material) cross-border collaboration presents challenges and opportunities for cross-border cooperation in a reshaped digital economy.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION ▶	Produce guidance on the legal, data, technological and other considerations pertaining to digital cross-border cooperation, especially in light of Brexit
RESEARCH RECOMMENDATION ▶	Map and explore the challenges and opportunities for cross-border cooperation in a reshaped digital economy to assess the potential for cultural exchange
RESEARCH RECOMMENDATION ▶	Investigate broader conceptualisations of what is meant by 'cross-border' collaboration in the arts via, for example, shared streaming platforms or online repositories of recorded performance to devise new models of cultural engagement

Given the shortfalls, variances, inconsistencies and discrepancies in funding across the two jurisdictions, a mechanism to align North-South support for cross-border cooperation in the arts would be welcome.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION ▶	Support through the funding of cross-border work the development of long-term relationships, not merely one-off projects

A broader recognition of the value of both evaluation and qualitative research would be helpful at both an Arts Council and a departmental level. A programme of research into audience experience / reception to explore and understand the outcomes from an experience of attendance/participation in cross-border arts would be invaluable.

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATION ▶	Examine in detail the question of 'cultural value in Ireland', as this appears as a cross-cutting theme in the report
POLICY RECOMMENDATION ▶	Jointly and collaboratively produce evaluation principles to guide and inform how evaluation is carried out and used in the cultural sector

Rural arts provision has been a long-standing debate in the cultural sector, not least because of the disparity between the contribution to arts subsidy from taxes and the disbursement of that subsidy.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION ▶	Reformulate the idea of cross-border cooperation in the arts at an all-island level, such that the concept extends beyond geography to consider psychogeography
RESEARCH RECOMMENDATION ▶	Analyse the data on funding (local/national/international) for cultural activity targeted at/provided to border counties to assess the rationales for such schemes

Most North-South cross-border cultural activity is likely to be informal and amateur, or professional but non-funded. This 'invisible' cooperation may be more important for understanding cross-border cooperation and reconciliation than is currently appreciated.

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATION ▶	Map the scope, scale and networks of amateur arts activity that operates on a cross-border basis
POLICY RECOMMENDATION ▶	Strengthen community networks of artists and arts workers operating on a cross-border basis

Introduction

How do people draw lines between themselves and others?
Across and In-Between project

Borders function in many ways: as metaphor, and as liminal, figurative and conceptual spaces. The border on the island of Ireland is something that many never encounter, yet for others it shapes lived experience in profound ways. It is as much a space for conflict transformation as it is the cause of that conflict.

The subsidised arts are a small sector of government, and an even smaller sector of the economy. Yet there can be few other areas of state-directed activity better suited to addressing the complexity of identity and culture that so vex the jurisdictions of this island.

Cross-border cooperation on the island of Ireland has evolved during the course of the past two decades, largely due to macro-level political initiatives within EU policy frameworks and commitments contained in the 1998 Good Friday Agreement ('the Agreement'). This trajectory has found both renewed impetus and complexity in the context of the Brexit process, ongoing disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the Irish government's Shared Island Initiative (SII). The SII was created in 2020 to examine how better to share the island regardless of people's political tradition, and whilst it naturally follows the standard model of government departmental thinking, which aligns strategic priorities with expenditure levels, with a focus on environment, health, education and economy, there is an inevitable need to address 'culture' in all its myriad meanings.

There is then a challenge at the heart of this report. The question of culture sits at both ends of the political spectrum. On the one hand culture (as 'the subsidised arts') is a minor concern for government, and a footnote in terms of overall expenditure. At the other extreme, on an island where questions of identity are to the fore, culture (as 'a way of life') is paramount and explicitly informs what Cathal McCall refers to as "the key resources of ethno-national group culture – religion, sport and language" (2011, p. 201). Indeed,

> There seems to be a paradox in the contemporary Irish border: crossing the border is both unremarkable and extraordinary. In some ways it is non-existent, completely irrelevant; in other ways it is ever-present and at the centre of politics, economics and peace (Hayward, 2018, p. 77).

What then are the specifically cultural aspects of cross-border cooperation in the arts which might differentiate this sector of society and the economy from the vast array of analysis that exists elsewhere? Conscious of the wider ARINS project, our focus in this report is almost exclusively on 'the arts' though we attempt to avoid the sense of exceptionalism that such a focus might entail. The prevailing political, economic, social and legal considerations of the Irish border provide the context within which cross-border cooperation in the arts operates. Within that broader context, there is a framework for supporting and developing the arts and artists both within and across this shared geography. A shared, all-island cultural ecology exists. Publicly subsidised culture sits alongside commercial elements of the creative and cultural industries operating island-wide. Where resources permitted, we examined some of this ecology, and have undertaken to signpost areas for future policy development and research.

In considering arts and culture as a key element of the process "to enhance cooperation, connection and mutual understanding on the island" (SIU) we hope that the report and recommendations provide a resource for policymakers and stakeholders in the arts. From the "quiet cooperation" of civil servants in both governments to the "rhetorical cultural recidivism" (McCall, 2011, p. 215) that characterises (too) much of the political debate, the ethos of this report is

to galvanise but not antagonise. We have engaged with policy actors, funders, organisations and individuals to articulate what many see as the confusing or deliberate absence of arts policy on cross-border cooperation. Of course, in a practical sense, 'policy' is frequently understood as that which is seen to be done . In a rapidly evolving context such as the one in which this report was written, action inevitably precedes policy.

There are important distinctions to be made in terms of a review of cross-border cooperation in the arts. This report does not, for example, consider the potential for an all-island approach to arts funding. Cross-border cooperation in the arts in this context is not, therefore, a question of resource allocation or of restructuring the administrative infrastructure of the two Arts Councils and their relationship to their respective government departments, local authorities etc. We do not comment on the potential benefits and drawbacks such an analysis might offer but we note that – given the very frequent commentary (see e.g., Meban, 2020) on the ongoing lack of funding for the NI arts sector – administrative and other economies and efficiencies of scale might offer solutions in a range of future all-island scenarios.

A final note. Any discussion or debate on the publicly subsidised cultural sector must fundamentally acknowledge the long-standing issue of resource constraints. There is a seemingly permanent 'lack' in the arts sector – whether it be a lack of money, time, skills, resources, infrastructure. As with other sectors such as health (see Heenan, 2021) closer cooperation could deliver economies of scale, value for money, opportunities for knowledge transfer and skills sharing. As the recent success of Belfast-based Array Collective in winning the Turner Prize has shown, the arts sector has passion and vision in abundance. It is hoped that this report constitutes a small step in correcting the imbalance as the sector across the island moves forward.

Dr Steven Hadley
National University of Ireland Galway
February 2022

List of abbreviations

AC　　　　Arts Council/ An Chomhairle Ealaíon (Arts Council Ireland)

ACNI　　　Arts Council of Northern Ireland

ARINS　　　Analysing and Researching Ireland, North & South (a joint project led by the Royal Irish Academy and the Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies at Notre Dame's Keough School of Global Affairs)

CBCA　　　Cross-Border Cooperation in the Arts

DCHG　　　Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (now DTCAGSM, see below)

DTCAGSM　Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

DFA　　　　Department of Foreign Affairs

EU　　　　European Union

LAAO　　　Local authority arts officer

L/Derry　　Londonderry/Derry

ND　　　　Notre Dame

NI　　　　Northern Ireland

NSMC　　　North South Ministerial Council

RIA　　　　Royal Irish Academy

SII　　　　Shared Island Initiative (Department of the Taoiseach)

Aims and focus

Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language. This is so partly because of its intricate historical development, in several European languages, but mainly because it has now come to be used for important concepts in several distinct intellectual disciplines and in several distinct and incompatible systems of thought

(Raymond Williams, *Keywords*: *A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, 1988, p. 87).

The ARINS project commissioned this report, *The Future of Cross-Border Cooperation in the Arts*, to investigate the interconnections between the arts sector in Ireland and Northern Ireland. In mapping cross-border cooperation, the report offers an assessment of the existing policy landscape and practice on the ground.

The primary aim of ARINS is to generate research into questions about the future relationship of Ireland and Northern Ireland beyond Brexit. The founding partners, the RIA and the University of Notre Dame, anticipate that this initial mapping exercise will provide a platform for further research and policy recommendations. The purpose of the report is therefore to provide a starting point to enable greater cooperation between the arts sector in both jurisdictions. This report will be circulated to policymakers, leaders of arts organisations and relevant groups, as well as academic researchers.

Cooperation, much like 'the arts', is a broad-church term and it is important to clarify our use of terminology. Conceptualisations of 'the arts' (and the wider cultural and creative industries) vary across research practices and discourses. Equally, 'arts', 'the arts' and 'culture' are used in a wide range of contexts and settings. Frequently, distinctions between the terms are blurred or conflated to suit the purposes of advocacy and argument and given the fluidity and impermanence of cultural distinctions and relationships, there is often little consistent usage.

In consultation with the ARINS Culture and Education subgroup, it was necessary for the research team to decide on a definition of 'the arts' to inform both the scoping and analysis of this report and to ensure that the outcomes could be delivered within the available resource. Equally important, and identified early in the project, was the need to understand cultural consumption in terms of audience demographics, so that our focus was on more than just artistic production. As we comment in the report, the ongoing lack of a longitudinal, empirical base for understanding the audience for the arts across the island of Ireland (understood here as those artforms and activities funded by both Arts Councils) is an ongoing concern (see DAHG, 2015).

Our approach to definitions might have been determined by institutional parameters (e.g., those artforms funded by the two Arts Councils) or by wider policy definitions (e.g., the policy scope of the respective North and South government departments). The project tender document specifically mentioned theatre, music, film, visual art, publishing and literature but not museums, although the heritage sector had begun the process of articulating future cross-border dialogue (see Irish Museums Association, 2019). Given the stated aim to both generate questions for future academic research and to develop new recommendations for policy, the decision was taken to both focus on, and adopt, pre-existing definitions and taxonomies of the professional arts from both the North and South. We proceeded on the basis that no finite, surgically accurate definition was achievable.

In offering a definition of 'culture', *Culture 2025: A National Cultural Policy Framework to 2025* differentiates between the arts, the creative industries and cultural heritage (DCHG, 2020, p.7). The arts are defined in the Arts Act 2003 (p. 3) as follows:

''arts'' means any creative or interpretative expression (whether traditional or contemporary) in whatever form, and includes, in particular, visual arts, theatre, literature, music, dance, opera, film, circus and architecture, and includes any medium when used for those purposes.

As agreed at a meeting of the ARINS Steering Group on 25 March 2021, the focus of the report is on professional arts and artists. Initially, and as per the UK Government North-South Cooperation Mapping Exercise (2017), this focus is bounded by category 124, 'Development and promotion of the Arts', with the scope limited to the island of Ireland. As per the *European Commission, Task Force for the Preparation and Conduct of the Negotiations with the United Kingdom under Article 50 TEU,* (2019, p.13 – 14),

> Cooperation in sport, arts and culture on the island, has played a positive role in peace and reconciliation. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland and the Arts Council of Ireland (An Chomhairle Ealaíon) have a framework for managing North-South cooperation and a North-South Strategy, which enable[s] them to make a wider impact where appropriate, such as supporting co-commissions, touring and the joint funding of organisations. This cooperation and cooperation between the agencies supporting the film industry involves mobility both of people and equipment.

The initial research approach undertook a broad process of environmental scanning to give a sense of the scope and scale of cross-border cooperation that has taken place within a wide-ranging definition of 'the arts'. Whilst the Project Team adopted an iterative approach to the scope of the work, given restrictions of time and resource it was not possible to analyse and assess all of this activity. Nonetheless, this exercise was useful in determining questions for future research (see 'Conclusions and Recommendations').

Research methodology

In terms of cross-border cooperation in the arts, this report offers an initial assessment of the existing policy landscape and practice on the ground and makes recommendations for future research and policy design. It is based on both extensive desk research and a mixed methods study involving semi-structured interviews, focus groups and discussions with individuals who had a particular interest in, or previous experience of, cross-border cooperation in the arts.

The participants were purposively sampled, and included artists and practitioners, academics, consultants, policymakers and staff at a range of levels in both Arts Councils. This group of experienced and information-rich stakeholders were articulate in their views and experience of cross-border working in the arts and spoke of the potential for increased dialogue and cooperation. A range of short interview guides were used to facilitate semi-structured virtual interviews and to enable participants to discuss their experiences and understandings. The questions emerged from a review of the existing literature on cross-border cooperation in the arts and an initial range of key informant interviews. Interviewees shared their understandings of policy rationales, political and resource challenges, and the experiences, opportunities and challenges of cross-border cooperation in the arts. The methodology included a mix of one-to-one interviews, sector engagement sessions and feedback loops. Small group interviews were used as a feedback loop with key informants to present and discuss interim findings. All interview data is reported anonymously within the report and redacted where appropriate. The interviewees (see Appendix 1 for a full list of interviewees and stakeholders) were then categorised by type as follows:

Academic
AC
ACNI
Arts Sector
Consultant
Govt/Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB)
Resource Organisation

The initial literature review and desk research showed that the concept of cross-border cooperation in the arts was significantly more complex than initially envisaged. The absence of data and policy documents – combined with an initial theme from the data showing that some initial assumptions from the research brief might require more detailed investigation – meant that engagement with the arts sector was undertaken only at the point at which the researchers already had a detailed understanding of the rationales for these absences. In practice, this meant that the project team used a 'research funnel' model with an initially broad data collection approach being iteratively adapted to filter and process to both develop a policy focus and to allocate resources to areas where it was felt the work could best identify and make recommendations for future research and policy design.

Use of language

In using terms to reference the two jurisdictions, the authors follow the ARINS Project nomenclature provided by the Royal Irish Academy. In general, the official names of the two jurisdictions are used: Ireland and Northern Ireland. Where interview transcripts are quoted and therefore verbatim, we report the language as it was used.

We use the expression 'cross-border cooperation' in this report to maintain consistency with the initial communications and brief when ARINS first commissioned this work. We recognise and acknowledge, however, that the expression

'North South touring' was adopted by the AC following consultation by them with ACNI in preference to other terminology. We recommend that this term is used for future work.

Research limitations

The research team had a set number of days within which to conduct this work. It became almost immediately apparent that the impact of Covid-19, lockdown(s), differing and evolving restrictions across two jurisdictions and the wide range of personal, social and work pressures impacting the sector would mean that a significant portion of research time was allocated to scheduling and rescheduling (and re-rescheduling) activity. Under differing circumstances, we would have wished to engage with a broader range of stakeholders – particularly artists – but we are fully aware of the constraints and pressures in the sector at this time. We are therefore extremely grateful to those individuals who were able to give of their time, energy and insight in participating in the work. We did not speak with as many people as we had hoped, but where we recognise gaps, these have been addressed in the recommendations.

Research team

The research team for the project was led for The Audience Agency by Dr Steven Hadley (NUI Galway/Moore Institute), and included Sophia Woodley, Head of Policy Research, Jonathan Goodacre, Senior Consultant International, Richard Turpin, Chief Research Officer, Oliver Mantell, Director of Evidence & Insight, Anne Torreggiani, CEO and Penny Mills, Chief Consulting Officer, with support from Professor Justin O'Connor and Matti Allam.

ARINS team

The commissioning of the report was led by Ruth Hegarty, Managing Editor, RIA and Dr Catherine Wilsdon, Notre Dame with an advisory group comprised of Valerie Bistany, Director of the Irish Writers Centre and two members of the ARINS Advisory Group: Colin Murphy, playwright and journalist and Professor Diane Urqhuart, Queen's University Belfast.

Funding

The Department of Foreign Affairs Reconciliation Fund provided the support to commission the research with the RIA and ND contributing the additional costs and executive.

Mapping

Context, background, policy

> Traditionally, the primary function of borders has been to divide, and an understanding of these divisions is coloured by the analytical lens employed. In his overviews of Border Studies, David Newman (2006a, b) adroitly navigates through the different academic approaches to borders. For geographers, borders have been conceptualized as lines of separation that divide economic, political and social spaces and are driven by a bordering process entailing both demarcation and management functions. Political scientists have concentrated on the power relations involved in that demarcation and management (including border reconfiguration). Sociologists and social anthropologists have tended to focus on binary distinctions when studying borders: that is, distinctions between 'self' and 'other', 'us' and 'them', 'here' and 'there', 'inside' and 'outside' and 'include' and 'exclude' (Newman, 2006a: 143–7; 2006b: 176).
>
> (McCall, 2011, p.201)

Whilst the attraction of 'border' as metaphor or conceptual construct has value, our research has invariably found a focus – from the perspective of all stakeholders – in the quotidian and the pragmatic. The border is a practical concern. Cathal McCall (2011, p.203) further considers two elements – sport and language – which he considers to be "key cultural resources of ethno-national group identity" and which have led to the development of an Irish border region cultural space. This report for ARINS addresses the artistic and cultural aspect of that shared space (whether it exists in the border region itself or elsewhere on the island of Ireland). As Deirdre Heenan's 2021 (p. 413) study on public funding for healthcare services on both sides of the Irish border articulates, "even in the face of an existential crisis, political leaders default to debates over culture and identity."

Context of 'cooperation'

In considering the question of cross-border cooperation in the arts, it is important to understand the history and context of 'cooperation' as a concept. It is clear that cross-border work between Ireland and Northern Ireland is not a new phenomenon:

> Collaboration between the two Arts Councils through, for example, artform touring schemes and the tourism authorities has been taking place for quite some time prior to the Good Friday Agreement (Durrer and McCall).[1]

However, the 1998 Agreement defined and established cooperation between the two nations in its formal sense. It created a North South Ministerial Council:

> to bring together those with executive responsibilities in Northern Ireland and the Irish Government, to develop consultation, cooperation and action within the island of Ireland –including through implementation on an all-island and cross border basis – on matters of mutual interest within the competence of the Administrations, North and South.[2]

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[1] Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09548963.2017.1342982.
[2] See: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-belfast-agreement.

Currently the North South Ministerial Council – which meets subject to the suspension or otherwise of the Northern Ireland Executive – has responsibility for six main areas of cooperation: agriculture, education, environment, health, tourism and transport. There are also six implementation bodies with responsibility for more specialist areas of cooperation.[3] The body relevant to this work is the Language Body, made up of two agencies: Foras na Gaeilge, which promotes the Irish language, and the Ulster-Scots Agency, whose remit is "the promotion of greater awareness and use of Ullans and of Ulster-Scots cultural issues, both within Northern Ireland and throughout the island."[4]

Mapping cooperation

Since the Agreement of 1998, two notable mapping exercises of cooperation have been undertaken. The first, a mapping exercise carried out in 2017 by the United Kingdom government, during phase 1 of the European Union withdrawal negotiations, aimed "to chart the range of formal and informal cooperation that currently exists between Northern Ireland and Ireland, noting the role of EU regulatory frameworks, where applicable, in its operation and development, with a view to maintaining North-South cooperation following the UK's withdrawal from the EU."[5] Its scope was relatively broad. Most relevant is its treatment of arts collaboration, quoted below:

114	Cooperation beyond NSMC (arts)	Arts Council of Northern Ireland and Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon North- South Touring and Dissemination Scheme	This scheme is designed to support the touring and dissemination of work in certain arts disciplines for tours starting between January and June each year, and is open to applicants who are resident in Ireland or Northern Ireland. The decision by both Arts Councils to combine resources and work together to create a simpler, joined-up approach was taken in May 2013.
115	Cooperation beyond NSMC (arts)	Libraries Northern Ireland North/South activities	Cooperation includes general service provision, information sharing, access to resources, training, and children's initiatives.
116	Cooperation beyond NSMC (arts)	National Museums Northern Ireland North-South collaboration	Ongoing collaboration between National Museums Northern Ireland and the National Museum of Ireland on exhibitions and programming.

The UK government mapping exercise was critiqued in a position paper from the Ad-Hoc Group for North-South and East-West Cooperation, which questioned whether it "achieves an explicit understanding of the conditions necessary for such cooperation." It continues:

As well as forms of North-South cooperation undertaken by community-level actors, for example, and that may not necessarily map neatly onto the categories of cooperation employed by the UK Government and the European Commission in their joint mapping exercise, it is not evident that there is clarity on what are the underlying and interrelated conditions that support North-South cooperation.

These factors are argued to include political, material, social, regulatory and funding conditions, with PEACE and INTERREG specifically identified as important funding supports to cooperation.[6]

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[3] See: https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/north-south-cooperation-island-ireland.
[4] See: https://www.ulsterscotsagency.com/about-us/.
[5] See: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-explanatory-note-north-south-cooperation-mapping-exercise.
[6] *The Necessary Conditions for North-South Cooperation: A Position Paper from the Ad-Hoc Group for North-South and East-West Cooperation.*

The second review, a European Commission mapping of North-South cooperation in 2019, defined its terms of reference in relation to the 1998 Agreement. It noted that:

> Further areas of informal and local/community level cooperation have not been captured by this exercise. It was fully recognised that cooperation must be seen in the context of the commitments made in the Agreement.[7]

In reference to the arts and culture specifically, the report concluded that:

> Cooperation in sport, arts and culture on the island has played a positive role in peace and reconciliation.
>
> The mapping exercise also drew attention to local, cultural cooperation between national museums, libraries, Arts Councils, and North-South projects supported by NI Screen and Fís Éireann. There is ongoing informal cooperation between museums in Northern Ireland and museums in Ireland, including loaning items between the museums, exhibitions jointly organised, touring exhibitions, and exchange of knowledge and close collaborative working; EU regulations facilitating arrangements for licencing, movement and return of objects over a particular value are relevant here.
>
> The Northern Ireland Libraries Authority works with a number of individual local authority library services in Ireland on initiatives to promote reading, learning and heritage. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland and the Arts Council of Ireland (An Chomhairle Ealaíon) have a framework for managing North-South cooperation and a North-South Strategy, which enable them to make a wider impact where appropriate, such as supporting co-commissions, touring and the joint funding of organisations. This cooperation and cooperation between the agencies supporting the film industry involves mobility both of people and equipment.[8]

The 2019 mapping exercise drew attention to the pivotal role played by the European Union in structuring, funding and catalysing cooperation:

> EU funding has been both supportive to and instrumental in the development of North-South cooperation, in many cases enabling projects and initiatives to get underway in contexts where it might not otherwise have been possible. Examples of some of the most relevant EU programmes include PEACE, INTERREG, Horizon 2020… In addition, all six Implementation Bodies benefit from funding under PEACE and INTERREG.
>
> The mapping exercise demonstrated the interconnectedness of the areas of cooperation and the work of the North-South Implementation Bodies. In many cases, areas of cooperation which rely heavily on the EU acquis are in turn connected to and support areas which are less reliant on the EU acquis. In numerous instances, projects or initiatives between North and South are realisable because they provide economies of scale that would not be possible were they to be pursued in parallel. This exercise also demonstrated clearly that many areas of North-South cooperation have either expressly relied upon or have been significantly enabled by the overarching EU legal and policy framework and the implicit assumption that both Ireland and the UK would remain EU Member States.[9]

Academic work

There appears to be relatively little academic work or research focusing on cross-border cooperation in the arts. One exception is a special edition of the *Irish Journal of Arts Management and Cultural Policy*, published in 2019, on the theme 'Exploring Cross-Border Cultural Policy in Practice'. The introduction to this special edition was based on an event on the subject co-organised by Cultural Policy Observatory Ireland, the Social Innovation Network and Dublin City University at The Garage Theatre in Monaghan in November 2018. Themes identified from this event include:

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[7] European Commission, 'Mapping of North-South Cooperation & Implementation Bodies: Report and key findings of the exercise' (hereafter 'Task Force 2019) (2019, p 4)
[8] European Commission, 'Task Force 2019' (13–14).
[9] 'Task Force 2019', 5.

- A general belief that "the value placed by Government on arts practice in Northern Ireland is different and / or perceived to be lesser to the value that Government in the Republic of Ireland is perceived to place on this practice."[10]

- A need for "the collaborative cross-border and cross-jurisdictional work being done on the ground [to] be formally captured and recognised so that it can be monitored and developed and thus its value to citizens across the island better understood."

- That Brexit had "the potential to reinforce separated cultural identities to the detriment of established relationships, thus further highlighting the importance of maintaining and developing existing Northern Ireland-Republic of Ireland collaborations and relationships."

- And finally, that there was a need to move forward to do further research and develop further networks, collaborations and groupings, potentially including an All-Island Cultural Engagement Framework or a Cultural Heritage Alliance.[11]

These themes are widely echoed through the rest of the volume. Another key theme is the centrality of the EU INTERREG and PEACE programmes to cross-border cooperation.

Although not studies of cooperation *per se*, there have been several other studies published recently that look at activity in the arts and culture sector with a cross-border perspective. Indeed, the creation of these studies can be seen as cross-border cooperation in its own right. The Irish Museums Association – itself a cross-border institution – published a survey of the Irish museum sector in 2016.[12] Reflecting on the lessons from her research, its author Dr Emily Mark-FitzGerald subsequently argued that "the shared historical and geographical origin and scope of many Irish collections, and the extent of current cross-border collaborations and close working relationships, means an all-island perspective is vital and comparatively useful."[13] She argued that "there is a recognised need for enhanced support of advanced research in arts/cultural policy and practice, including research on museums, on an all-island basis", arguing for the creation of an information and research unit on museums (also a main conclusion of the report), better models for data collection and a combined research agenda.[14]

In 2010, AC and ACNI jointly commissioned a report on the living and working conditions of artists. The authors noted that "from a research perspective, the all-island approach worked very well". It is interesting to observe that their findings were published as two distinct reports, one for Ireland and one for Northern Ireland.[15]

Overview of the funded arts sector

National

The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon (AC) is the Irish government agency for the arts. It is "an autonomous body, which is under the aegis of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media."[16] In 2019, AC received €75 million in grant funding from the Exchequer (via the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht). It also received over €1m (combined) from the Department of Education and Skills and Creative Ireland for its Creative Schools programme.

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[10] This view is echoed by Dylan Quinn in another article in the same volume, who states that "the disappointing reality is that if and when we, as artists based in Northern Ireland, attempt to have a conversation with our colleagues in the Republic about partnerships, we are having two very different conversations". Dylan Quinn, 'Working with the Presence of a Border: An Artist's Perspective', 46.
[11] Munch and Durrer Exploring Cross-Border Cultural Policy in Practice, Special Issue Introduction', 9–11.
[12] See: https://irishmuseums.org/uploads/downloads/IMS-2016-DocsinglePrint.pdf.
[13] Mark-FitzGerald, 'Known unknowns: research on Irish museums since 2008', 196.
[14] Mark-FitzGerald, 'Known unknowns: research on Irish museums since 2008', Ibid, 198, 211.
[15] *The Living and Working Conditions of Artists in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland* (2010).
[16] For more information see: http://www.artscouncil.ie/about/Who-we-are/.

Of the €75m in 2019, €26.6m went as core funding to 112 organisations through the Strategic Funding programme (which claimed €37m in total). Other grant schemes included:

- €8.7m supporting 159 festivals and events

- €5.7m in partnership funding to 50 arts centres

- €1.9m to 54 grantees to support tourism

- €1.8m in local authority partnership funding to 31 grantees

- Over €5m in support to individual artists[17]

The AC funds architecture; circus, street art and spectacle; dance; film; literature; music; opera; theatre; traditional arts; and visual arts.

Its funding increased only slightly between 2009 and 2019, from €73.4m to €74.99m (a decrease in real terms).[18] However this was a significant increase from the low point of €56.67m in 2014 (see comparative chart below). In the most recent years, funding has increased dramatically. From €74.99m in 2019, the Arts Council's budget increased to €130m in 2021.

In *Culture 2025: A National Cultural Policy Framework to 2025*, DTCAGSM explicitly acknowledged the role and impact of cooperation:

> Culture operates beyond borders and boundaries and can facilitate cross-community and cross-cultural understanding at the deepest level. Because of this public policy, planning and provision in the field of culture have an important role to play in building and maintaining strong connections on this island, North and South, and between Britain and Ireland.
>
> The Government will ensure that culture continues to play an important role in fostering all-island dialogue, and dialogue between Ireland and Britain, particularly during this Decade of Centenaries and also now in the context of the UK's decision to leave the EU.[19]

We aimed to interview the Strategic Development Director of the AC to understand how this policy framework is put into practice at the AC but the request was declined on the grounds that the postholder did not have any involvement with cross-border activity. Apart from monitoring the Touring and Dissemination of Work Scheme, the AC does not gather specific data on cross-border cooperation.

In Northern Ireland, arts and culture is the responsibility of the **ACNI**, an arms-length body overseen by the Department for Communities in Northern Ireland. Its current five-year strategic plan contains no reference to cooperation. This is in contrast to its 2013–2018 plan, which stated that:

> The Arts Councils of these islands have a long history of cooperation. We reaffirm our commitment to work with the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon, to share a common strategic commitment to support artists and arts organisations jointly through key projects such as the Tyrone Guthrie Centre, the all-island Chair of Poetry, Children's Laureate and an island-wide touring initiative.[20]

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[17] See: https://www.artscouncil.ie/uploadedFiles/Annual%20Report%202019.pdf, xiii-1.

[18] See: https://www.artscouncil.ie/uploadedFiles/Main_Site/Content/Research_and_Publications/All/AC_Annual_Review09_15Feb_small.pdf.

[19] *Culture 2025: A National Cultural Policy Framework to 2025*, 12.

[20] *Ambitions for the Arts: A Five Year Strategic Plan for the Arts in Northern Ireland 2013–2018*, 11.

While the 2019 EU mapping exercise suggested the existence of "a framework for managing North-South cooperation and a North-South Strategy, which enable them to make a wider impact where appropriate",[21] the information we received from ACNI and AC suggested that there is no public-facing documentation available.

ACNI supports the arts and artists through funding from both Lottery and Exchequer sources. ACNI Exchequer funding "has fallen by 30% in cash terms over the last decade, from £14.1m to £9.5m closer to 40% when inflation is taken into account." Lottery income has also declined: from £10.9m in 2014/15 to a projected £9.11m in 2020/21.[22]

Year	Arts Council Exchequer	Year	ACNI combined (Lottery + Exchequer)	ACNI Exchequer	ACNI Lottery
2021	€130m	2020/21	£18.643m	£9.532m	£9.111m
2020	€106.9m	2019/20	£18.587m	£9.532m	£9.055m
2019	€74.99m	2018/19	£18.791m	£10.092m	£8.699m
2018	€68.2m	2017/18	£18.868m	£9.888m	£8.980m
2017	€65.15m	2016/17	£19.428m	£10.300m	£9.128m
2016	€60.12m	2015/16	£21.694m	£10.923m	£10.771m
2015	€58.59m	2014/15	£23.231m	£12.301m	£10.930m
2014	€56.67m	2013/14		£12.499m	
2013	€59.86m	2012/13		£13.057m	
2012	€63.24m	2011/12		£14.133m	
2011	€65.16m				
2010	€68.65m				
2009	€73.35m				

In a response to the NI Executive Consultation on the 2021–22 Draft Budget, ACNI emphasises "the extent of underinvestment in the Arts in Northern Ireland" and a "disparity of funding [that] continues to grow." It states that "Based on 2020/21 budget, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland receives only £5.38 per capita, contrasting sharply with Wales at £10.41 and the Republic of Ireland £28.52."[23] This overstates the case, as it seems likely that it only takes into account Exchequer funding. However, the funding gap has widened significantly in recent years, with the 73% increase in AC funding between 2019 and 2021.

Through the Annual Funding Programme, ACNI offered core funding to 97 organisations in 2019/20, representing a total of £12.8m. These organisations spanned combined arts (28), visual arts (18), music (13), drama (13), traditional arts (12), dance (5), circus/carnival (4) and literature (4).[24]

[21] *TF50 (2019) 63 – Commission to EU 27*, 14.
[22] *TF50 (2019) 63 – Commission to EU 27*, 4–5.
[23] See: http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/publications-documents/ACNI-Executive-Budget-Response-February-2021.pdf p 6.
[24] See: http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/publications-documents/ACNI-AFS-Headline-Report-2019-20.pdf.

The table below compares these figures against previous years, where these are available. As will be evident, there has been a gradual decline in the number of organisations funded and the amount of funding offered. The 2018 desk review found that the fall in funding at that point had been greatest for smaller organisations.[25]

Year	Number of organisations funded	Total funding offered
2019/20	97	£12.8m
2016/17	107	£13.92m
2013/14	109	£13.67m

ACNI does gather data on funded organisations that deliver work in Ireland. We were provided with summary data on activity delivered by core funded organisations between 2017/18 and 2019/20 in Ireland. In this three-year period, 52 ACNI-funded organisations delivered 1773 activities in Ireland, at around 171 unique venues per year.

Over 90% of the activities were performances or participatory events, with the remainder being festivals, exhibitions or broadcasts. Activities were delivered across a range of artforms, with visual arts being notably low. Activity levels appear to have increased significantly over the three years for which we have data, although the number of venues involved has remained broadly constant.[26]

Sum of Ireland-based activity by year		
	Number of unique venues	Sum of activity delivered
2017/18	173	450
2018/19	166	567
2019/20	173	756
Total	Data not available	1773

Sum of the Ireland-based activity by activity type (2017/18 to 2019/20)	
Broadcast	4
Exhibition	64
Festival	66
Participation	852
Performance	787
Total	1773

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[25] See: http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/publications-documents/Desk-review-of-ACNI-Strategy-Final-Report-AJA-2018.pdf, p. 9.
[26] Data provided by ACNI.

Sum of the Ireland-based activity by primary artform (2017/18 to 2019/20)	
Circus/Street Theatre/Carnival	254
Combined	224
Dance	252
Drama	341
Literature	193
Music	282
Traditional Arts	217
Visual Arts	10
Total	**1773**

Joint Organisational Funding

A number of organisations are jointly funded by Arts Council and Arts Council Northern Ireland. As of May 2019, there were sixteen organisations "operating on an island of Ireland basis …funded by both Councils" (considering funding only from "Strategic and Arts Grant funding programmes… [not] non-recurring funding such as Touring or Projects"). As will be clear, the list is heavily dominated by literature organisations:

- Children's Books Ireland
- Contemporary Music Centre
- Doire Press
- Dublin City Council
- Gallery Press
- Irish Pages
- Irish Traditional Music Archive
- Irish Writers Centre
- Kids' Own Publishing
- Little Island
- New Island
- Photoworks North/Source Magazine
- Poetry Ireland
- Stewart Parker Trust

- Tyrone Guthrie Centre

- Visual Arts Ireland[27]

Funding for Cross-Border Activity

The leading jointly-funded programme that supports cross-border activity is the Touring and Dissemination of Work Scheme, administered by AC. Under this scheme, tours taking place in Northern Ireland are funded by ACNI and those taking place in Ireland are funded by AC. It is important to note that both Arts Councils are statutorily limited to funding their own jurisdictions. The AC set up and administered a scheme in which ACNI was able to participate until the absence of government in Stormont curtailed funding. The AC mentioned in consultation meetings that is willing to reinstate T&D at any time, once ACNI can commit a budget.

The Touring and Dissemination of Work Scheme still funds Northern Irish organisations interested in touring to Ireland. It is open to all individuals or organisations "who are resident or based in the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland." Ineligible activities include those "that are more suited to another award or scheme funded by the Arts Council or operated by other state agencies, such as Culture Ireland – this includes activities that take place outside the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland."[28]

A review of the touring programme was due to be published in 2021 but has not yet been released. The review was not expected to include a focus on the cross-border element of its activity.[29]

Summary data on the programme was provided to us by both AC (for 2014–2017) and ACNI (complete to Round 2 2015 with some advance numbers for 2016). This was not provided in a standardised format:

- AC provided statistics on audiences and performances but not artforms or number of applications originating from North or South

- ACNI provided statistics on artforms and number of applications originating from North or South but not audiences or performances.

Per a communication from AC, "The data provided by [Arts Council] was drawn from report forms completed by recipients of funding of the T&D Scheme." We understand that neither Arts Council specifically aims to gather data on cross-border activity and/or cooperation. As can be seen from the statistics below:

- The proportion of funding contributed by North and South has generally been roughly proportionate to the number of performances in each jurisdiction

- The number of funded tours has varied greatly, from 9 in 2014 to 31 in 2016, with a parallel variation in the number of artists employed.

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[27] The Arts Council of Northern Ireland and The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon, Meeting 22 May 2019: Joint Funding.
[28] ACNI, *Touring and Dissemination of Work Scheme Guidelines for Applicants 2022*.
[29] Communication from Arts Council received 19 May 2021.

Touring and Dissemination Work Scheme, data provided by Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon

Year	No. of tours funded:	N/S	Investment: split AC/ ACNI	No. of venues: split N/S	No. of Performances: split N/S	Audience (paying): split N/S	Audience (non-paying): split N/S	No. of Artists Employed: split N/S
2014	9	NI	€121,427.00	19	31	5,103	4,204	Figures not split
		Ireland	€142,973.00	44	84	17,059	8,587	Figures not split
TOTAL			**€264,400.00**	**63**	**115**	**22,162**	**12,791**	**95**
2015	19	NI	€135,415.00	32	53	3,429	1,075	Figures not split
		Ireland	€306,394.00	110	182	12,449	2,725	Figures not split
TOTAL			**€441,809.00**	**142**	**235**	**15,878**	**3,800**	**209**
2016	31	NI	€192,687.00	45	120	4,118	4,727	Figures not split
		Ireland	€736,336.00	150	335	16,791	16,972	Figures not split
TOTAL			**€929,023.00**	**195**	**455**	**20,909**	**21,699**	**436**
2017	20	NI	€175,537.00	31	70	2784	377	Figures not split
		Ireland	€446,734.00	112	160	16,222	2,180	Figures not split
TOTAL			**€622,271.00**	**143**	**230**	**19,006**	**2,557**	**261**

Since 2020, the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media has operated a funding strand called *Co-operation with Northern Ireland Scheme*. It is a small-scale scheme seeking to support projects promoting the following areas:

- cooperation and joint initiatives between organisations and institutions on a North/South basis

- cultural tourism on a North/South basis

- the provision of cultural outreach programmes on a North/South basis

The scheme aims to provide "(...) funding support for projects which seek to enhance, celebrate or commemorate the artistic, cultural, musical, film or heritage of the Island of Ireland on a North/South basis". Projects were eligible to receive up to €15,000 in funding support. So far, two rounds have supported 25 different projects since 2020. The projects were managed by the following organisations:

	2020	2021
1	BEAM	ADAPT
2	Children's Books Ireland	Cinemagic
3	Cinemagic	Dance Ireland
4	Donegal Museum County	Éabhlóid
5	Fighting Words	GAA Museum
6	Irish Heritage Trust	Gallery of Photography
7	Irish Museums Association (IMA)	Irish Heritage Trust
8	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council	Irish Museums Association (IMA)
9	NYAH Cavan	Music Generation Laois
10	Pop Up Projects	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council
11	Smashing Times	NYAH Cavan
12	St Mary's Primary School (Armagh)	The Irish Military Heritage Foundation
13	n/a only 12 funded in 2020	The Little Museum of Dublin
Total Funding	**€134,095**	**€147,000**

International

One of the major sources of funding for cross-border cultural activity is the PEACE programme, formally known as the Special Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland. This was initiated by the European Commission in 1994.

Since its inception, there have been four PEACE Programmes (PEACE I, II, III and IV) running in conjunction with the European Commission's seven-year budget cycle and support of EU funding programmes. According to the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), which administers the PEACE programme:

> almost €2.3 billon has been allocated to fund 22,500 projects across the eligible area of Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. Of this, €1.6 billion came from the European Commission, and the remaining €0.7 billion, from the government of Ireland and the Northern Ireland Executive.[30]

As will be obvious, the PEACE programme is large, complex and far-reaching. A review of the programme by Bush and Houston points out that ''over 21,000 projects were funded in PEACE I and PEACE II alone. The variety, complexity *and volume* of projects, programmes, and consequent publications [is] considerable.''[31]

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[30] See: https://www.peaceplatform.seupb.eu/en/
[31] See: https://www.seupb.eu/sites/default/files/styles/file_entity_browser_thumbnail/public/PEACE%20Content%20Type/9668%20%20SEUPB%20The%20Story%20of%20Peace%20D9.pdf

To limit the scope of work, we have focused on funding provided to the cultural sector under the previous two PEACE programmes (PEACE III running from 2007 – 2013 and PEACE IV running from 2014 – 2020), as well as looking at the opportunities and challenges for the future PEACE Plus programme.

The scope of the PEACE III programme was Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland (Counties Louth, Monaghan, Cavan, Leitrim, Sligo and Donegal). It funded six arts-led or arts-related projects out of a total of 215 projects, receiving nearly €330m in funding. (Note that it is sometimes a question of judgement whether a particular project is arts related.) Furthermore, it is important to note that some Local Authority Action Plans funded under PEACE III provided funding for smaller arts-related projects that were financed through the PEACE programme.

One of the six arts-led or arts-related projects under PEACE III was led by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. ACNI received nearly €1.7m in grant funding from PEACE III for its Reimagining Communities Programme, *Building Peace Through the Arts.* On top of this, ACNI committed to contribute just over £700,000 of its own funding to the programme, as did the International Fund for Ireland. The programme followed a pilot project, "Re-Imagining Communities" (2006–9) delivered by ACNI.

Building Peace Through the Arts aimed to "support communities to tackle sectarianism and racism through a creative engagement process leading to the creation of public art", and funded 53 projects in Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Irish republic. Interestingly, the programme found it easier to attract applicants from Northern Ireland than from the border counties in the Irish republic. An evaluation of the programme found that the bureaucracy of the application and administration process was off-putting to potential applicants in Ireland; it also found that there was "comparatively lower community capacity/desire to discuss community divisions in the South" and "a perception that these areas are less affected by sectarianism/racism than NI."[32]

There were significant delivery challenges around project timelines, administration and artist capacity to deal with complex and divisive community issues. Out of a total projected budget of £3,127,508, only £2,014,944 was actually spent.[33] An interviewee from Northern Ireland who had been involved with PEACE III commented that:

> We heard all the time in Belfast that the money is not getting through to the grassroots groups. It's not getting through to the very small community groups. It's not getting through to the small neighbourhood groups who really need that: the most vulnerable, the most affected communities.

Given that even the relatively experienced ACNI faced challenges with administration, it is not surprising that smaller arts and community organisations would have found participation a major barrier.

PEACE IV (2014 to 2020) was a €270m programme that funded 96 projects, of which 8 can be classed as arts-led or arts-related. These included:

• Nerve Centre (L/Derry): "a regional change programme of cultural engagement, creativity and skills development… [to] interrogate and re-imagine consortium collections through the creative arts and digital technologies."

• Cavan County Council: funding for three projects including a new arts centre and a new space in the museum for "commemoration, shared education programmes and a large exhibition/workshop/event space."

• Leitrim County Council: seven projects including "support for Ethnic communities – activities to include arts, culture, sports and common interests."

• Mid and East Antrim Borough Council: two projects, one being an "Inter-Generational project engaging artists/ performers from the Borough to 'animate' urban 'contested spaces' through arts/music/theatre performance at 20 locations across the Borough."

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[32] Evaluation of the Building Peace through the Arts: Re-Imaging Communities Programme, p. 16
[33] Evaluation, 78–80

Although PEACE funding is very significant in the context of funded cross-border cooperation, it is worth noting that funding for the arts and culture is small compared to the overall scale of the programmes. Looking at PEACE IV, the arts-led or arts-related projects represented around €13.5m of total funding – and this includes a €5.2m capital project to develop a creative hub in Bushmills, County Antrim.[34] Putting the capital project to one side, arts projects represented only around 3% of total PEACE IV funding.

Preparations are currently underway for PEACE Plus, which is planned for 2021–2027. Despite Brexit, the UK government will continue to support the programme, with a contribution of around £730m to PEACE Plus.[35] It is uncertain whether funding will continue beyond this.

A consultation on the shape of the programme took place during 2021. In addition to considering potential actions and wider goals around economic, social and environmental development, the consultation proposed delivery mechanisms aimed at simplifying the burden of administration.[36] Apart from the PEACE programme, European funding involving an element of cross-border cooperation is limited. For instance, we analysed all Creative Europe grants with a call year between 2014 and 2020 and found only two[37] that involved project partners in both Ireland and Northern Ireland:

• Future Artist-Maker Labs: "an exciting international programme of art-making, exhibition, training, and networking" (€200,000). Coordinator Nerve Centre in L/Derry; project partners in Ireland (University of Limerick) and Spain.

• *Gladiators: A Different World*: a film about the Giro d'Italia (€57,560). Coordinator in Lithuania; project partners in Ireland (Dublin), Northern Ireland (L/Derry), Belgium, Latvia and Italy.

A new database of PEACE programmes has now been made available, offering richer data on all funded organisations as well as lead partners. Due to the timing, we have not been able to analyse this database as part of the report but suggest that this is a worthwhile avenue for further research.[38]

The Cultural Economy

The Taoiseach's Shared Island initiative launched in October 2020[39] and is outlined in the *Programme for Government*. In Budget 2021, the government established the Shared Island Fund, committing €500m in capital funding out to 2025, ring-fenced for investment in collaborative North/South projects to deliver key cross-border initiatives and objectives as set out in the *Programme for Government*. The funding has been made available for five years to research ways of "deepening North-South cooperation" and building a "shared island agenda" to "support the building of consensus around a shared future on the island". As Martina Lawless, Research Professor at the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and Adjunct Professor at Trinity College Dublin (2021) notes, amongst the core objectives of the Shared Island initiative is the enhanced development of the all-island economy. The importance of pre-existing economic relations, particularly in the border counties, has also been emphasised in recent dialogue given the uncertainty surrounding Brexit.

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[34] Although it is worth emphasising that similar capital projects have an important role to play in supporting cross-border cooperation. As an interviewee from Northern Ireland who had been involved in PEACE III commented, "if you don't have shared [neutral] spaces for people to come together, it's very difficult for art to be truly cooperative and truly cross-community."
[35] See: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-announces-majority-contribution-to-peace-plus-funding
[36] EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL COOPERATION 2021–2027: Preparing the EU PEACE PLUS Programme for the 2021 – 2027 period: Stakeholder Engagement Survey Summary of Responses (July 2020).
[37] Between 2014 and 2022, a total of 4,453 projects funded under Creative Europe (all strands including Media which can be funding for individual companies). Out of these there were 44 projects that included partners from ROI and UK; out of these, there were only 2 that were ROI and NI.
[38] See: https://www.peaceplatform.seupb.eu/en/
[39] See: https://merrionstreet.ie/en/newsroom/speeches/online_address_by_an_taoiseach_on_shared_island.html
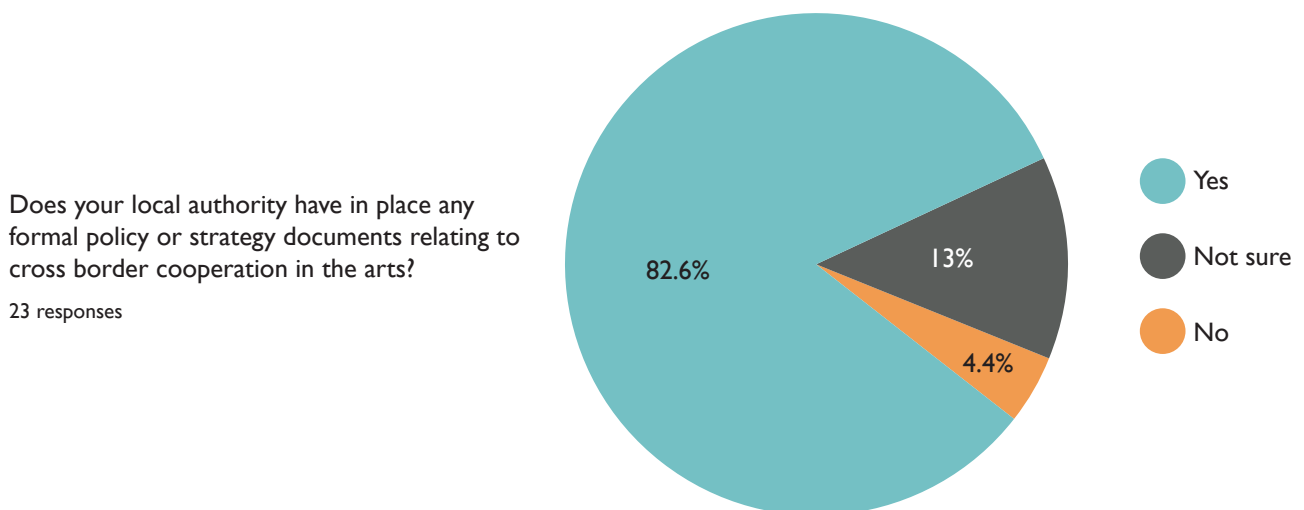
Within the context of this report, developing the cultural economy (cultural and creative industries, broadly understood) of the island of Ireland is a key focus. The reality of the research to date is that it highlights how little we know about the mechanisms, both structural and interpersonal, that support the cultural and creative networks across the island of Ireland. Whilst the focus of this report is the publicly subsidised arts, that sector operates in a much broader ecology. As is clear in the findings discussed below, the development of cross-border cooperation in the arts is inextricably linked to wider considerations of the cultural economy of the island of Ireland.
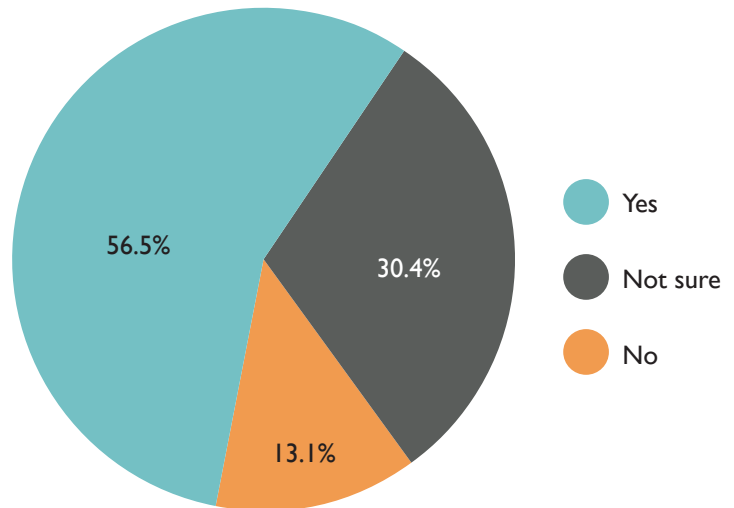
Local

Local Authorities

As part of the mapping exercise at a local level, an online survey was issued to all 42 local authorities on the island of Ireland. Local Authority Arts Officers and Arts Managers received a targeted online survey to enquire about cross-border cooperation in the arts at a local authority level. Furthermore, a short presentation was given to the regular meeting of Local Authority Arts Managers in Northern Ireland. Overall, 23 responses to the survey were received from 19 different local authorities.

The difficulty of engaging with this cohort was indicative of the wider difficulties experienced in the project due to Covid-19. The engagement took place over an extended period and eventually concluded with 19 local authorities responding to the online survey. There is a desire to conduct more cross-border cooperation within this cohort, indicative of the perceived value in an all-island focus, and we recommend re-engagement with Arts Officers/Managers in Local Authorities. A qualitative approach in the form of a focus group might be more beneficial to engage with respondents and understand barriers for cooperation and opportunities for further engagement. The majority of respondents have indicated that they would be willing to participate in follow up interviews or focus groups. While the sample is small and perhaps inconclusive, the data from survey responses can provide indicators of cross-border cooperation or lack thereof. The data received indeed indicates that there is a lack of formal policy and strategy documents in place for cross-border cooperation in the arts across local authorities.

Does your local authority have in place any formal policy or strategy documents relating to cross border cooperation in the arts?

23 responses


- Yes — 82.6%
- Not sure — 13%
- No — 4.4%

Self-evidently, the absence of strategic frameworks and/or formal policies for cross-border cooperation in the arts in Ireland, North and South, may be the reason for the lack of cooperation in this area across jurisdictions.

Does your local authority currently engage in cross border cooperation in the arts?

23 responses

- Yes — 56.5%
- Not sure — 30.4%
- No — 13.1%

Compared to whether local authorities have previously engaged in cross-border cooperation, there was a bigger cohort that has worked cross border (56.5%) rather than working cross border now (30.4%).

Has your local authority previously engaged in cross border cooperation in the arts?

23 responses

- Yes — 26.1%
- Not sure — 56.5%
- No — 17.4%
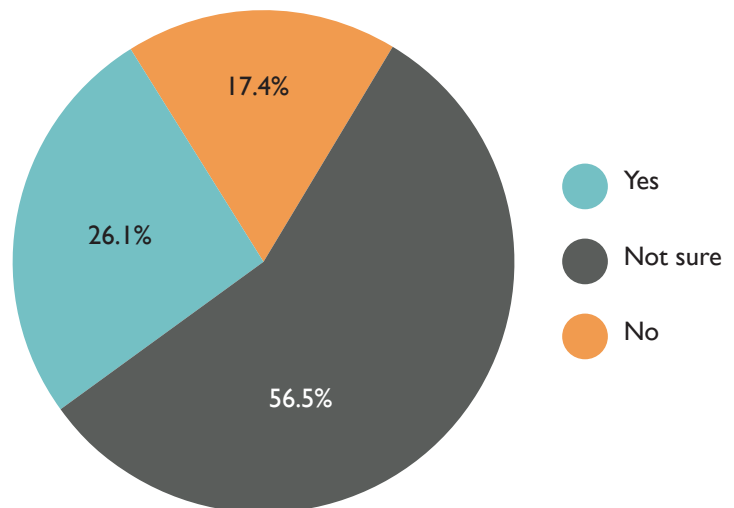
It is difficult to identify the reason why there was more cross-border collaboration previously than is currently taking place but the main platform where collaboration took place was between local authorities. When asked why there may be an absence of any activity in cross-border cooperation, most respondents indicated that it is due to it not being a strategic priority (39%). However, other reasons for the lack of cross-border cooperation were pragmatic, such as distance (geographic location of the local authority), lack of suitable projects, partners and funding provisions. One respondent noted that cooperation seems to be strongest in border counties. It appears that co-related funding to facilitate cross-border collaborations is more readily available to direct 'border counties' through local authorities. It is however difficult to verify this through responses received. Another respondent stated that,

> If there was funding available to encourage projects our council would consider developing opportunities.
> (Local Authority)

Cooperation does however happen informally in the context of,

> collaborative arts projects utilising both the talents and skills of creatives North and South of the border. (Local Authority)

It appears that talent crosses the border more easily than institutions as one local authority highlighted that while cross-border opportunities do not come across their desk, they often work with talent cross border in traditional arts and music. The limited responses received indicated a genuine desire for further cooperation and,

> welcome the opportunity to develop networks/engagement with Arts organisations and local authorities in NI. A first step would be to look at developing opportunities for developing connections with key organisations and agencies in NI This might be done by organising some familiarisation events etc. (Local Authority)

Another representative from a local authority highlighted that they were,

> keen to make links - particularly around touring visual art and theatre/music opportunities.

In terms of future engagement, there is a Local Authority Arts Officers Association in Ireland and a group of local authority arts managers in Northern Ireland. These groupings provide a readymade forum to facilitate knowledge exchange and cooperation opportunities going forward.

Findings

Cross-Border Cooperation in the Arts (CBCA) Development Model

We begin with the CBCA Development Model. The model is an attempt to develop a typology of the reasons, drivers and rationales for cross-border cooperation in the arts that were expressed to us during the research. The model functions as a useful heuristic to both summarise and interrogate some of the rationales as to 'why you would engage in cross-border cultural cooperation.'

There are, of course, important nuances missing within the model, given that it is a reductive attempt to categorise a large and detailed debate. For example, economic rationales don't necessarily align with the goals of artform development. Equally, if the aspiration of cross-border cooperation in the arts were simply a minor increase in provision of theatre in Northern Ireland, then one must ask where there is evidence of a provision deficit, and where there is evidence of demand.

It is important to acknowledge that the definition of civic development used in this document operates in a limited fashion and is not intended to encompass or frame the vast array of activity that happens within this discourse. Equally, we apply the concept of civic development (and relate this to broader ideas of reconciliation) in order to articulate findings from the research within the context of the brief provided to us by the Royal Irish Academy.

'Civic Development' is used here as a catch-all for the broader functions of arts activity within civic society, and the civic role performed by arts organisations. The role of the arts in civic society is a topic that has seen significant focus in recent years (see e.g., the UK's Creative People and Places scheme, and the semi-equivalent Creative Places scheme in Ireland).[1] We adopt the term mindful of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's *Inquiry into the Civic Role of Arts Organisations,*[2] which has done much to advance the debate on how arts organisations need to articulate the value they bring to local communities.

Needless to say, discussion of civic development within the cultural sector on the island of Ireland is a complex point that requires further discussion, and we would like to make it clear that both Arts Councils explicitly address elements of civic development across a broad range of policy papers and public discourse.

For some, 'civic development' is the natural or logical outcome of any arts activity, such that "the other four are subservient" (Consultant). For others, rationales are more simply around the acts of creation and performance: "Sharing our stories with northern audiences" (Arts Sector).

Equally, there is nothing wrong with developing a policy and delivering funding for cross-border cooperation in the arts purely to generate additional revenue for funded clients. After all, "The majority of artists want to make a living and to make art" (Consultant). The question of whether artists and arts organisations should also accept – or be co-opted into – a broader social remit or responsibility is not for us to try to answer here.

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[1] See: https://www.artscouncil.ie/Arts-in-Ireland/Strategic-development/Creative-Places/#:~:text=The%20new%20Creative%20Places%20include,to%20develop%20their%20Creative%20Places
[2] See: https://gulbenkian.pt/uk-branch/our-work/the-civic-role-of-arts-organisations/

CBCA Development Model

Area	Focus	Benefits
Professional Development	*Artist and Arts Manager*	*Skills & knowledge transfer, networking, exchange of best practice*
Artform Development	*Theatre, music, dance and other art forms*	*New work, artform hybridity, genre exploration*
Audience Development	*Attendance, engagement, participation*	*Different and new audiences – diversity, scale, frequency*
Economic Development	*Revenue generation, economies of scale*	*Income, efficiency savings, shared risk*
Civic Development	*Social realm, public sphere*	*Empathy, mutual understanding, better relations within and between traditions*

Learning From/Impact of Brexit and Covid-19

The research and findings of this report were shaped by both Brexit and the limitations created by the Covid-19 pandemic. As there is a considerable amount of work being done in both academia and the arts sector on these topics[3] we do not go into any great level of detail here. However, our interviews with stakeholders and arts organisations highlighted that these themes (particularly Brexit) are seen as having an impact on cross-border cooperation, and so to avoid addressing them would mean ignoring an elephant in the room when it comes to experiences 'on the ground'. Indeed, it was difficult for many interviewees to see past the impact of both on policy and practice when discussing barriers to cooperation.

Brexit

On 31 December 2020, freedom of movement between the United Kingdom and the European Union ended with Brexit. In August 2021 the ACNI published a report setting out the key changes in legislation affecting creative workers and arts organisations travelling or trading with EU counterparts. *EU Withdrawal: Key Changes and Implications for Northern Ireland-based Arts Organisations*[4] considers the impact of new rules and the steps that are currently being taken at a local and national level to support the continued mobility of artists internationally:

The implications for the arts sector in Northern Ireland are complex, multi-dimensional, and evolving. The report by the AC outlines the legislative requirements regarding:

- Visas and working in the EU for NI creatives
- EU creatives travelling to the UK
- EU creatives working in the UK
- Movement of goods (Carnets and Cabotage)
- Social Security protocols.

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[3] See for example: https://www.assemblyresearchmatters.org/2021/03/18/how-is-brexit-changing-things-for-our-artists/
[4] Arts Council of Northern Ireland 'EU Withdrawal: Key Legislations for Northern Ireland-based Arts Organisations' (2021)

Key issues for the arts include:

- loss of major sources of funding and income

- additional costs of taking work to the EU

- fewer performing opportunities for emerging and existing artists

- loss of trans-national partnerships

- shortening of tours

- difficulties sourcing materials

- Northern Ireland becoming unattractive to visiting artists.

The ACNI report details support and information that is available to the arts sector to help artists and organisations navigate the continuing uncertainty that surrounds the international mobility of artists. One of those key resources is *Arts Infopoint UK* (http://artsinfopointuk.com/), established by the four UK national arts development agencies, who work with EU partners to provide UK artists with practical advice on such issues as visas, work permits and residencies. It hosts country-specific webinars, signposts resources and researches the challenges to artist mobility.

Those we interviewed who were involved with touring were particularly pessimistic about the impact of Brexit. One interviewee stated that:

> Brexit became – and will be in the coming years – such a wedge, it'll drive such a wedge between companies and audiences in Northern Ireland and Ireland. It's such a major obstacle to exchange, touring and working cross border, that I don't know whether or how you overcome its impact… It's all very well to argue for the cultural value of exchange. But at what cost, if that cost is trying to overcome the obstacles that have been determinately put in place as a result of Brexit? How much time, effort and investment do you put into achieving better exchange when the legal framework… is working against you? (Arts Sector)

Although the interviewee stated that while "large organisations and large festivals and experienced production companies can overcome those difficulties", they saw much of the rest of the theatre sector as standing back and waiting to achieve greater clarity. A particular issue was knowledge around cross-border logistics and administrative requirements, which they described as a "quagmire". They felt that the Arts Council lacked the capacity to offer guidance: "it's so broad… it's got to go all the way through to customs and transport and VAT and payments and pension arrangements" (Arts Sector).

Such pessimism may seem counter-intuitive given that – in theory at least – Brexit should not cause undue complications for cross-border cooperation given the Protocol. Nonetheless, there was a clear sentiment within our conversations that the administrative burden of Brexit was set to be a key factor in future considerations of cross-border cooperation. One clear complication was that described below – travel for non-Irish/British citizens.

Several interviewees highlighted particular inequities faced by artists and arts-sector workers holding third-party passports, whether these were resident on the island of Ireland or elsewhere. Stated one head of a sector body:

> [For a] Northern Irish artist or Republic of Ireland artist with an Irish passport or a UK passport, freedom of movement and freedom of expression [is] still pretty much intact. But stepping outside… is definitely causing issues… For example, we had one Persian-passport-carrying artist based in Paris, who we wanted both in Belfast and in Dublin. It became a complete national nightmare. We had to actually say, okay, it has to happen in one [city] or the other… It does become an issue when you start dealing with diversity and inclusion. It suddenly becomes quite an exclusionary thing because the border isn't permeable for everyone.

A recent online panel discussion, 'Living and working as an artist in post-Brexit Ireland'[5] noted that the complications of Brexit (both current and potential) compound pre-existing disadvantages such as needing to access Great Britain by plane, the inability for artists to make a living solely within NI, an inadequate transport infrastructure, and the obvious funding disparities between North and South.

Covid-19

Covid-19 was highlighted by some interviewees as a barrier to cross-border cooperation. At its most basic level, this was attributed to organisations being focused on their own survival and unable to devote resources and attention to broader goals. Other factors that were mentioned included:

- Difficulties travelling during periods of travel restriction when rules were different on each side of the border

- Divergences between the experience and outlook of arts organisations in Northern Ireland and Ireland because of different access to support during the pandemic

- Covid-19 accelerating existing trends, particularly around a shift from in-person touring to streaming and digital performance.

There is a significant amount of work ongoing globally (see e.g., work from NESTA's Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre)[6] to monitor and measure the impact of Covid-19 and it would be unwise at this stage to try and second-guess the mid- to long-term impact. Nonetheless, as was noted in the research, "there is recognition that post Covid we need to increase cooperation" (Arts Council).

On 29 July 2021 the AC published a report that showed the outcomes and impacts of its response to the Covid-19 crisis since March 2020.[7] The report also includes the findings of a new survey of artists and arts workers, which shows:

- Almost half (48%) of professional artists have considered abandoning their career in the arts over the last year, with lack of income and financial pressures being cited by 70% of those as the main reason for considering this.

- 48% of artists say the financial impact of the Covid crisis has been "severe".

- Differences emerged between artforms, with those involved in music reporting more severe impacts in 2021 than in 2020, reflecting the ongoing impact of Covid restrictions on the arts.

- The percentage of income for professional artists from artistic activities has decreased substantially since March 2020.

Eight priority areas have been identified by the AC for additional funding in 2022, with a strategic plan for significant regional impact in areas aligned with their current policies:

1. Development of employment hubs for artists through the regional arts centre network

2. Establishment of new workspaces for artists countrywide

3. Expansion of Creative Places programme which will see concentrated investment in 10 new urban and rural communities

4. Stabilisation funding to ensure core infrastructure remains intact

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[5] See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GoXemMcm7us.
Panellists were Eugene Downes (Cultural Director, DFA), Sara Greavu (Curator of Visual Arts at Project Arts Centre), Dylan Quinn (Dance Artist), Jan Carson (Author) and Colin Murphy (Playwright, Screenwriter & Columnist)
[6] See: https://www.pec.ac.uk/
[7] See: https://www.artscouncil.ie/News/Arts-Council-Publishes-New-Report-on-the-Impact-of-the-Covid-Crisis-_-Budget-Submission-for-2022/. The Arts Council carried out the impact assessment survey with individual artists in May and June 2021.

5. Increased investment in diversity and inclusion initiatives to ensure participation by people from all backgrounds6. Increased investment in festivals in every county

6. Focus on climate adaptation and sustainability

7. Focus on digitalisation to ensure sector is adequately resourced to operate in changed landscape (€2m)

Whilst there is significant potential for cross-border/all-island activity in initiatives such as the proposed employment hubs and workspaces for artists and the aim to be more diverse and inclusive, at the time of writing such a focus is absent and doubtless mitigated by the need to secure and stabilise the sector.

Absence of a Policy Framework

There are "signposts" and "nods towards" cross-border cooperation in a range of macro-level policy documents, and the Good Friday Agreement itself was both a "motivating protocol" (Arts Sector) and "a path to reconciliation" (Academic). The Agreement (1998 NI Act, Declaration of Support) states that,

> We are committed to partnership, equality and mutual respect as the basis of relationships within Northern Ireland, between North and South, and between these islands.

Annex B, Article 3 (Irish Government Draft Legislation to Amend the Constitution, adopted as part of the revised Article 3 of the Irish Constitution) articulates the conditions for cross-border cooperation in the arts when it states,

> It is the firm will of the Irish nation, in harmony and friendship, to unite all the people who share the territory of the island of Ireland, in all the diversity of their identities and traditions.

In a similar vein, the *New Decade, New Approach* (2020, p. 15) agreement articulates the significance of cultural identity and expression when voicing,

> the need to respect the freedom of all persons in Northern Ireland to choose, affirm, maintain and develop their national and cultural identity and to celebrate and express that identity.

The North South Ministerial Council[8] ostensibly has formal scope for cross-border cooperation in the arts but is not a principal channel for arts and culture aside from consideration of language.

Cooperation with Northern Ireland Scheme

During 2020 the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media operated a scheme of funding support for projects that seek to enhance, celebrate or commemorate the artistic, cultural, musical, film or heritage of the Island of Ireland on a North-South basis. Projects funded under this scheme needed to be creative and innovative with examples of projects which could be considered for funding under the scheme requested to promote:

- cooperation and joint initiatives between organisations and institutions on a North/South basis

- cultural tourism on a North/South basis

- the provision of cultural outreach programmes on a North/South basis

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[8] The North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) is a body established under the Good Friday Agreement to co-ordinate activity and exercise certain governmental powers across the whole island of Ireland and is responsible for twelve policy areas. Six of these areas are the responsibility of corresponding North/South Implementation Bodies.

Such schemes might be said to operate on a "philosophical rather than geographical" (Govt/NDPB) definition of Irish and adopt "deliberately broad" (Govt/NDPB) definitional terms in their calls and terms. In this sense, *policy exists in practice*. Whilst schemes such as 'Cooperation with Northern Ireland' follow the AC approach of eschewing evaluation in favour of monitoring, there is nonetheless a clear desire to see such schemes and their outputs as having "a developmental role" (Govt/NDPB).

Arts Councils

Collaboration between the two Arts Councils takes various forms, from formally structured funds to "semi-formal" partnership in such processes as annual plenary sessions. Prior to Brexit and Covid-19, there was a structured process of engagement at both Council and Executive level between the two Arts Councils. There are numerous practical reasons for this: "cultural collaboration"; "sharing excellence", "earned income" (AC). In terms of a single, or stand-alone document however, policy has "never been codified in that way" (AC). Rather, it is mentioned in strategic frameworks and even then, done so mindful of political considerations and the fact that – as expressed in interviews – certain ministers view cross-border cooperation in the arts in an east-west rather than north-south light. Importantly, cross-border cooperation "is not a term we [ACNI] use". ACNI's preference for 'north-south cooperation' was noted by AC staff.

Looking back, ACNI's (2015) *Annual Report & Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2015* (pp. 21–22) records that,

> The North South Touring and Dissemination of Work programme, introduced at the tail-end of 2013–14, gained real momentum in 2014–15. To date 25 organisations have received funding support through the scheme. The programme is the result of a partnership between the two arts councils on the island and is intended to incentivise touring and redress a noted decline in recent years in artistic work being performed and exhibited on both sides of the border.

ACNI see North/South working as a "fundamental part" (ACNI) of their 2025–30 strategy and articulate clear benefits around knowledge exchange, shared learning and collaborative partnerships. It is worth noting the discrepancy in strategic viewpoints between the two Arts Councils, given that whilst the strategic development team at ACNI see cross-border cooperation in the arts as a strategic part of their role, their counterparts in Dublin do not.

It was noted in interviews that whilst there was a wide range of dialogue between the Arts Councils – at Executive, Board, Working Group and Artform Officer levels – the criticism of some of this work being "courtesy politics" (Arts Sector) was "a fair enough point" (ACNI) and there was not a sufficient and sustained level of activity "to hang our coats on" (ACNI).

By their own account, the Arts Council in Dublin have tended to focus on economies of scale as "there's a logic to supporting arts organisations in that way". They have said their staff were "not surprised" by our finding of an absence of any policy framework as "that sort of policy is given to us" and as cross-border cooperation in the arts "has not been given to us as something we need to address" it is not something the AC have directly focussed on. In relation to the CBCA Development Model devised during the project (see p. 35), and the area of 'civic development' as a focus or intended outcome for cross-border cooperation, the AC were emphatic: "Absolutely not. Wasn't the intention". There was an acknowledgement of "a general desire to work on an all-island basis" (Arts Council), and that the modest funding jointly allocated to cross-border cooperation in the arts through touring could be reinstated with "administrative will".

Drivers of Cross-Border Cooperation in the Arts

A need to differentiate the political from the practical in this discussion was evident in the interviews. A number of drivers can be identified as having influenced cross-border cooperation in the arts to date:

- Broadly articulated and interpreted political sentiments in macro-level documents

- Availability and framing of EU funding

- Partnership and what might be termed / 'common sense' working (particularly in the border counties)

- Personal relationships between artists and arts administrators

- Natural mobility of some artforms (e.g., touring theatre, bands)

An overall framework or stand-alone policy document for cross-border cooperation in the arts is, however, absent.

It was noted by one AC member of staff that it was "not felt to be necessary" (Arts Council) to have a policy on cross-border cooperation in the arts. Whilst from an internal, administrative perspective such a statement may be correct, there is nonetheless a sense from the sector that an absence of policy is indicative of other concerns. The absence of a policy framework was seen as "political, it is ideological, it is complacency" (Arts Sector) and at least partly the cause of a "lack of a driving impetus" (Arts Sector) behind cross-border cooperation in the arts.

Opinion within the sector was divided between the view there was a political desire to "do something together" (Arts Sector) but no requirement as such, and a view that without top-down pressure, little serious strategic intent would ever evolve.

> So sometimes it feels like it's more of a guerrilla tactic than an all-Ireland national framework. And artists are working within that construct, doing the best that they can, but I have to believe that through focus groups such as this, we could have a better inflection point and more clarity around where the issues are, and put a focus on how to manage that going forward. (Arts Sector)

> They do mention a lot 'cross border', they do mention a lot 'North/South collaboration'. But it is always very much based on projects. Funding is very much based on short term funding of projects, or programmes, whereas it's not looking at what really – for us anyway – needs to happen, which is about strengthening long-term partnerships (Arts Sector)

> [...] , it would be nice to have a bit more of an all-Ireland approach. And it really just means the two primary funding agents coming together in a more overt gesture because if national mobility is something that's of importance to any arts, funding government agency, which it should be, there's a responsibility there to reflect that in the potential of touring awards, and collaboration on that. (Arts Sector)

The political stasis in Northern Ireland, and its small population scale relative to areas of England meant there was a sense of "noise" and "intent" (Arts Sector) towards cross-border cooperation in the arts, but little substantive action made many question why a substantive policy was not in place:

> Policy drives action and creates the context for funding and that will drive the conversation forward (Consultant)

Commentary from the arts sector revealed that a more joined-up approach is required. At present it feels as though there are "individual schemes going through individual bureaucracies" (Arts Sector) without any cohesive and longitudinal approach. The ad hoc nature of the approach from funding bodies was deemed to be stifling artistic ambition. There was a noted sense of shock at "how little there was policy-wise or action-wise" and "how little was happening" (Arts Sector) in the border areas in terms of cultural activity.

Aside from the challenges posed by the different developmental stages of arts strategy in the two jurisdictions, a number of critical differences between the foundational principals that inform their respective arts policies were also identified. It was noted that arts policy in Northern Ireland was inherently political and that this was not the case with the arts policy in Ireland. In what might be considered the corollary of this observation it was noted that an understanding of the civic role of the arts was evident in arts policy in Northern Ireland while largely absent from arts policy in Ireland.

Politicisation of art policy

The Arts Councils are each public bodies with a remit for a defined geographical territory. A note must be made of the legal and governance framework that underpins some of this debate. The AC articulated this as restrictive, stating that they "can't pay for artistic events outside their jurisdiction". It is the AC's view that its cross-border touring scheme was "deliberately set up in a way that didn't attract 'grant reactive' behaviour" but rather "just extended tours". In the North specifically, this makes the topic of cross-border cooperation in the arts politically difficult, in that there needs to be "a good and clear rationale" (ACNI). Moreover, any policy document would need to be signed off by the respective ministers. The development of formal policy would therefore be "prone to becoming a political football" (Academic). The loss of EU membership for Northern Ireland was felt to be significant, with "the EU space" (Academic) seen as intrinsically important for cross-border cooperation per se.

Cross-border cooperation in the arts operates at an informal concordat administrative level without codified formalisation. There is no single document that one can point to on cross-border cooperation in the arts. It was suggested that this approach made such activity "easier to protect from political visibility and whim" (Govt/NDPB), with the near universal recognition across the research data, that "culture can become so politicised so easily". Systems of arts subsidy are inevitably embedded in a political context. Were cross-border cooperation in the arts flagged as a formal endeavour, it would be easier to block. The risk associated with any kind of formalised policy on cross-border cooperation in the arts is "it escalates into a political decision" (ACNI) and thereby creates more problems than it solves. The absence of policy may also explain what many in the sector saw as "a lack of ambition to build scale" (Arts Sector), which had resulted in a number of projects needing to look beyond the island of Ireland for additional funding.

There was an acknowledgement that the politics of the island made the practicalities of collaboration challenging. Equally, there was a sense that "no-one wants to take on the job of looking at strategic issues" (Arts Sector). Yet as Heenan (2021a) states in her work on healthcare collaboration,[9] "While the lack of priority and absence of strategic planning may be partly explained by the political sensitivities of all-island working, particularly for unionists, it does not fully explain why the potential benefits and barriers have not been the focus of substantial research attention".

Heenan's research on health expresses the view that "if there was robust evidence to illustrate the mutual benefits to support collaboration, then political reticence would eventually subside or 'melt away'". The issue here, as stated elsewhere in this report, is that cooperation in the arts is seen by many politicians to be problematic on two key fronts: first, that judgements are subjective (as opposed to the objectivity of science/health) and second that, in both jurisdictions, the arts/culture are closely entwined with ideas of political and national identity and are therefore not seen as neutral.

The absence of any formal strategy or policy document from either Arts Council may be seen to contribute to limitations in capacity building, iterative development of collaborative infrastructure and the unlocking of economies and efficiencies that might assist in the development of an all-island cultural economy. As we note in the 'Recommendations' section, such an all-island cultural economy is already in existence in the wider cultural industries – for example, Aiken Promotions have offices in Belfast and Dublin. It is also arguable that such models are more effective in delivering some of the aims of peace and reconciliation if these are defined in terms of audience mobility and engagement in culture.

There is an absence of policy documents and guiding frameworks for cross-border cooperation in the arts. Whether by accident, ignorance or design, there is a strong suggestion that the absence of policy assists in the absence of political opposition. Future research therefore needs to address the question of policy impact in a more nuanced way than previously envisaged. The apparent absence of strategic intent may then be a tactic in the form of "silent policy" (ACNI).

Of course, the perceived absence of a formal cultural policy framework should not be read as implying a lack of care – "It doesn't mean it's not important" (Arts Council). Cultural policy manifests in different ways. As Jeremy Ahearne (2009)

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[9] Heenan, 'Cross-Border collaboration healthcare', p. 415

has written, a useful way of thinking about this is in terms of 'implicit' and 'explicit' cultural policy. We can draw a contrast between policies explicitly labelled cultural, such as those pursued by ministries of culture around the world, and 'implicit' cultural policy, which refers to those more powerful forms of institutional action that are intended to shape cultural attitudes and habits over given territories, but which are not expressly described as 'cultural'. Both Arts Councils, like their counterparts elsewhere, previously produced a number of individual artform policies, but have moved to a more over-arching strategic framework of multi-year strategic plans that encompass all activity and offset the need for individual policies. Moreover, given the divergent understandings of cultural value across the two jurisdictions, "to draw lines of consistency North-South would be quite difficult" (Arts Council).

Were a formal policy to be developed (or even to be considered desirable), the impact of Covid-19 and the resultant advocacy campaigns from the sector have anecdotally been seen to affect the scope of definitions at play in the arts sector. Terms such as 'arts', 'culture', 'cultural industries' and 'creative industries' are often used interchangeably in a way that suggests either little desire or perceived need to use the terms with clarity when discussing e.g., economic impact or labour markets.

North/South Ambivalence

> From personal experience and just things I've seen there is a real sort of antipathy… to the North. They see it as a problem child. I mean, it's an old and cliched analogy now, but the North is really like a child from divorced parents and neither parent wants the child. You know that Ireland and Britain they just see it as a problem. They don't want to have to deal with this. (Arts Sector)

Some (strongly worded) comments were made during the course of the research around the differing perspectives of those living in Northern Ireland and Ireland. Many comments reflected Pollak's (2017) phrasing of 'Northern intransigence and southern indifference' whilst others referred to the discrepancy in attitudes of ambivalence and indifference as "cultural racism" (Arts Sector). We do not include use the term 'cultural racism' lightly. The term is nonetheless indicative of a range of feelings articulated throughout the research process that spoke to both shifting and entrenched attitudes. This was especially apparent amongst those with direct experience of working and living on both sides of the border.

Changes in perceptions of 'the other', whether that be looking from the South to the North or vice versa, were notably influenced by the sense that there had been a significant shift in prosperity in the South, whilst the North remained locked into political in-fighting that resulted in cultural and economic stagnation. Such "massive cultural differences" (Arts Sector) between North and South were seen to contribute to perceptions of antipathy and indifference.

> There is a '32 county' approach from some Arts Officers in the Arts Council. It's always 6 counties in Northern Ireland (Arts Sector)

The limited extent of cultural interaction, of the "cultural consciousness of each other" (Arts Sector) was a cause for concern and there was a sense that a key rationale for cross-border cooperation in the arts was (or should be) to foster "cultural exchange and togetherness" (Arts Sector). However, ambivalence between the North and South was a continual theme:

> You become very aware very quickly, that they don't care in the South about the North, they really don't, they've moved on, I don't blame them in a way (Arts Sector).

Of course, programming work across the border frequently carries risk, as one participant raised:

> I was advised by a number of people don't do it because nobody is interested (Arts Sector).

An important distinction to make here is between arts and culture that crosses a border to be staged in Ireland but may originate from any country, whether North or South, and what was frequently termed 'Irish culture' (culture made by, for and about Ireland). A direct causal connection was made between 'Irish culture' and wider discussion around the process "to enhance cooperation, connection and mutual understanding on the island" (SIU). Specific reference was made, for example, to a 1994 performance of *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme* attended by David Ervine at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin (the Frank McGuinness play was first staged on the Peacock Stage of the Abbey Theatre on 18 February 1985).

It is clear from the dialogue with the arts sector that the artistic work produced North and South is felt to be two "very different product[s]" (Arts Sector). Such that,

> There is a very distinct sense of identity that can be so parochial. (Arts Sector)

Knowledge of artistic product was considered to vary (often considerably) between Northern Ireland and Ireland. As one respondent indicated, "Brand awareness is a big issue". With marketing budgets already limited, developing awareness in what was often considered to be a new market felt difficult and often out of reach. Other, more subtle differences were also apparent. There were numerous comments from those who had undertaken cross-border work around how audiences would respond differently to work on each side of the border, particularly in terms of sense of humour as "audiences would laugh in different places" (Consultant) and there were "nuanced differences of interpretation" (Arts Sector).

In this regard and considering identity as a multi-scalar phenomenon (homeplace – town – county – nation), it was suggested that national-level developments (in terms of the formation of policy) may not be the best approach. In particular, it cannot be assumed that there is a general desire/need for cross-border cooperation in the arts from the general public. This raises the issue of "the point of maturity in this process" (Arts Sector), as described by one interviewee, and where this is in terms of articulating the differing sensibilities and then moving beyond them.

Cultural Value & Evaluation

> One thing that's most beautiful about the south of Ireland is it values the arts and culture much more highly than the culture we live in. And I don't mean just Northern Ireland. I mean it in GB, although Scotland has it to a degree so it must be something Celtic about it, although it's not here. I don't know why. (Arts Sector)

The question of cultural value rose to prominence again after the millennium in the context of an apparent crisis of legitimacy (Holden, 2004, 2006) in the arts sector. Whilst contemporary debates can be traced back to the rise of the economic impact agenda in the 1980s (see Myerscough, 1988), the contemporary cultural value debate has predominantly taken place in the UK, albeit with international dimensions (Meyrick et al., 2018). There has been no equivalent debate on cultural value within contemporary cultural policy discourse in Ireland. However, the pandemic has raised urgent questions about the social role and impact of the arts and culture worldwide and given the debate a new urgency.

An understanding of cultural value enables exploration of how narratives of cultural policy development, structures of funding and both professional and institutional understandings determine how concepts are interpreted and understood on the ground. Findings from interviews show how differing approaches North and South reveal questions of cultural value to be subjective, political, and highly contextualised:

> One of their greatest economic assets is the culture of Ireland. And the Irish brand is its culture, its literature and music. And its place and all those things. And it was the only thing that Ireland had for a long time to export. (Arts Sector)

> The political-cultural contexts are very different on either side of the border. (Arts Sector)

A cross-cutting theme emerging from the data was that of cultural value – specifically, how culture is understood as a resource, source of pride, social tool, tourism vehicle and an integral element of national identity. Despite the ostensibly similar administrative models for the disbursement of arts subsidy across the two jurisdictions, the differences in understanding and articulating cultural value are pronounced. At a material level, this is most pronounced in the discrepancies in funding levels provided to the two Arts Councils, with ACNI receiving considerably from the government purse (see *Overview of the Funded Arts Sector*).

In a context where artforms may be marginalised for sectarian reasons (for example where the practice of the artform is aligned with a particular political identity), it is important to find a shared language to express cultural value (and to support cultural expression) within respective statutory limits. The absence of any formal evaluation to understand the value of cross-border cooperation in the arts was indicative of a wider absence of broader methodological approaches to understanding the impact and value of culture.

The question of cultural value is therefore paramount in this context. Public value being attached to anniversaries had created "an arbitrary lens" (Arts Sector) through which to understand the value of culture and such perceptions needed to be rebalanced. Assumptions of cultural value – whether in a national or cross-border cooperation context – should be empirically grounded, not situated in narratives of national identity and wishful thinking.

> It's a very Northern Ireland thing. The issue is that the government doesn't see the civic value [of the arts] (Arts Sector)

Between Northern Ireland and Ireland, "The social and cultural context in which the arts sits is so very different" (ACNI). This divergence of approach affects both how cultural value is understood, but also how culture is evaluated. There was, overwhelmingly, felt to be too much focus on outputs from funded activity, whether at an EU, national or local level and not enough focus on longer-term outcomes.

> I don't see how you can separate out or relegate civic development (Arts Sector)

> Who is responsible for measuring impact? Nobody will take responsibility for outcomes. It's about what you can measure, not impact (Arts Sector)

There was an acknowledgment that for the North/South Touring Scheme, evaluation was perceived by the sector to be "extra work" (ACNI) and that the mandatory 'end of project' reports from funded clients were "limited in their effectiveness" (ACNI) for a variety of reasons, notably "a reluctance to criticise" (ACNI) and the fact that data collected was limited to quantitative outputs. In terms of taking a qualitative focus, this was felt to be "something you'd need to review as part of a study" (Arts Council) and so was shelved. It was further acknowledged that even the available quantitative data was "never really analysed" (Arts Council). This avowedly administrative focus is the result of seeing cross-border cooperation in the arts as "less to do with political aspirations [and] more about supporting the arts" (Arts Council).

Psychogeography of the Border

> Can you ever be 'far away' from the border in Ireland given the scale of the land mass? (Arts Sector)

Psychogeography is an exploration of urban environments that emphasises playfulness and 'drifting'. It has links to the Letterist and Situationist Internationals, revolutionary groups influenced by Marxist and anarchist theory, and the attitudes and methods of Dadaists and Surrealists. In 1955, Guy Debord[10] defined psychogeography as "the study of the precise

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[10] See: http://library.nothingness.org/articles/SI/en/display/2

laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals.'' As a practice and theory, psychogeography has influenced a wide range of artists, activists and academics.

There is an important distinction between the Irish border as lived experience and the border as political object. This is the difference between the everyday/quotidian impacts of the border (differing currencies, prices, legislation) and the geopolitical impact of a divided island. For many, ''the divide is geopolitical, not cultural'' (Govt/NDPB) and can therefore be understood as an issue of Irish/UK politics and a legacy of colonialism.

The absence of strategic and policy documents discussed above has also resulted in some ambiguity as to the geographic scope (or limitations) of cross-border cooperation in the arts. At times, the terms 'cross border' and 'all-island' were used interchangeably. For some, 'cross border' was implicitly or explicitly understood to refer to a definable geographic region. This issue is compounded by the focus of EU funding schemes which (in contradistinction to e.g., the testimony of the *Across and In-Between* project) are focussed on the 'cross-border region' as if that were the locus of the intersectional problems associated with peace and reconciliation. In part as an attempt to question this focus, we undertook the survey of Local Authority Arts Officers to establish an initial empirical base for assessing whether proximity to the border was a determinant in engagement with cross-border cooperation activities.

Among interviewees 'cross-border cooperation' was not a popular term and few recognised it as describing their own activity across the border, preferring to describe work as ''North-South'', ''all-island'' or ''all-Ireland''. One head of a sector body with offices in Northern Ireland and Ireland commented that ''we don't see ourselves as cross border but as an all-Ireland body.'' At the AC itself, ''generally we tend to talk in terms of North/South rather than *cross-border cooperation*.''[11] It seems likely that the choice between these various terms will reflect political, ethnic and/or geographical concerns, but these cannot be fully explored based on our primary research. One interviewee from Northern Ireland commented on the idea that some people preferred to say 'North-South' or 'all-Ireland' rather than 'cross-border', saying, ''those are *Irish Times* readers you're talking about, I think!'' (Arts Sector).

Of course, 'cross-border cooperation' does not exist as a single phenomenon. We can distinguish between at least three different phenomena of cooperation, each involving its own characteristics and outlook:

- Between neighbours in the borderlands (encouraged by particular geographies such as Inishowen peninsula as the hinterland of L/Derry)
- Capital-to-capital between Dublin and Belfast
- Between two places in different parts of the island without obvious geographical or political links

As is evident in the participant testimony from the *Across and In Between* project (see Case Studies), those living near the border have a relatively unencumbered, 360-degree view of the land, whereas the psychogeography of a divided island means that distance from the border can involve (or evoke) a captive mentality. Proximity to the border is not necessarily a helpful guide to one's understanding of how the border functions. The 'view' of the border from Belfast is very different to that from Ballyconnell. Equally, for those working in and around L/Derry and Donegal, ''the border doesn't exist'' (Arts Sector) and there is ''a fluidity of cross-border traffic'' (Arts Sector).

For some interviewees, contemplating the dynamic of North-South relations inevitably implied envisioning West (Ireland)/ East (Great Britain) relationships as well. A view was expressed that North-South relations could not be taken out of the embedded UK/EU context – and in some cases this implied an awareness that many of the important decisions affecting the island of Ireland were being taken somewhere outside it.

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[11] Email communication received from AC 19 May 2021.

The psychogeography of the island also meant that interviewees perceived internal borders where none formally existed. This was an articulation of how both funders and audiences map the island in different ways. For example, 'west of the Bann'[12] was a recurrent phrase. The river is often used as a symbolic dividing line between the east and west of Northern Ireland, along religious, economic and political lines, with areas 'west of the Bann' seen as having less investment and government spending.

When thinking of the psychogeography of the border, it is also worth being mindful that there are instances wherein the border is not an issue at all. For example, there are examples of artistic dialogue and collaboration where the driver is one of mutual artistic interest, *irrespective of geographical location*. Such collaboration should be differentiated from activity "where the existence of cross-border collaboration is a conscious intentionality of the work" (Govt/NDPB).

Many interviewees put forward the idea (or ideal) that art doesn't have borders – that purely artist-to-artist or artist-to-artwork activity did not 'see' the border – and therefore that it only existed in other spheres of engagement such as politics, education or employment. One commented:

> the visual arts are probably quite fluid, I would almost say borderless. I sometimes don't know where artists are from or where they work… Ireland is a small island, and the market is small, and an artist will participate in projects across the country… And so there is a collaborative nature due to the size of the island. (Arts Sector)

Such comments about the visual arts run counter to earlier discussions around e.g., the impact of Brexit on the theatre sector and suggest that how the border functions may vary across different artforms. We discuss this in the Recommendations section.

The director of a sector body argued that "the meaningful collaboration, the everyday one that actually embeds us in both communities, is happening and invisible" (Arts Sector). They viewed it as "crass" to explicitly label artists from Northern Ireland as such – and explicitly reduce them to that aspect of their identity.

Several interviewees discussed how talking about the border – or describing activity explicitly as 'cross border' – tended to inscribe or reinforce its presence. An artist commented that:

> The word 'cross border' in some ways doesn't seem to apply to the border, because [when] you live within ten miles of the border, then your life is cross border, almost every aspect of it. (Arts Sector)

While they acknowledged that the term 'cross border' made sense when discussing Dublin-to-Belfast touring (for example), they argued that it would be more productive for the border region itself to view it as a territory in its own right, as a centre and a culturally productive space. "Maybe we need a border laureate" (Arts Sector), they concluded.

Whilst there was overall agreement that an all-island, as opposed to 'border counties' approach was beneficial to both this study and to further arts development, there was also concern at the obvious downside of "Ulster-British resistance" to a united island and the perception that any such policy developments would be seen as "a Trojan Horse" (Academic).

Cross Border or off-island?

> [In Ireland], everything is about London and New York (Consultant).

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[12] The River Bann (from Irish: An Bhanna, meaning "the goddess"; Ulster-Scots: Bann Wattèr) is one of the longest rivers in Northern Ireland.

When considering borders – and the crossing of borders for work – the point was frequently made that there were other, potentially more beneficial and rewarding borders to be crossed than the one dividing the island of Ireland. References to England and Scotland predominated, though wider European horizons also featured in discussion with the sector. There is a sense in which the "natural pathways" (Arts Sector) for organisations in NI to engage in cross-border cooperation in the arts are to look to the UK. Equally, co-commissioning of work was often done on an international basis. The ability to plan long-term is a recurring theme in the subsidised cultural sector, and this issue is also reflected in an organisation's ability to incorporate cross-border cooperation in the arts into their organisational mission, such that cross-border cooperation moves "from being ad hoc to being an ambition" (Arts Sector).

There was a consensus in one focus group that there is more financial support available for touring to other parts of the UK or to continental Europe than to bring a show to the Irish republic, such that:

> It's more cost effective to tour to London or continental Europe than to the south (Arts Sector)

Economic concerns are often paramount. There was an open acknowledgement that organisations could (and would) lose money by undertaking collaborative projects, and also that it was often easier to both tour to and host from other countries than it was to engage in cross-border cooperation in Ireland. For some artforms, "production cooperation is a necessity" (Arts Sector) and enables economies of scale to be established, which make productions financially viable. The 'necessity' of cooperation is also a concern for those artforms where the labour market is limited. For example, where the level of skill, training or expertise required of a performer is such that the number of possible candidates is limited.

Resource Disparity

> If NI wasn't our home, we wouldn't be doing this work on the basis of the support we get (Arts Sector)

The resource disparity between Northern Ireland and Ireland at a departmental, Arts Council and local council level was a constant theme in the research. The disparity of resources at the disposal of the two Arts Councils was noted many times. This created an imbalance that added a further layer of complexity to cross-border collaborations. The emotive issue was summed up by one NI arts organisation as feeling like "the poor cousins" (Arts Sector). Such funding disparity between both jurisdictions and between the nations of the UK is indicative of "serious resource challenges" (ACNI) in Northern Ireland, which inevitably manifest as ecological differences between artforms on the island.

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland's *Response to the NI Executive Consultation on the 2021–22 Draft Budget*[13] demonstrates the extent of underinvestment in the arts in Northern Ireland by giving spending comparisons with other regions of the United Kingdom and in Ireland. Analysis based on 2020/21 budgets shows the stark non-proportionality in per capita Exchequer spend. Northern Ireland has the lowest levels of per capita government spending on the arts, and the disparity of funding continues to grow.

Ireland	£28.52
Wales	£10.41
Northern Ireland	£5.38

ACNI calculate that for Northern Ireland to reach the same level of exchequer investment per head of population as its closest comparator, Wales, an additional investment of £18.4m would be required over 3 years. The total investment needed over this period would be £50m.

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[13] See: http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/publications-documents/ACNI-Executive-Budget-Response-February-2021. pdf?utm_source=NewZapp&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=24_Aug_2020

Having worked closely with the five Arts Councils (or equivalents) in Britain and Ireland, one arts organisation observed that they are all at different stages of evolution in terms of arts policy. This creates difficulty when the Councils come together to collaborate. In the case of ACNI, the challenge is possibly greater as this organisation is seen to be poorly resourced and working constantly under duress and appears to have a "lack of strategy" (Arts Sector).

Resource is not only a financial issue. Austerity reduces "the capacity in the sector to think more broadly about cooperation" (Arts Sector). In a context where the rationale is survival, wider considerations border on the irrelevant. This results in the sense that "Arts are not leading the conversation, funding is leading the conversation" (Arts Sector) and that "Relationship building should be a 'need to have' but in the current operational climate it falls into the 'nice to have'" (Arts Sector).

Resource allocation is a key issue on the island of Ireland due to the urban/rural divide, and the clustering of populations in a small number of cities. According to a 2019 CSO report[14], between 2011 and 2016, Ireland's population increased by 3.6% to 4.69 million people. Of this, 2.9 million live in urban areas with just over one in three of the population in cities having a third-level degree or higher in 2016. What this means for the arts is that "the economics don't work outside the bigger places" (Arts Sector).

Note should also be made of the mundane, but practically important effects of limited resources on planning cycles, funding timelines and durations (single year or project funding as against the relative stability of multi-year funding); the "rhythms of booking" (Arts Sector) that materially affect the ability of organisations in Northern Ireland and Ireland to cooperate with one another, irrespective of intent or ambition. In a similar vein, variances in receiving venues across the touring infrastructure (for example, whether the venue was Arts Council or Local Authority funded, or both) would affect their capacity to offer guarantees to touring companies.

Transport Infrastructure

Improved public transport infrastructure would be a start, but I guess that's not part of this discussion (Arts Sector)

Often, debates on policy and/or politics come down to resources and practicality. Transport infrastructure is one such example. Yet even in a seemingly straightforward discussion on roads, "It is hard to talk about this and not be political" (Arts Sector). It is a common perception that the transport infrastructure on the island of Ireland, particularly in the North, is guided less by evidence of need or socio-economic development and more by political ideology. Equally, infrastructure is tied to prosperity, the North/South balance of which has shifted over time. One interviewee, discussing touring cross-border in the 1990s, fondly remembered "they had lovely roads in the North" (Arts Sector).

Comments were made about both the lack of transport infrastructure on the island (including both road and rail) and the associated costs – both financial and time – involved in navigating the lack of infrastructure when touring:

Bus services in Belfast aren't that wonderful, but in rural areas, I imagine that's non-existent. So unless you have a car, unless you have access to your own transport it's probably very difficult to get there… Don't forget that… cross-border travel was not easy because they closed certain roads off. So when there were roads that people were genuinely not used to going down, and when your mental map is, 'can't go across that road', even though it might be open now for the last 15 years, you tend to use the routes that you've always used. (Arts Sector)

It is worth noting that the SIU is looking at this issue and that in terms of cross-border transport: work is ongoing to further the development of cross-border roads and greenways, such as the A5 corridor (between Counties Dublin and L/Derry), the 'Ulster Canal' greenway (from Counties Fermanagh to Armagh, going through Co. Monaghan), the Narrow Water Bridge across Carlingford Lough (between Counties Louth and Co Down), and the Sligo-Enniskillen greenway.

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[14] See: https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-urli/urbanandrurallifeinireland2019/

A feasibility study is being developed into a railway being extended "from Cork, Dublin, Belfast and on to Derry", the GFA committee have been told.[15]

Rural Arts Provision

Whilst we were not able to explore this issue in detail, it is clear that many stakeholders considered the border region as rural, and rural arts as being under-funded and under-prioritised. There are questions of ambition and practicalities of resource here. For example, the question was asked, "Why can't you see world-class work on your doorstep?" (Arts Sector) whilst at the same time it was acknowledged that rural arts were frequently "invisible" and that "Belfast is a euphemism for Northern Ireland" (Arts Sector), such that little is felt to be of significance outside the North's main city.

Attempts to engage with tourism bodies (to offset a lack of arts funding) were found to be "bureaucratically very tough" (Arts Sector) and whilst the buzzword of 'placemaking' was useful in attracting interest (and occasionally money), "there was no real belief in supporting these areas", "no impetus or drive" to support work in the border region, whilst in terms of frameworks and infrastructure, there was "virtually none at all" (Arts Sector).

Structures, Mechanisms and Platforms for Exchange

A lot of it is not knowing (Arts Sector)

It is clear that more formal structures and mechanisms to facilitate cross-border cooperation in the arts would be welcomed within the sector. Knowledge and information exchange, sharing of learning, and identifying opportunities for creatives would assist in network development for those without pre-existing contacts. There was a sense that those in the sector who had networks (e.g., from a prior job role on the other side of the border) were much better placed to engage in cross-border cooperation. Indeed, for those arts organisations not currently engaged in cross-border cooperation in the arts, there is a distinct sense that those who are engaged, are so by dint of established and pre-existing relationships. It was clear that an individual's own connections were a key resource, and that without such connections finding partners and networks was a big challenge.

"We need a joined-up approach that puts the artist first" (Arts Sector). Such an approach should develop from the "the grassroots" and would thereby be indicative of a "shifting of power" (Arts Sector) from funder to artist. Structural issues such as the lack of a formal, well-developed touring network/circuit and opportunities to acquire knowledge of artistic product coming out of the two regions were identified as important. Issues of engagement can often be issues of integration, and it was observed that different artforms have different structural models that would affect this. For example, it was suggested that a significant portion of work in both publishing and visual arts was more integrated with London than Belfast, due to London being the location of a disproportionately large number of publishing houses and galleries. Ambivalence can also be an issue when the structural challenges are of a different ordinance. For example, large-scale performing arts productions can frequently demand significant structural alignment in order to make them economically feasible. Such economies of scale "bring questions of desire to the fore" (Govt/NDPB).

The administrative strain of dealing with two different funding jurisdictions was a recurring topic. Among all-Ireland remit organisations a common theme was the administrative challenge of sustaining relations with two Arts Councils that are working on different schedules, best encapsulated as there being "a distinct lack of synchronicity" (Arts Sector). A number of these organisations also noted that their funding from Northern Ireland was less consistent, coming from different bodies/funding streams and/or being discontinued. Specific elements of this "administrative burden" (Arts Sector) apply to different areas for activity. For example, one organisation cited different visa requirements and the foreign entertainers'

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[15] For more information on SIU see: https://www.thejournal.ie/explainer-shared-island-unit-5375878-Mar2021/

tax rules as factors that discouraged cross-border touring by independent touring operators. For another organisation that has established partners in Northern Ireland, the barrier to collaboration is screening rights. It is indicative of the complexity of this territory that one organisation spoke about its struggle to collaborate with itself across the border:

> I do think it will be helpful to have a forum for all-Ireland, cultural organisations to have a way of interlinking and a way of working together in partnership that's more obvious and more meaningful, where we know who to talk to, and each organisation …I'm not sure who to talk to, to try and organise things. [A forum would be] extraordinarily resource heavy (Arts Sector).

A recurrent theme among all the organisations was the importance of collaborative cross-border partners, be they resource organisations (e.g., Moving on Music, which was mentioned several times) or individual venues (arts centres, theatres and museums).

> Established relationships are key [and] your own connections are important, but finding partners and a network is a big challenge (Arts Sector).

The need was emphasised for more networking opportunities for arts organisations to meet and discover common areas where projects and relationships could be developed. In terms of touring networks and circuits, one respondent felt there was "no support" (Arts Sector) for developing partnerships. The amount of time and resources necessary to cultivate networks and find out what's happening artistically across borders was cited as a major barrier to cooperation:

> I do spend and have spent a lot of my time as I come in cultivating relationships with artists and arts organisations in Northern Ireland, because I feel actually that we don't have enough interaction. When it comes to the island, it tends to be more from the south… I'm very aware that we're a North-South organisation. But we're not part of running North South discussions, I'm not on any roundtable discussions. So you're doing your best to cultivate people hoping that they will come. I'd love to get involved in some discussions like that (Arts Sector)

Topics suggested for future development included: sharing communications; splitting costs; learning/knowledge-exchange; identifying opportunities for creatives; and signposting opportunities. Plus, "more generally, we're neighbours! Would like to know more about what's going on!" (Arts Sector).

The views gathered from the arts sector during the course of this research were somewhat disparate and it would require further detailed research before any firm conclusions could be drawn. For example, whilst a number of participants identified an absence of networks and the capacity of others to both develop work and access grant funding based on prior personal connections, others signposted a range of supports available to the sector. As an example, whilst not cross-border in terms of scope, Theatre Forum list (among others) the following networks on their site:[16]

NASC Theatre Network

NASC is an Irish word meaning link or relationship and describes the linking of venues to develop touring programmes.

NOMAD Theatre Network

NOMAD was set up in January 2006 to further the development of the performing arts in the North midlands region and to extend the parameters of regional, national and international performances available to venues and their audiences.

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[16] See: https://theatreforum.ie/touring/

Strollers Theatre Network

The Strollers Network is Ireland's largest consortium of Art Centres.

Theatre Forum themselves work with their Northern Ireland counterpart – Theatre and Dance NI – and have co-produced conferences in the past. It may simply be the case that networks exist in a patchwork way, subject to a combination of artform, resource and the desire/capacity/ability of those working in the sector to collaborate across a range of scales of activity.

A key point in relation to resource disparity is that there are a good number of bodies working on an all-island basis (see e.g., Visual Arts Ireland in the Case Study section of this report) and a range of organisations which have, and work in tandem with, their counterparts North and South (e.g., Theatre Forum and Theatre and Dance NI). In this sense, calls from the sector in our research for more signposting, information and guidance on opportunities for cross-border collaboration may be indicative of either a lack of awareness of the work of these organisations, or resource constraints that prevent these organisations from promoting their work more widely.

It is entirely possible that what the research is highlighting is both a range of understanding and awareness of the supports available, and a discrepancy in the range of support offered across artforms. Whether the existing support structures across artforms are in some way comparable to the level of subsidy and/or professional activity in each field – such that those artforms which receive the most subsidy have the most funding for support – is a topic for further research.

The Data Gap

This section of the report is short, but that should not lessen its importance to our overall findings. There are only so many ways to state that a key theme across both the research data and our desk research was a shortfall in the data available to inform a deep understanding of the current and potential benefits of cross-border collaboration in the arts sector. The research did, however, highlight some important nuance.

In terms of the information provided to us from the two Arts Councils, the data provided on North-South touring was limited. Furthermore, as it was provided in summary form, it is impossible to conclude whether the data gathered was different or whether it's simply that the selection made was different. However, it's clear that there has been no specific attempt to standardise or share data collection between the two Arts Councils – possibly in the case of high-level data on North-South touring as it is a jointly administered programme, but even here things are unclear and future researchers would have to ask for more information. Finally, there is no evidence that either Arts Council is monitoring or evaluating cross-border activity – as opposed to 'extended touring' – in any way.

There was also commentary on the divergence in reporting structures between the two Arts Councils. ACNI was felt to be more exacting in terms of the reporting required to both access and report back on funding. This is a direct result of the variances in cultural value discussed above. Ever since the introduction of New Public Management into the UK public sector (and thereby arts sector), there has been an increasing focus on economy, efficiency and effectiveness, which many have argued has led to an instrumentalisation of the subsidised arts (see Hadley and Gray, 2017). In a North-South context – and particularly from the perspective of artists and arts organisations – the data (audit) requirements of the AC appear more light touch and therefore "easier" (Arts Sector).

The lack of comparable data is partly explained by the difference in jurisdiction and the different audit regimes: "We operate in quite different policy contexts… with different priorities" (ACNI). Moreover, it is clear that – in light of the political context referred to above in the discussion on cultural value – ACNI, in particular, "need data as part of our

evidence [to Government] from an AFS perspective").[17] Because of audit pressures, robust information on both funding systems is available, but the focus is on quantitative outputs, not qualitative outcomes and is much more frequently on production than on consumption (audience experience).

Surprisingly, the AC is "not interested" (Arts Council) in any broader evaluation that might seek to assess connections between the funding of cross-border work and broader social outcomes (what, in the CBCA Development Model, we have called 'civic development').

The key finding here is two-fold. First, that statistics gathered for audit purposes give us a poor picture of how culture enriches us. Second, that purely economic rationales for cross-border (North/South) cooperation in the arts betray a poverty of ambition in understanding how a shared culture might enrich us all.

Mobility & Visibility

Questions and ideas of both 'mobility' and 'visibility' arose in a variety of differing forms and terminologies in the research data. We attempt a broad conceptual outline here, but the topic needs further research.

Mobility – *who is moving cross border and why? Why not have the artists remain where they are and let the audience move?*

There is an abundance of data that shows that audiences for subsidised arts events are almost all likely to live within a 30 (and to a much lesser extent 45) minute drive time of the venue or event. Beyond that distance, and even distances of less, "it's very hard to motivate people to move" (Arts Sector). Interestingly, motivation is felt to be a key driver here, such that audiences wouldn't travel far for an arts event, but "they wouldn't shy away from going up to Derry to do their shopping" (Arts Sector). There are potentially important 'spill over' effects from looking at audience, rather than artist, mobility. Aside from the blunt fact of audiences physically crossing the border, there is "the added benefit of them exploring more than the product they're going to consume" (Arts Sector). Mobility of audiences is a commercial concern for concert promoters of scale, whereas for jointly funded Arts Council schemes, mobility of the artist is paramount:

> It's interesting to look at the promoters. For the last few months, because audience members can travel from Dublin to Belfast and the northern counties in an hour or less. So a lot of the promoters may well look to programme UK-based acts in Belfast, and sell those to an Irish audience. So they will stay and will work around the border. And it'll have no impact on ticket sales. And they will simply position a concert in Belfast or a concert in Dublin, whatever the financial gain and the ease of production is easiest. (Arts Sector).

The already existing cross-border mobility of audiences – which anecdotally happens at significant scale for open air festivals and concerts in Dublin, Slane, Stradbally and further afield – should be the subject of dedicated research. The assertion was made that those travelling North-to-South for such events were part of the "non-aligned 20%", the "inbetweeners" (Academic) in the North who are seen as unencumbered by allegiances forged in political identity. What is seen to be needed, however, was to reach into those communities both damaged by, and still vulnerable to, conflict.

Visibility: *much of the cross-border work funded by Arts Councils is at a particular scale – would fewer but much larger events achieve the desired outcomes?*

Several interviewees articulated the importance of creating a public profile for cross-border collaborations. There was further an acknowledgement that "we have had so few opportunities to develop work of scale and ambition" (ACNI) and that media profile and political support happens more readily at scale. However, there was also sentiment that the public value attached to anniversaries had created a false or unhelpful lens through which to judge large-scale

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[17] ACNI's Annual Funding Survey (AFS), an annual survey of core funded clients.

public events. In terms of national media attention there is recognition that "topicality value" (Arts Sector) determines whether the arts get attention. The political lens via which Northern Ireland is seen means that "NI is always a news story, not an arts story" (Arts Sector). A chronic lack of any independent critical journalism infrastructure within the Northern Ireland media to provide objective, independent reviews of the arts was also felt to be inhibiting credibility, visibility and artistic development.

Audience Focus

"The first thing you need to do is to have contact, then the cooperation will start" (Academic).

Almost exclusively, within the frame of this research project, reconciliation (or what we more broadly call in the CBCA Development Model, 'civic development') was not considered to be a driver or rationale of cross-border cooperation in the arts. There was general agreement that the place of reconciliation in cross-border collaborations was necessarily a by-product of artistic and cultural engagement rather than an aim. Notably, in a discussion of the rationales and design of the joint Arts Council North/South Touring scheme, the idea that activity resulting from this funding scheme was in any way designed to foster such things as mutual understanding was strongly repudiated,

No, not in the slightest. No, no, never... I would keep away from that. Absolutely… it wasn't of interest to me. The political impact, because that's not my role… as a bureaucrat (Arts Council)

As we articulate in the CBCA Development Model above, there are a range of instrumental policy rationales for both undertaking – and increasing the volume of – cross-border cooperation in the arts. However, those rationales – professional, artform, audience and economic development – have little bearing on wider debates such as those emanating from the SIU or DFA's Reconciliation Fund.

It is clear across the research we undertook that in-depth conversations on inequality, class, social mobility and other social justice concerns that are predominant elsewhere[18] have yet to fully permeate sensibilities within sections of the Irish sector, which still cleaves to the Enlightenment idea of 'Great Art'. Part of this thinking was identified as resulting from the need for a shift in the subsidised cultural sector, particularly in Ireland, to "engage meaningfully with those outside the cultural elite" (Arts Sector).

The locus of 'reconciliation' – art, artist or audience?

Where does reconciliation happen? There is a recognition that "audience are where the impact could be made" (Arts Sector) and that the focus of any civic or social development activity (peace and reconciliation; empathy and understanding) should be on transformational experiences within audience members. And yet many of those we consulted are very wary about the idea that cross-border activity necessarily has to be about peace and reconciliation. For them, cross-border activity is more about normalisation and creating a 'borderlessness' that some see as existing in the art world anyway.

Conversely, a "revolutionary approach" (Arts Sector) was called for to address the lack of dynamism and developmental approaches to understanding the potential value and impact of cross-border cooperation in the arts. Old models and old thinking were not helpful. One interviewee articulated the need for a shift from quantitative outputs to "softer outcomes" (Arts Sector) that should be the focus of longitudinal analysis. Such a focus should encompass those geographical areas "locked into identity politics" (Arts Sector).

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[18] See: https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/news/ace-mandate-social-class-reporting-audiences

Outputs or Outcomes?

It seems clear that any future policy for cross-border cooperation in the arts that would seek to align funding for these activities with a broader social development agenda should focus on outcomes, not outputs. That is to say, evidence for civic development cannot be found in 'number of performances', 'income generated' or 'attendance figures', but rather takes place at a personal and/or inter-personal level. Neither should it be assumed that attendance at the arts is, per se, a 'good' or 'transformational' experience. Nor can we ignore the social stratification of cultural consumption.

> The changing of minds and structures is a very slow-moving process… the time it takes to evolve mindsets, given the subtleties involved (Govt/NDPB)

There is then a key issue here – how culture is consumed and experienced, rather than produced and toured. If the rationales for cross-border cooperation in the arts are those of economic and professional developmental imperatives, then the rationales are located within models of cultural production. However, if the wider debate around mutual understanding and reconciliation is pertinent, then a focus on outcomes (rather than outputs) is relevant. In this context, one might assume that a focus on the effect of culture on the audience – rather than the quality of the work per se – would be a concern. There is a fundamental issue at the heart of this debate, which is that of the connection between 'excellent' (or 'great') art and its supposed transformational effects. As Hadley and Gray (2017) outline in their analysis of recent cultural policy developments in Northern Ireland:

> The manner in which this rhetorical exercise takes place is based on the underlying philosophical position of epiphenomenalism: in this case, the claim that instrumental outcomes are a purely secondary effect arising from the intrinsic value of cultural outputs.

As one interviewee wonderfully put it, the purpose of engagement with the arts is for people "to meet themselves as much as they meet each other" (Arts Sector) and that the "colour of the air in daily life" (Arts Sector) is changed by artistic intervention. Nonetheless, there is magical realism at work in the idea that simply by attending a performance every member of the audience is transformed. One might reasonably argue that in this specific context the 'quality' of culture is secondary to whether it can produce a desired effect. As such, if Taylor Swift can create empathy and understanding at a deeper level and greater scale than James Joyce, do we need more *Folklore* and less *Ulysses*?

Seen through the lens of civic development, cross-border cooperation in the arts is not (necessarily) about excellent or great art. It is about human engagement, interaction and understanding. These things are not mutually exclusive, nor are they synonymous. The key issue is not about how and where art is delivered but rather about gathering, exchange and experience. If the purpose of cross-border cooperation in the arts is civic development, then the question of cultural consumption becomes important. That is to say, it becomes vital to understand who is engaging with/participating in the artistic products provided by funding streams to facilitate cross-border cooperation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This report maps and, where sensible, begins to address both empirical questions and longer-term theoretical and/or strategic issues. Without question, "the main obstacle to cross-border cooperation in the arts is political" (Academic). As such the debate is "not really about economics, it's about identity" (Academic) and the importance of culture in the development of political identity. Whilst there is a range of formal, funded and structural mechanisms for cross-border cultural cooperation, it is evident that there is also a significant degree of what Michael Kennedy (2000) called 'quiet' cross-border cooperation. This enables debate to take place in an informal, low-level way and to map a route out of the political arena.

There are a number of different philosophical, political and logistical borders that need to be negotiated when undertaking cross-border collaborations in the arts. Whilst some art and artform practices move effortlessly across the border – in both physical and digital forms – others do not, and the political, social and cultural structures that are in place often do little to assist in this flow. In many cases barriers are created that stymie the enthusiasm of individuals and organisations to build cross-border collaborations.

Cross-border cooperation in the arts appears to lack a guiding policy framework and a driving intent, yet the need to accelerate the process of mutual understanding appears imperative. The lack of a robust, longitudinal empirical base that incorporates good qualitative evidence within which to ground an informed debate remains a key issue.

What, then, is the best (or most appropriate) lens through which to address this question? Brexit, Covid-19, Irish reunification, migration, identity are all legitimate foci. There is both a desire and, we would argue, a need to resist the desire to instrumentalise cross-border cooperation in the arts as a panacea for social ills. We cannot begin to address the complexity and difficulty of these questions unless we develop more sophisticated thinking beyond economic instrumentalism and a limited logic of extending tours. As one arts sector interviewee put it, "that is where the blindness sits" (Arts Sector).

Of course, as is often the case with cultural policy, some of the findings outlined above are not new. In a 2002 review of the North South Touring Scheme,[19] Angela McCloskey identified "improving communication between venues and companies", "outstanding monitoring information" and "audience development" as key recommendations. However, that these recommendations remain an issue is telling.

Recommendations for policy contained in this report are tentative and should be read in the context of the recommendations for future research. Where we felt appropriate, we have reported directly on suggestions made to us during the research.

Recommendations for Policy & Future Research

Strategic Framework for Cross-Border Cultural Cooperation

A Strategic Framework document – developed jointly by both Arts Councils and with departmental level input – would help to address a number of concerns raised within the report, particularly from the arts sector in both Northern Ireland and Ireland. Whilst not a formal policy document, the framework would address issues of intent, purpose and evaluation in the distribution of funding. Moreover, the framework would outline a detailed methodology for the capture of mixed

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[19] See: http://artscouncil-ni.org/news/review-of-the-north-south-touring-scheme

methods (quantitative and qualitative) data for use in evaluation and impact reporting. The Strategic Framework should include a dedicated focus on local arts policy and development.

Policy Recommendation: Develop a Strategic Framework for Cross-Border Cultural Cooperation

Local Authority Arts Officers and Managers

Local government is one important tier in the subsidised arts ecology in both Northern Ireland and Ireland which does not always receive due attention in research studies. From the limited data we were able to gather there appears to be interest in developing further cross-border links, irrespective of geography. There is further valuable work to be done with this cohort, who collectively provide total geographic coverage of the island of Ireland.

Research Recommendation: Engage in-depth with Local Authority Arts Officers and Managers to understand attitudes and behaviours

Different Artform, Different Border

Different artforms have different structural models and therefore encounter different realities when engaging in cross-border work. For some artforms, production cooperation is a practical necessity that enables both significant structural alignment and economies of scale to be established, making productions financially viable. The 'necessity' of cooperation is also a concern for those artforms where the labour market is limited. For example, where the level of skill, training or expertise required of a performer is such that the number of possible candidates is limited. Once productions are planned, issues such as variances in receiving venues across the touring infrastructure (for example, whether the venue is Arts Council or Local Authority funded, or both) affect their capacity to offer financial guarantees. Aligned with this is a range of (evolving) concerns around cross-border logistics and administrative requirements.

Questions also arose within the research around whether frameworks and supports could be put in place whereby on-island collaboration might generate and develop artistic work for off-island opportunities. It is clear from the data that 'cross border' can have multiple meanings and conceptualisations dependent upon whether one works in e.g., publishing or drama, looks to England or Scotland, or has a focus on festivals or touring.

Research Recommendation: Map the administrative and logistical issues that arise for different artforms in undertaking cross-border cooperation to provide an understanding of the scales and ranges of support needed.

Research Recommendation: Explore the dynamic between on-island and off-island opportunities for collaboration and cooperation

Policy Recommendation: Fund identified supports within the context of the Strategic Framework

Mapping the Cultural Economy: Commercial Promoters (Cultural Industries)

Whilst a mapping exercise addressing the totality of the cultural and creative industries would be a very significant undertaking – and was outside the scope of this report – specific elements are felt to be of importance to cross-border cooperation in the arts. Engagement with concert promoters operating on an island-wide basis, such as MCD[20] and Aiken

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[20] MCD Productions is an Irish concert promotion company. Established in 1980, and headquartered in Dún Laoghaire, County Dublin, MCD Productions (as a subsidiary of Live Nation) owns and operates a number of venues including The Olympia, The Gaiety, The Ambassador and The Academy. https://mcd.ie/

Promotions,[21] may shed new light on both methods and models for producing cultural events on a cross-border basis. In particular, this would be useful for understanding how the commercial industry intends to address the administrative problems caused by Brexit. The opportunity to both analyse ticketing data from commercially promoted events, and to compare this data with that from subsidised events, would be invaluable in providing a richer understanding of the cultural ecology on the island and the cross-border traffic created by such activity.

Both companies were approached as part of this research process. The research team attempted to interview staff, but the companies declined the offer due to reduced capacity because of Covid-19. This is understandable as the commercial sector for concert promotion is only slowly opening up following a long spell of restrictions on mass gatherings.

Research Recommendation: Produce an exploratory briefing note that details the future research potential of this business sector (as regards cross-border cooperation). Questions to be addressed should include access to, and comparability of, data.

Policy Recommendation: Map the 'ecology' within which the subsidised arts sector sits, and the current and potential synergies between public and private cultural enterprise.

Policy Recommendation: Establish clear parameters for the use of conceptual categories, so that terms such as 'arts', 'culture', 'cultural industries' and 'creative industries' are used in a consistent and coherent manner.

Structural Supports for Information Sharing and Partnership Working

As was frequently noted in engagement with both local authorities and the arts sector, the opportunity to develop networks and deepen engagement would be broadly welcomed. A first step would be to look at developing opportunities for relationship-building with organisations and agencies on both sides of the border who already have this role within their remit. This might be done by organising familiarisation events and more structured networking opportunities. Knowledge and information exchange and sharing of learning and identifying opportunities for creatives would all assist in network development for those without pre-existing contacts. A key element of this work would be a comparative analysis of the networks, touring consortiums and bodies working on an all-island basis (see e.g., Visual Arts Ireland in the Case Study section of this report). This would include the range of organisations which have, and work in tandem with, counterparts North and South (e.g., Theatre Forum and Theatre and Dance NI). Such work would clarify whether calls from the sector in our research for more signposting, information and guidance on opportunities for cross-border collaboration may be indicative of either a lack of awareness of the work of these organisations, or resource constraints that prevent these organisations from promoting their work more widely.

Research Recommendation: Map existing supports and networks to assess and understand whether there are imbalances of funding and/or provision by artform

Policy Recommendation: Create formal, regular and funded structures and mechanisms to facilitate cross-border cooperation in the arts

Policy Recommendation: Provide direct funding for artistic project development on a cross-border basis

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[21] Aiken Promotions has offices in Belfast and Dublin. The company promotes events from large-scale concerts in venues such as Croke Park, the Aviva Stadium and the RDS, to one-off special event tours taking place in the largest venues across Ireland. https://aikenpromotions.com/

PEACE Funding

Initiated by the European Commission in 1994, the PEACE programme has been one of the major sources of funding for cross-border cultural activity in Northern Ireland and Ireland. There have been four PEACE Programmes (PEACE I, II, III and IV) running in conjunction with the European Commission's seven-year budget cycle and support of EU funding programmes. A new database of PEACE programmes has been made available, offering richer data on all funded organisations as well as lead partners. Due to the timing, we have not been able to analyse this database as part of the report. https://www.peaceplatform.seupb.eu/en/

Research Recommendation: Analyse the new data on the PEACE programme, in the context of the findings from this report (in general) and in relation to recommendations for improved evaluation and data capture (in particular)

Joint funding applications

It was suggested directly during the research that both Arts Councils should partner on a major EU-level funding bid (Horizon2020 was given as an example) in order to move the joint approach by both councils onto a new footing and to engender wider public debate and engagement. The administrative technicalities and viability of such an approach would need to be investigated.

Policy Recommendation: Explore jointly wider collaborative funding opportunities for both Arts Councils

Audience Focus – Baseline and Longitudinal Analysis

Vast quantities of data travel across the border every minute of every day. The materiality/physicality of the border is largely irrelevant to this process, governing only a small part of the existing ecosystem of legal and illegal data exchange via GDPR. While the relative lack of an evidence base overall is important for understanding the subsidised arts and cultural sector in Ireland, the lack of a robust, empirical base for understanding the audience for the subsidised arts is crucial. Both Arts Councils produce data on cultural consumption, but none of that data gathering enables a robust segmentation of cultural activity that is subsidised by the state versus more general 'culture'. Equally, there is no capacity to analyse and assess data longitudinally or in terms of cross-border activity. The implementation of such a data architecture on an all-Ireland basis is neither technologically difficult (models such as Audience Finder and Purple Seven are now used globally), nor would it be prohibitively expensive at a departmental level. Data architecture would provide an organic empirical base for much future research and policy. An all-island data system,[22] funded at a departmental level to ensure it were both free for all arts organisations and not seen to be drawing funding away from clients of either Arts Council, would enable a robust demographic profiling of arts and cultural engagement, and enable that data to be parsed to show audiences for events that are publicly subsidised.

Policy Recommendation: Scope and implement an all-island audience data infrastructure for both Arts Councils.

Cross-Border Cultural Events at Scale

Audience numbers and levels of funding for both Arts Council-funded cross-border activity and DTCAGSM's funding (*Co-operation with Northern Ireland Scheme*) are small and operate at a small-scale. We discussed issues of 'visibility' within the Findings section of the report and reiterate here the frequently voiced potential for large-scale arts events to deliver

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[22] The researchers note a declaration of interest in regard to this recommendation.

"cultural moments" (Arts Sector) for the general public beyond the typical arts audience. There is a perception in the sector that large scale (often open air) events enable the public to have "the conversations that are needed to be had" (Arts Sector) about the big cultural and social issues of the day. Research would be needed to test this assumption and to assess the potential for large-scale events to achieve economies of scale and impact that would warrant such expenditure.

As with so much of the discussion in this report, a key concern regarding the potential of large-scale events is whether the rationale for their staging is considered in terms of outputs or outcomes, and how those outputs or outcomes are quantified. Turner Prize-winning artist Jeremy Deller's project, 'we're here because we're here' (a UK-wide event commissioned by 14-18 NOW, see: https://becausewearehere.co.uk/) was given as an example of a project conceived and delivered at scale and which created a significant degree of public awareness and engagement. One might also look at the forthcoming Unboxed Festival (https://unboxed2022.uk/), which includes large-scale events in Northern Ireland.

The comment was made to us that joint Arts Council funding for cross-border activity should not necessitate touring but could focus explicitly on the border. One suggestion made was for a 'Festival on/of the Border' – to stage a large-scale event that would attract an audience from across the island and at which attendance necessitates crossing the border.

Policy Recommendation: Devise a pilot funding scheme for a small number of events of significant scale which incorporates a rigorous and adequately resourced evaluation scheme

Digital (non-material) cross-border collaboration

With events spaces, theatres and cultural institutions closed or in a state of flux at the time of writing, the pandemic has challenged the sector to find new ways to reach audiences. The last 18 months accelerated a pivot to digital across many organisations in the arts sector but evidence appears mixed as to the extent to which digital platforms have truly 'democratised' the arts. Research that both mapped and explored the challenges and opportunities for cross-border cooperation in a reshaped digital economy would be valuable to assess the potential for cultural exchange whilst also considering such factors as environmental impact. Aligned with such a focus would be a recognition of the onerous bureaucracy associated with working across national boundaries, which was noted as stifling innovation and creativity. Given the potential fluidity and boundary-less nature of digital platforms, there was a belief that such an approach could be an opportunity to facilitate rather than hinder collaboration.

Key to any research or policy development in this area would be a focus on digital access, which can exacerbate pre-existing structural inequalities in cultural engagement/consumption. Research could investigate broader conceptualisations of what is meant by cross-border collaboration in the arts via, for example, shared streaming platforms or online repositories of recorded performance. The implications for funding and impact would also need to be considered for work that might be considered to be 'stateless'.

Policy Recommendation: Produce guidance on the legal, data, technological and other considerations pertaining to digital cross-border cooperation, especially in light of Brexit

Research Recommendation: Map and explore the challenges and opportunities for cross-border cooperation in a reshaped digital economy to assess the potential for cultural exchange (considering environmental impact and 'digital poverty')

Research Recommendation: Investigate broader conceptualisations of what is meant by 'cross-border' collaboration in the arts via, for example, shared streaming platforms or online repositories of recorded performance to devise new models of cultural engagement

Alignment and Duration of Funding

Given the shortfalls, variances, inconsistencies and discrepancies in funding across the two jurisdictions, a mechanism to align North-South support for cross-border cooperation in the arts would be welcomed. Due to variances in governance structures this may need to take place at an inter-departmental level. Such an approach could enable multi-year projects at scale and have mechanisms for longitudinal evaluation built in from the outset. When funding is available for cross-border work it tends to be project-focused. However, our research suggests that the key to effective, sustainable and meaningful cross-border collaborations is through long-term relationships, which funding does not currently support.

Policy Recommendation: Support development of long-term relationships, not merely one-off projects, for funding of cross-border work.

Cultural Value & Evaluation

A broader recognition of the value of both evaluation and qualitative research would be helpful at both an Arts Council and a departmental level, as has been identified in the UK by the AHRC Cultural Value report, and subsequent establishment of the Centre for Cultural Value.[23] The research data gives a strong sense that quantitative data is perceived to be the only 'language' government ministries understand, with one interviewee noting that, "In terms of the Programme for Government, they really only accept quantitative data" (ACNI). A programme of research into audience experience / reception to explore and understand the outcomes from an experience of attendance/participation in cross-border arts would be invaluable, alongside broader data on such issues as motivation to attend and quality of experience.

Research Recommendation: **Examine in detail the question of 'cultural value in Ireland', as this appears as a cross-cutting theme in the report**

Policy Recommendation: Jointly and collaboratively produce evaluation principles to guide and inform how evaluation is carried out and used in the cultural sector

Rural Arts Provision

Irrespective of the level of subsidy involved, arts provision tends to follow market economics where provision is concerned. As such, the majority of large-scale arts provision, clusters of skilled labour and (both subsidised and commercial) touring product tend to congregate in larger urban areas. Rural arts provision has been a long-standing debate in the cultural sector, not least because of the disparity between the contribution to arts subsidy from taxes and the disbursement of that subsidy. The key point in the context of this work, is that there is a strong sense that areas that sit on the border suffer from poor arts infrastructure and provision. The areas of east Tyrone and west Donegal in particular were highlighted by interviewees. Simultaneously, there was frequent reference in the data to the idea that – whilst significant portions of funding were directly targeted at the border counties (particularly at an EU level) – this was not the geographic area that needed the 'transformative' effects of culture in order to enhance what we refer to the in the CBCA Model as 'civic development'. As we discuss in the Findings (see 'Psychogeography of the Border'), it is beneficial to consider cross-border cooperation at an all-island level when considering outcomes such as reconciliation.

Policy Recommendation: Reformulate the idea of cross-border cooperation in the arts at an all-island level, such that the concept extends beyond geography to consider psychogeography

Research Recommendation: **Analyse the data on funding (local/national/international) for cultural activity targeted at/provided to border counties to assess the rationales for such schemes (this work might be undertaken in conjunction with the proposed analysis of the new PEACE data)**

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[23] See: https://www.culturalvalue.org.uk/

Cross-Border Cooperation in the Amateur Arts

Funded and/or subsidised arts and cultural activity represent only a portion of the much wider engagement in 'culture' on the island of Ireland. As is noted above with regard to commercial cultural activity, a lack of data – and an inability to parse existing data to separate out funded/unfunded activity – means that assessments of the scale of activity are difficult. For example, amateur drama in Ireland has two national competition circuits – the 1-Act Festival Circuit and the Full Length/3-Act Festival Circuit – both of which are all-island.[24] We note also that the Arts Council/ An Chomhairle Ealaíon's strategy recognises the distinctive role of amateur arts practice, which makes an important contribution to the vitality of the arts in Ireland, delivering many personal, social and artistic benefits. Based on the conversations and dialogue undertaken for this research, and on research that exists elsewhere, we suspect that most cultural activity is informal, amateur or professional but non-funded, and that this 'invisible' cooperation may be more important for understanding cross-border cooperation and reconciliation than is currently appreciated.

Research Recommendation: Map the scope, scale and networks of amateur arts activity operating on a cross-border basis

Policy Recommendation: Strengthen community networks of artists and arts workers operating on a cross-border basis

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[24] See Drama League of Ireland for more information: https://www.dli.ie/

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Case Studies

Case studies were selected to provide a cross-section of artform and collaborative examples of all-island cooperation, at both a project and organisational level. Selected case studies are as follows:

1. ***Across and In-Between*** – project produced by Cian Smyth funded as part of 14-18 NOW. An example of a project with cross-border living at its heart, resulting in a manifesto about the border.

2. **Arts Across Borders** – organisation specifically producing work along the border. An example of an organisation continuously working across the border over the last ten years and producing festivals and other cross-border projects.

3. **Irish Children's Literature Laureate na nÓg** – initiative of the AC, managed by Children's Books Ireland and supported by ACNI and Department for Children Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. An example of an all-Ireland initiative supported by Arts Council and Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

4. **Poetry Ireland** – poetry resource organisation operating North and South. An example of an organisation working on an all-Ireland basis.

5. **Visual Artists Ireland** – visual arts resource organisation funded by ACNI and AC, operating Ireland North and South. An example of an organisation working on an all-Ireland basis with a representative covering Northern Ireland.

6. **Tyrone Guthrie Centre** – centre providing space for residencies and for encounters from North and South. An example of an organisation promoting cross-border collaboration at their venue and hosting residencies open for artists based North and South

The case studies below summarise the organisation's area of work in cross-border cooperation. Feedback from interviews with case study representatives has been included in the Findings section of the report above.

Across and In-Between

Type of cross-border cooperation: project

Contact: Cian Smyth, Artistic Advisor / Producer / Programmer

Website: https://www.suzannelacy.com/across-and-in-between; https://belfastinternationalartsfestival.com/revisit-across-and-in-between-suzanne-lacy-belfast-international-arts-festival-2018/

Image: Across and In-Between by Suzanne Lacy. Photo by Helen Sloan SMPSP

About

Co-commission by 14-18 NOW: WW1 Centenary Art Commissions and Belfast International Arts Festival and partially supported by the Government of Ireland through the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Reconciliation Fund). Creative collaboration between Suzanne Lacy and Cian Smyth with Helen Sharp and communities in Pettigo, Tullyhommon, Cuilcagh Mountain, Castlesaunderson, Magheraveely, Newtownbutler and surroundings.

Created in collaboration with communities in Ireland from both sides of the border, almost 100 years since the partition of Ireland, *Across and In-Between* explored the profound impact the border has on the lives of people living there during a time of intense international focus around Brexit. The project now exists as an installation of photos, videos, writings and documentation of a performance spread across two actions.

The project consisted of two actions: The Yellow Line and Border People's Parliament.

The Yellow Line: residents in five rural regions in the border area of Northern Ireland and Ireland were "engaged in playful construction of unique 'actions' expressing the various sentiments and hopes for the future of their region".

Image: Across and In-Between by Suzanne Lacy. Photo by Mark Thomas and Andy Yoong.

Border People's Parliament: At the height of the Brexit crisis, 150 people arrived at Northern Ireland's Parliament Buildings, Stormont, for a Border People's Parliament. On 20th October 2018, guests were part of a carefully staged event where conversations about their relationship to the border landscape were recorded in Parliamentary committee rooms and their photographic portraits captured. Over dinner they participated in drafting *The Yellow Manifesto – A True Account of a Border and its People*.

From 16th to 23rd October 2018, it was presented at Belfast International Arts Festival as part of the closing season of 14–18 NOW.

From 12th June 2021 to 14th August 2021 Susanne Lacy presented her installation of Across and In-Between at the Golden Thread Galley in association with IWM Imperial War Museum, The Whitworth and Ulster University.

THE YELLOW MANIFESTO

A true account of a border and its people.

1. People who live on the border need a say about the border. Don't think just of the borderline, think of the lives there. Think of the emotional meaning of the border as well as its practical impacts.

2. This is one of the most beautiful places on earth. We need to preserve this for everyone; the night sky, lakes, mountains and bogs. We value the freedom we have to wander in our environment.

3. We value our ability to live and work in either jurisdiction. Many of us cross the border daily. Homesteads, farms and businesses span both sides. We value the borderland's uniqueness. We value family and friends; we have relatives across religious and social borders and love our differences. We value peace and quiet.

4. We know how to resist. We know how to adapt. How to open closed roads. How to quickly evaluate strangers and work out currency exchange rates. How to get along with neighbours, even when our views are opposed. We don't fit the stereotypes.

5. We could teach you about tolerance. Border people have codes; we know how to treat each other in order to keep harmony. The border is where realities can co-exist. Co-existence is essential to the contract we have with each other; it is a higher thing than economics or security.

6. No one was unaffected by our history; the sights we saw, the hurt and fear. Some people lost far too much. For many the border gave safety and protection and preserved identity. We all need to learn history—our own and others. Preserve this knowledge so that the troubles of the past remain in the past.

7. Keep the border invisible and confined to maps. We want no checkpoints. Heightened security doesn't make us feel more safe or more secure. It makes us feel the opposite—angry, anxious, defensive and fearful.

8. The difference between Yes and No can be made into Maybe. The Good Friday Agreement brought peace and stability. We fear the reversal of this good work. We can teach the world about history, respect and forgiveness but we need more time to come to terms with our past. You don't rush border people.

9. Some of us want to grow together without a border. Some of us want the border intact although invisible. Our neighbours are our friends. We all choose peace.

ACROSS AND\IN-BETWEEN

Written by people who live along the border in Ireland during the Border People's Parliament.

Parliament Buildings, Stormont. 20th October 2018

Across and In-Between is a project by Suzanne Lacy commissioned by 14-18 NOW and Belfast International Arts Festival

Image: The Yellow Manifesto from *Across and In-Between* by Suzanne Lacy. Drafted by Garrett Carr with 150 residents from the border in Ireland.

Arts Over Borders

Type of cross-border cooperation: festivals and projects
Contact: Sean Doran and Liam Browne
Web: https://www.artsoverborders.com/

Image: Literary Map by Arts Over Borders

About

Arts Over Borders is led by Sean Doran and Liam Browne (Festival Producers) who produce and present festivals and work on border areas on the Island of Ireland. Over the last ten years, Arts Over Borders has produced various projects and festivals including Lughnasa FrielFest and the International Beckett Festival. Recently, Arts Over Borders has participated in an Interreg-funded project on literary tourism project called SpotLit. The project is co-financed by the Interreg Northern Periphery and Artic Programme and aims to promote destinations on the back of their literary heritage and interest. Recently the project installed a *Follow the Swallow Trail* placing 150 gilded swallows in Enniskillen, following in the footsteps of Oscar Wilde and Samuel Beckett. Arts Over Borders receives project funding support from different public sector organisations, including local authorities, Government of Ireland and destination marketing agency Tourism NI, amongst other supporters.

Image: Arts over Borders: Walking for Godot (2019) image by Matthew Andrews

The Children's Laureate | Laureate na nÓg

Type of cross-border cooperation: Initiative
Contact: Children's Books Ireland
Web: www.childrenslaureate.ie

Image: Laureates (l-r) Niamh Sharkey, Siobhán Parkinson, Áine Ní Ghlinn, O.J. Lynch and Sarah Crossan at the launch of #RightToBeAReader campaign, September 2021. Photo by Julian Behal

About

The Children's Laureate | Laureate na nÓg, is an initiative by the Arts Council/ An Chomhairle Ealaíonof and managed by the Children's Books Ireland. The initiative receives support from the Arts Council Northern Ireland and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. Northern Ireland has been central to the Laureate.

The initiative has been set up to recognise the role and importance of literature for children in Ireland. The first Laureate na nÓg was held by Siobhán Parkinson for a period of two years. Illustrator Niamh Sharkey was the second laureate and held the title until May 2014. Eoin Colfer held the role between 2014 and 2016. Illustrator PJ Lynch took over the role from 2016 – 2018. Sarah Crossan held the role from 2018-2020 with Áine Ní Ghlinn announced as the current Laureate na nÓg in May 2020.

The Laureate will participate in a site of projects and initiatives delivered throughout their term.

In September 2021, the Laureate na nÓg Áine Ní Ghlinn in partnership with Foras na Gaeilge and Arts Council/ An Chomhairle Ealaíon launched a Book-Gifting scheme called An Bosca Leabharlainne. It is a project open to primary schools across the Island of Ireland. Boxes of Irish language books will be gifted to over 1000 primary schools, promoting Irish language books and literature.

Poetry Ireland

Type of cross-border cooperation: Resource organisation operating on an all-Ireland basis
Contact: Liz Kelly, Director
Web: https://www.poetryireland.ie/

Image: *Me, myself and I* (2017). Final event in the Lyric Theatre Belfast. The project was made possible through the Reconciliation Fund from the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Image by Poetry Ireland.

About

Poetry Ireland is a resource organisation connecting poetry and people on an island-wide basis. It works with various partners such as arts centres, festivals, schools and colleges as well as bookshops. The organisation receives funding support from Arts Council and Arts Council of Northern Ireland. In 2016, Poetry Ireland moved into a new building for which it is currently fundraising for re-development. The aim is to establish a Poetry Ireland Centre as an all-Ireland institution. The building is situated in Dublin's Parnell Square.

Poetry Ireland aims to create 'performance and publication opportunities for poets at all stages of their career' (Poetry Ireland 2021) with the view to make excellent poetry work available to a wide audience and fostering Irish poetry for the future.

Visual Artists Ireland

Type of cross-border cooperation: Resource organisation operating on an all-Ireland basis
Contact: Noel Kelly, CEO
Web: https://visualartists.ie/

Image: VAI Get Together 2018, Speed Curating, IMMA; photograph by Jonathan Sammon, courtesy of Visual Artists Ireland

About

Visual Artists Ireland operates on an all-Ireland basis and is a representative body for professional visual artists in Ireland. VAI provides support and resources for artists through a variety of services including advocacy, advice/ helpdesks for artists around different issues including artists' rights and insurance, online guides and information sheets to name a few.

Visual Artists Ireland's main office is in Dublin, with a representative of the organisation based in Belfast and operating across Northern Ireland.

The organisation receives funding support from the Arts Council and Arts Council of Northern Ireland. VAI is also a member of international organisations such as Culture Action Europe, representing and providing advocacy on a European level.

Tyrone Guthrie Centre

Type of cross-border cooperation: Venue and organisation operating on an all-island basis
Contact: Dr Éimear O'Connor
Web: http://www.tyroneguthrie.ie/

Image: Tyrone Guthrie Centre by Dr. Éimear O'Connor

About

The Tyrone Guthrie Centre is situated in Annaghmakerrig, Co. Monaghan. The Centre is a residential workplace for national and international artists.

The Centre is closely situated to Northern Ireland and houses residencies for artists from various disciplines: visual arts including print, dance, recording artists and writers. It receives support from AC and ACNI as well as the Office of Public Works (OPW).

The Centre was founded by the two Arts Councils in 1981 and has been forging relationships with artists and organisations on an all-Ireland basis.

Other Project Examples

Neither Either: Maiden Voyage Dance and Liz Roche Company Co-Production.

Two dance companies, one from Belfast and one from Dublin, come together to perform a new dance work that looks at the predicament of living out two conflicting states of mind at once. Inspired by writings of Seamus Heaney.

https://maidenvoyagedance.com/productions/neither-either/

The Art of Reconciliation: Do reconciliation-funded arts projects transform conflict?

Arts And Humanities Research Council (AHRC), UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) (UK)

https://www.artforreconciliation.org/about/about#:~:text=It%20is%20claimed%20that%20Art,for%20the%20growth%20in%20AfR.

Based in Institute of Irish Studies at the University of Liverpool ongoing to Sept. 2021.

It is claimed that Art for Reconciliation produces work that reflects, represents, or responds to multiple forms of political conflict in ways that encourage conflict transformation. This claim is reflected in international political and financial support for the growth in AfR.

University of Liverpool, Ulster University and Queen's University Belfast received a research grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) to explore Arts for Reconciliation (AfR), specifically asking:

- Whether AfR is achieving conflict transformation
- The distinctive strategies and practices of AfR
- How we can improve practice and promote the values of AfR

'Dancing with Borders: A Mixed Methods Experiment in Understanding Artists 'Cross-Border Movement', 31st March 2021, Dr Victoria Durrer, UCD

School of Art History & Cultural Policy Spring 2021 Online Research Seminar Series.

This paper presents an ongoing project that seeks to chart the relationship of territorial borders to dance artists' 'livelihoods and practice on the island of Ireland'. A collaboration between a dance practitioner-scholar (Aoife McGrath of QUB) and two social science researchers Victoria Durrer (UCD) and Peter Campbell (University of Liverpool), the project has married dance-practice-as-research with methods of sociological enquiry.

Building Peace Through the Arts – Reimagining Communities (Peace III)
https://seupb.eu/sites/default/files/Past%20Programmes/PIII_ProjectCaseStudy_Re-imagingCommunities.pdf

The programme has supported 53 community-based projects to undertake creative engagement and consultation resulting in the development and installation of 32 pieces of site-specific public art across Northern Ireland and in the border counties of Ireland.

Each project addressed the following 5 strategic objectives:

- Community Cohesion – Work with communities to provide opportunities for more stable, safer neighbourhoods and develop strong, positive relations between people from different backgrounds

- Build Peace and Reconciliation – Support progress towards a peaceful, shared and stable society and promote reconciliation through community-led programmes of arts activities

- Foster positive relations at a local level – Utilise the arts and arts processes as a means with which to challenge sectarian and racist attitudes and build positive community relations at a local level.

- Regeneration through the Arts – Work with communities wanting to develop more inclusive civic and cultural identities through the production of high-quality artwork for the public realm

- Connecting communities – Utilise the arts and arts processes as a means in which to connect communities throughout Northern Ireland and the Border Areas.

A consortium of key stakeholders from North and South of the Border provided programme support. The consortium includes the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Office of the First and Deputy First Minister, Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure, Department of Social Development, Special European Union Programmes Body, International Fund for Ireland, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Community Relations Council, Association of Local Authority Arts Officers and Rural Community Network. This project is part-financed by the European Union's Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE III) managed by the Special EU Programmes Body, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, and the International Fund for Ireland.

Theatre of Witness (Peace III)

https://seupb.eu/sites/default/files/Past%20Programmes/PIII_ProjectCaseStudy_TheatreofWitness.pdf

Theatre of Witness is a form of performance developed by founder and artistic director Teya Sepinuck, in which the true-life stories of those who have been marginalised by society are performed by the storytellers themselves as a way for audiences to bear witness to significant social issues. Key Project Outputs:

- Create and tour at least two new Theatre of Witness productions throughout Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland.

- Co-ordinate a series of workshops, discussion groups and training on the Theatre of Witness methodology across NI and the border region of Ireland.

Termon Project (Peace III)

https://seupb.eu/sites/default/files/Past%20Programmes/PIII_ProjectCaseStudy_Termon.pdf

Donegal County Council in partnership with Fermanagh District Council and ADoPT (Association for the Development of Pettigo & Tullyhommon) is currently undertaking a major regeneration project in the villages of Pettigo and Tullyhommon funded by the EU's PEACE III Programme.

The Termon Project is a multifaceted physical and recreational regeneration project designed to enhance the twin villages of Pettigo in County Donegal and Tullyhommon in County Fermanagh, using the River Termon as a focus for creation of shared public spaces for use by all communities.

NB per Peace III evaluation, a great deal more applications from NI than the Border:

http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/publications/2012/ofmdfm/7113.pdf

Theatre Peace Building Academy (Peace IV)

The NW Play Resource Centre (NWPRC) was awarded €859,069.50 under the PEACE IV Programme for the 'Theatre Peace Building Academy'. The ambitious project will use theatre as a tool to explore community relations issues in a safe and accessible environment. People and communities most affected by the conflict will be the main beneficiaries.

The project will recruit eight local artists and a range of internationally based artists with significant experience of utilising arts activity in areas of conflict and social breakdown. An estimated 76 cross-community participants will be reached delivering approximately 2,200 hours of collaborative working time.

Project Partners: Holywell Trust and Queen's University Belfast.

Nerve Centre (Peace IV)

The Nerve Centre received €1,804,814.67 under the PEACE IV Programme to deliver a regional change programme of cultural engagement, creativity and skills development. 5,000+ direct participants will interrogate and re-imagine consortium collections through the creative arts and digital technologies. Results will be viewed by 100,000+ people who will participate in exhibitions, events and workshops. The project will bring participants together in consortium spaces, community centres across NI, and museums, venues, libraries and community cinemas in border counties North and South.

Project Partners: National Museums Northern Ireland, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland and Linen Hall Library

Ignite

The Ignite Documentary Talent Development programme is supported by TG4, the AC, Screen Skills Ireland and Arts & Business NI.

https://www.northernirelandscreen.co.uk/news/funding/ignite-documentary-talent-development-programme/

FILM HUB NI AND ACCESS>CINEMA PARTNER FOR CROSS-BORDER INITIATIVE IN BELFAST

https://www.northernirelandscreen.co.uk/news/general/film-hub-ni-accesscinema-partner-cross border-initiative-belfast/

The programmers' networking event has been kindly supported by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union, and BFI, through the Film Audience Network.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Interviewee & Stakeholder Consultation

We are grateful to all those who gave of their time, expertise and insight to help inform the writing of this report. Due to their role, position or organisational structure, not everyone listed was able to formally contribute to the research but each was nonetheless of invaluable assistance in providing information and signposting.

Surname	Name	Role	Organisation
Ballance	Val	Head of Arts Centres	Arts Council
Bell	Fiona	CEO	We Will Thrive
Bergan	Phil	Director	FeileAfrica
Boyd	David	Director	Beat Carnival
Brown	Paul	CEO / Artistic Director	Earagail Arts Festival
Browne	Liam	Programmers, curators, Festival organisers	Arts Over Borders
Budd	Aoife	Civil Servant	Aonad um Oileán Comhroinnte | Shared Island Initiative
Carr	Garrett	EDI Artists	https://www.garrettcarr.net/
Carroll	Bernardine	Engagement Officer	The Irish Architecture Foundation
Chowdhury	Farah	CEO	Wheel Works Arts
Cullinane	Liz	Associate Artist	Paradosso Theatre company
Daughen	Katie	Civil Servant	Aonad um Oileán Comhroinnte | Shared Island Initiative
de Barra	Eibhlín	Director	Young At Art
Dennett	Toby	Manager, Strategic Development	Arts Council
Donnelly	Cliona	General Manager	NI Opera
Doran	Sean	Programmers, curators, Festival organisers	Arts Over Borders
Downes	Eugene	Cultural Director	DFA
Dryden	Charlotte	CEO	Oh Yeah Belfast
Ferguson	Evonne	Director	Contemporary Music Centre

Surname	Name	Role	Organisation
Flanagan	Niamh	Executive Director	Theatre and Dance NI
Flannery	Aingeala	Project Manager Laureate na nÓg	Children's Book Ireland
Francey	Hazel	Commissioner and representative on the PEACE programme MS Monitoring Committee	The Equality Commission (NI)
Greene	Karly	Director of Strategic Development & Partnerships	ACNI
Hayles	Sophie	CEO	The Crescent
Hollywood	Majella	CEO	Chamber Choir Ireland
Jennings	Clare	Administrator	Armagh Rhymers
Jimmy Fay	Jimmy	Executive Producer	Lyric Theatre
Kelly	Noel	CEO	Visual Artists Ireland
Killeen	Kenneth	CEO	Improvised Music Company
Lundberg	Colm	Managing the scheme cooperation with Northern Ireland	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
Maher	Anne	CEO/ Artistic Director	Ballet Ireland
McAlonan-McCrudden	Carrie-Anne	General Manager	Aisling Ghéar Theatre Co
McCall	Cathal	Professor School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics	Queen's University Belfast
McGlynn	Damien	Director	Creative Lives
McKinney	Nóirín	Director of Arts Development	Arts Council
Medlycott	Lucy	Director	ISACS
Moore	Jacquie	Deputy Art Adviser	Office of Public Works
Murray	Aoife	Programme and Events Manager	Children's Book Ireland
O'Brien	Maria	Lecturer/ Film Festival	East Asia Film Festival Ireland
O'Connor	Dr Éimear	Resident Director	Tyrone Guthrie Centre
O'Donnell	Niamh	Director	Poetry Ireland
O'Kelly	Gina	Executive Director	Irish Museums Association
O'Mahony	Caitríona	Operations Manager	Improvised Music Company
O'Rourke	Ruby	Events Officer	MayWe

Surname	Name	Role	Organisation
Smyth	Amy	Third Secretary	Reconciliation Fund, DFA
Smyth	Cian	Producer	Ulster University
Stevenson	Graeme	Research Officer	Arts Council of Northern Ireland
Teevan	David	Researcher and consultant, Festival Advisor Art Council Ireland	Freelance
Terlingo	Davide	Head of International Arts	Arts Council
Toland	Grace	ITSC Organiser	Inishowen Traditional Singers' Circle
Vernon	Matt	Development Worker	Beat Carnival
Walsh	Anna	Director	Theatre Forum

Appendix 2: All-Island Resource and Support Organisations

Organisation	Location	ArtForm	Notes
Children's Books Ireland	IE	Literature	Laureat na nÓg: aiming to raise children's literature in Ireland and internationally. Initiative by Arts Council with the support of Children's Books Ireland, The Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Poetry Ireland and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland
Contemporary Music Centre	IE	Music	Supporting the work of composers throughout the Republic and Northern Ireland. Receives funding from Arts Council Ireland and Lottery funding from Arts Council of Northern Ireland
Creative Lives	NI	Community Arts	Operating North and South
Irish Theatre Institute	IE	Theatre	Produce a comprehensive multimedia directory of professional drama, dance and opera in Ireland, North and South
Irish Writers Centre	IE	Literature	Arts Council Ireland Support and Arts Council NI Lottery Funding
ISACS	IE	Street and Circus	Mainly Ireland but has members in NI https://isacs.ie/our-members/
Poetry Ireland	IE	Literature	Receives funding from both Arts Councils
Visual Artists Ireland	IE	Visual Arts	Support for Visual Artist, North and South

Appendix 3: Bibliography

This bibliography is intended as a resource for future researchers and includes material additional to the References and which may not be referenced in the report.

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