



**An Roinn
Cultúir, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta**

**Department of
Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht**

Oifig an Ard-Rúnaí
Office of the Secretary General

Ms. Aileen Fallon
Clerk to the Committee (Work Programme)
Special Committee on COVID-19 Response
Leinster House
Dublin 2
D02 XR20

26 June 2020

REF: SCC19R-I-02822

Re: INVITATION TO MAKE WRITTEN SUBMISSION

Dear Ms Fallon

I refer further to your correspondence of 18 June requesting a written submission on the topic of the impact of COVID-19 on the arts and entertainment sector. At the outset, I would like to point out that the Department of Culture, Heritage and Gaeltacht's primary focus from a cultural perspective is on the arts as defined under the Arts Act, our National Cultural Institutions, the audiovisual sector, and commemorations under the Decade of Centenaries. Culture Ireland, which promotes Irish arts worldwide, forms part of the Department. The Creative Ireland programme is a whole of Government culture and wellbeing initiative led and coordinated by the Creative Ireland team within the Department.

Broadcasting is primarily a matter for the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment. The broader entertainment sector, including many concerts, festivals and cinemas, which operates on a commercial basis is not generally supported by the Department given that no market failure typically applies, but is regulated in a number of respects e.g. through the licensing of large events by local authorities under licensing of outdoor events regulations under the Planning and Development Acts or under licensing of indoor events regulations under the Fire Services Acts. However, given the unprecedented impact of COVID-19 and the necessary public health guidance to minimise risk to the public, the Department has been engaged in a process of consultation with commercial stakeholders on the challenges posed to their industries.

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Please find attached a document setting out the challenges posed to the sector by COVID-19 and the response of the Department and its agencies to date. In summary, the focus has been broadly speaking to:

- comply with the public health guidance in the initial phase,
- assess the impacts,
- evaluate and introduce effective interventions;
- introduce measures to sustain personal and collective wellbeing; and
- support stakeholders through the reopening process.

This has been based on a wide ranging consultation with stakeholders including bodies under the aegis of the Department, including the National Cultural Institutions, the Arts Council and Screen Ireland, advocacy bodies such as the National Campaign for the Arts, resource organisations such as Theatre Forum and Visual Artists Ireland, theatre companies, and individual arts practices and artists. Screen Ireland has liaised with stakeholders across its sector including screen producers and employee representatives.

This has allowed the Department to develop, in consultation with these sectoral interests, tailored solutions to the needs of the sector. In addition, the Department has supported a range of creative and cultural content to sustain personal and collective wellbeing which has reached a large audience globally and provided paid performance opportunities for artists. More recently, the Taoiseach and the Minister for Culture, Heritage and Gaeltacht announced a Stabilisation Fund for the Culture sector of €25m. €20m of this fund is being allocated to the Arts Council bringing its 2020 allocation to €100m. The balance will be applied to measures to support regional cultural facilities, local museums, and further online cultural and creative content, including from locations such as the National Concert Hall.

The challenge of COVID-19 is likely to be a sustained one for the broad culture sector. The Department will continue to engage with affected stakeholders, to monitor the impacts, and to seek to introduce effective supports. The Department's key objective throughout this period has been to make the most effective use of available resources to sustain the sector through this challenging period. A comprehensive briefing note on these matters, with a summary and index, is attached for the information of Committee members.

Yours sincerely



Katherine Licken
Secretary General

Topic	Rebooting the Economy: The Arts and Entertainment Sector
Area	The arts, culture, entertainment
Background	Covid-19 and the resulting restrictions on social distancing and public events, have had a huge impact on the arts and entertainment industry with large numbers of festivals, from local to national, and with the postponement of concerts, plays and other major cultural events along with a closure of the film and television production. There is some concern about the impact on artists and those working in ancillary industries.
Issues for consideration	<p><i>These are issues in relation to which the Committee is particularly interested in receiving your views. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of the matters the Committee will inquire into in this area</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny of response by Arts Council and Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht • Impact on film industry and broadcasters • Impact on theatre and performing arts • Impact on entertainment and events industry • Impact on visual arts, exhibitions and arts centres • Impact on local and national festivals
Stakeholders	<p><i>Interest Groups</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on the arts: National Campaign for the Arts, Dance Ireland, Irish Theatre Institute, Abbey Theatre, Irish Association of Songwriters, Composers and Authors • Impact on Festivals, Events and Entertainment Industry: Events Industry Association of Ireland, Association of Irish Festivals and Events, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, An tOireachtas, Galway 2020, • Impact on film industry and broadcasters: Screen Producers Ireland, RTÉ, TG4, Virgin Media • Unions: ICTU, Irish Equity • Business to Arts (Impact on funding from Business partnerships) <p><i>Experts</i></p> <p><i>Government Departments and State Bodies</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht • The Arts Council • Ealaín na Gaeltachta (Údarás na Gaeltachta) • Culture Ireland • Creative Ireland • Screen Ireland • Tourism Ireland
<p>Proposed Course of Action</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request submissions from all stakeholders identified (including any additional stakeholders proposed by the Committee) addressing the <i>issues for consideration</i>. 2. Secretariat to review submissions and provide summary note. 3. Committee to consider submission and decide if it wishes to invite any of the stakeholders to meet with the Committee.