

# By working together we can affect change.

## **Building Capacity for the Cultural Industries**

Towards a Shared-Island Approach for Dance and Theatre

**Victoria Durrer**

University College Dublin

**Aoife McGrath**

Queen's University Belfast

**Emma McAlister**

University College Dublin



IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL  
An Chomhairle um Thaighde in Éirinn



Report written by  
Victoria Durrer, University College Dublin  
Aoife McGrath, Queen's University Belfast  
Emma McAlister, University College Dublin

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# SUMMARY

This report presents the findings from a research project entitled, *Building Capacity for Cultural Industries: Towards a Shared-Island Approach*, which took place from December 2021 – November 2022. The project explored the extent of what is currently shared (resources, finances, networks) across the island of Ireland within the professional dance and theatre sector and what might enable or hinder the development of shared-island ties.

Funded by the Irish Research Council's (IRC) New Foundations Scheme 2021, under the Shared Island Initiative Strand (8) supported by the Shared Island Unit (SIU) in the Department of the Taoiseach, this project brought together new and existing academic and sector-based research to understand how all-island relations within the professional, publicly-subsidised performing arts of dance and theatre may be nurtured.

The project was led by Dr Victoria Durrer (University College Dublin) in partnership with Dr Aoife McGrath (Queen's University Belfast), and representatives from Theatre & Dance Northern Ireland, Arts Council Northern Ireland, Dance Ireland and Dylan Quinn Dance Theatre. Cavan County Council Arts Office, British Council Ireland and Arts Council Ireland / An Chomhairle Ealaíon are core research participants with Dr Emma McAlister supporting the work as Research Assistant. All of these individuals are referred to in this document as the Core Research Group.

Unless stated differently in direct quotes or referenced data, the Republic of Ireland will be referred to as Ireland in the report, in keeping with the official name of the State and usage by the Shared Island Unit.

## Rationale

The professional, publicly-subsidised performing arts of dance and theatre are an interconnected 'cultural industry' on the island of Ireland. Very little documentation is available regarding the extent of these relationships, how this interconnection functions and with what impact. This lack of understanding limits how to consider strengthening, and also nurturing, these industries collectively and within the two jurisdictions of Northern Ireland (NI) and Ireland (IRL) in a post-Brexit and post-pandemic context. As a result, strategic development of the cooperative and competitive elements of Irish regional cultural industry development has been hampered. This absence is further concerning, especially as Brexit and the pandemic have posed strategic challenges to the livelihoods of a highly mobile cultural workforce and regional competition in cultural tourism.

In this report, rather than focusing on SIU's acknowledgement of the role of the arts, and dance and theatre, as 'good work' or a service for the endeavour of a 'Shared Island', we are concerned with the administrative systems, functions and operations of dance and theatre as an underpinning infrastructure of this endeavour. To date, public policies have largely neglected the labour of theatre and dance professionals, their aligned ways of working, their engagement with audiences, and the collaborative formal and informal working networks across Ireland.

## Research Approach

This study has prioritised the lived experiences and knowledge of those working in dance and theatre across the island of Ireland within the two jurisdictions, including those who work along and across the border region.

The Core Research Group agreed on working principles that emphasise sharing and critical debate that are mutually respectful and equally valuing of one another's perspective and experience. We took a collaborative mixed-methods approach to scope the extent and nature of all-island relations in dance and theatre to understand what requirements for development might exist. This research involved:

- Academic literature across political science, public administration, arts management, cultural policy, theatre and dance, social sciences, as well as sector-based reports and sector based workforce surveys
- Expenditure of Arts Council funding (Ireland and Northern Ireland) to dance and theatre (individual artists and companies)
- Public policies related to pandemic closures and recovery; spatial planning; tourism; foreign affairs; arts and culture
- 4 half-day workshops to explore cross-border knowledge and experiences of a range of arts, local authority, civil society and research professionals with two accompanying discussion papers
- 3 Zoom meetings to review data amongst Core Research Group
- Semi-structured interviews with 6 case relationships to highlight the lived experience of cross-border working
- An online focus group exploring the impact of Brexit with 10 arts workers across dance and theatre
- Interview with a local authority network CEO
- Audit of the Arts Council Ireland / Arts Council Northern Ireland touring scheme
- Narrative experiences of the administrative and funding practices in and across two jurisdictions of the Core Research Group members

## Funding and Development Disparity

Comparable data on the financial resourcing of dance and theatre between the two jurisdictions is lacking, and what does exist requires nuanced comparison. Nevertheless, it is clear that there is major disparity in the publicly subsidised arts sector between the two jurisdictions, with significantly less investment provided to the cultural industries in Northern Ireland.

This funding disparity is complicated by broader lived realities in each jurisdiction, such as significant disparities in GDP per capita and living standards. These circumstances present financially inequitable ground on which all-island cooperation in the cultural industries occurs, requiring any discussion of "shared" conditions to be approached with sensitivity to these fundamental inequities.

## Workforce Mobility

Dance and theatre work is highly mobile by nature, with cross-border movement, whether transnational or more locally-based, a near expectation or requirement of the industry for gaining work, making work, or showcasing work. Arts workers in Ireland are no exception. However, the situation of education and training on the island makes leaving the island a particular requirement for some, especially for those aspiring to work in certain genres of dance, such as ballet.

## Precarity

Work is often short-term, poorly paid, and dependent upon project funding cycles. The nature of this work means that many arts workers spend a great deal of time attempting to source or provide a sustainable income, whether that is for whole companies and organisations or for themselves as individual freelancers. These circumstances infringe on time for creative and professional development and impact one's health and well-being.

While not unique to circumstances on the island of Ireland, such precarity constitutes an unstable system for fostering all-island relations in the cultural industries. The pandemic and Brexit have exacerbated the uncertainty that comes with such circumstances. This experience is indicative of the perception within NI of lessened political will towards the arts as compared to peers in Ireland, which is further complicated by the instability of the NI Executive.

## Covid-19 and Brexit

The Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit have had a considerable impact on the cultural industries across the island of Ireland. Some of the issues we identified related to the pandemic centre on workforce and skills shortages. Further, and in relation to Brexit there are additional concerns framing and challenging cross-island relations as follows:

- Visa issues
- An increase in regulatory / legal complexity
- ATA Carnet and the movement of goods
- Increased costs and economic divergence
- Emotional stress and anxiety

While these circumstances create challenging ground on which to initiate and develop cross-island relations, many such relations already exist, demonstrating interdependence and affinity within the cultural industries.

## Types, Extent & Nature of Relations

Despite each jurisdiction's differing contexts of policy and development, our research indicates that the professional, publicly-subsidised dance and theatre sectors are economically and developmentally connected through a complex interlinking of formal and informal relationships between individuals and organisations.

Working relations entail co-production, joint-working, as well as opportunities for training and development, showcasing or presentation of work, and networking.

Mobility around and off the island is crucial for individual arts workers to access work as well as training and development. It is also a means by which arts development—both professional and community – takes place.

Financial investment for cross-island working may be classified as:

- Joint funding: core organisational or activity funding that issues from funders from each jurisdiction
- One-off project funding aimed at supporting cross-island / border collaboration and / or partnership
- Showcase / Recognition funding aimed at supporting the development or touring of work or recognising excellence in practice (regardless of jurisdictional base)
- Bi-jurisdictional accounts: companies and organisations that operate financial accounts in both jurisdictions

Relationships are personal and institutional. The flow of connections stretches across and off the island (not just as border proximate), with relationships existing not only North-South, but also East-West and internationally. The development of dance and theatre across the island is dependent upon this workforce mobility and the associated relational dynamics.

## Impacts of Cross-Jurisdictional Working

The impacts of arts worker mobility and cross-border working are both personal and more broad-reaching and include:

- Methods for sharing risk and raising creative ambition. More than about 'value for money' and sharing the financial risk and the administration of a production, pooling resources and working together provides a means for bolstering the "scale" and ambition of what arts workers can create together
- Providing peer-to-peer support for arts workers personally and professionally
- Peer-to-peer and organisational upskilling, training, and development
- Profile raising and visibility of arts workers, organisations, groups, and companies to one another and to new audiences and new markets
- Regional visibility and profile raising of Irish arts workers, organisations, groups and companies to new audiences and new markets abroad
- Opportunities for cultural exchange specific to the interests and needs of people living and working on this island



## Facilitating Relations

While structures and procedures exist (e.g. funding streams, resource allocation, memoranda of agreement, enabling frameworks of the Good Friday Agreement, and cross-island local authority networks), there is currently no formal cross-island cultural industries framework. Top-down support, through legislation, policy, or higher-level funding initiatives that are supportive of cross-island relationships are limited. A number of key enablers of cross island relations were identified through our research:

- Cross-island working and relationship building that is initiated and sustained at the behest and initiative of individual arts workers and/or organisations. These relations are often reliant upon personal interest, will, and commitment, and often tied to personal connections.
- Champions (individuals and / or organisations) that particularly support and promote cross and all-island relations. These are situated across institutional and sectoral hierarchies.
- Becoming familiar with arts workers through word of mouth, but especially through experiencing one another's work.
- Common strategic concerns and creative / artistic interests that become important foundations for working across the border, even when resourced or supported through top-down initiatives or frameworks.
- Collaborative relationships with a foundation of mutual understanding and trust established prior to any agreement to apply for funding to work together.

## Building Capacity

Capacity building is not about developing a one-size-fits-all toolkit of best practices or a training programme for cross-border relations. That approach would not be suitable, as relationships are context-dependent. Capacity building is a fuller process of gathering, researching, reflecting, and developing. It is something in which policymakers, funders and arts workers all have a stake, an interest, and some level of agency. As a result, recommendations for building capacity are addressed at two, interrelated groups:

### 1. Higher Level Policy Makers:

Teams of elected officials and civil and public servants in the Shared Island Unit and the Northern Ireland Executive, as well as government departments, local government, and arm's length bodies in both jurisdictions

### 2. Industry / Sector Professionals:

Arts workers in the dance and theatre resource bodies and companies, as well as those who are freelance artists and arts managers.

**With data capture and research as a cross-cutting area of capacity building, the report recommends actions across 5 key spheres of development:**

Nurture Regional Stability

There is an enthusiastic appetite for championing all-island working, however, the stability of the sector needs to be nurtured on the island for any relationship-building to flourish.

- Foster exchange and solidarity through sharing practice and meeting on common advocacy concerns such as rates of pay, funding disparity, climate action, tourism, and spatial development
- Engage on staffing and labour market concerns
- Explore and develop regulatory convergence on rates of pay
- Develop joint research and data convergence
- Respond to Brexit as a shared matter with implications for performing arts sector, and develop a clear Reference Guide in response to key changes
- Recognise and resource research and development (R & D) as core to the nature of a cultural industry, particularly in relation to nurturing creative risk-taking and experimentation

Develop & Implement Enabling Frameworks

Lack of top-down, policy and strategic level support hampers the sustainability and potential of cross island initiatives.

- Address Brexit concerns, particularly recognise the performing arts industries as cross-cutting industries that bring goods and products across the Irish and transnational borders
- Develop cross-jurisdictional alignment in administration for cross-island working, allowing convergence in data capture of funding and reporting
- Through action-research and dialogue events, develop an explicit framework for cross-border relations in the performing arts through a process of co-design that is reviewed and revised within evolving socio-political and economic circumstances
- Resource cross-border exchange at various levels: local authority, arms-length bodies, organisation to organisation, arts worker to arts worker
- Develop cross-jurisdictional alignment in financial resourcing for cross-island working, allowing border fluidity for specified funding without greater bureaucracy
- Resource research and development: dedicated staffing, time, partnerships with higher education and research institutes and development of new projects

### Embed Access & Inclusion

Both rights and place-based concerns emerged as important issues in our findings, particularly in relation to the marginalisation of arts workers with disabilities and arts workers based in rural locations.

- Develop and enhance spatial connectivity through financial investment in, and enhancement of, existing cross-island networks (e.g., venues; local authorities; resource bodies; festivals; arts workers) through meetings, gatherings, and information exchange
- Recognise and address the marginalisation of arts workers in rural and rural border areas
- Develop and enhance legislative and administrative coherence with regards to access to work for arts workers with disabilities
- Recognise and address arts worker mobility as a key policy area and considerations for migrant communities post-Brexit

### Raise Awareness

In order to support the Shared Island endeavour, three forms of awareness of cross-border working in the cultural industries are required: 1) within the sector 2) between the cultural industries and other relevant cross-border sectors and 3) outward as a form of celebration.

- Encourage consideration of a wider variety of cultural industries more strategically within tourism policies and with tourism officers
- Grow understanding of shared and unique circumstances on the island by funding short-stay residencies without expectation of output for arts workers living in different parts of the island to exchange experiences and practice
- Support and resource the profile-raising and celebration of cross-island work through funding of platforms and showcase opportunities on, across, and off the island that recognise the diversity of our workforce
- Commission, support, and engage in cross-island co-productions

### Support Legacy

Informal networks are a significant, but fragile source of cross / all-island working. Institutional memory and embedded practices are required to sustain and further develop cross-island relations.

- Keep cultural industries on the Shared Island agenda and maintain awareness of sector needs
- Resource staff time for meetings and research development
- Review and embed cross-island working (where relevant) in organisational plans and staffing roles (with resourcing)
- Put all-island topics on the agenda of existing networks
- Resource development of a digital archive of cross-island practice in dance and theatre

## Data Capture and Research

Our limited knowledge base is a critical capacity-building issue. Further areas of research needed are thus identified for each area in the full report. Ethical and inclusive research requires the inclusion of arts workers in shaping research agendas. It embraces mixed methods that recognise and value experiential as well as academic knowledge. It includes qualitative research methods and action research, as well as quantitative approaches.

Several new research projects have commenced that continue investigating some of the areas of potential growth identified by this project. The academic leads are working on a project investigating youth dance across the island funded by the HEA North South programme, and some Core Research Group members and research participants have initiated further projects incorporating cross-border and all-island elements. There has also been some significant policy development, with the new Arts Council Ireland (2022) Dance Policy including plans for the development of an all-island dance company.

Further key research gaps have been identified below.

Support Research	
<i>Nurture Regional Stability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Capture the diverse demographics and map the mobilities of arts workers on the island</li> <li>→ Examine the financial and human resourcing of the arts by local authorities on the island</li> <li>→ Capture pay / income, working conditions and experiences of arts workers</li> <li>→ Capture how arts workers are navigating uncertainty and / or maintaining risk and innovation in a risk averse environment</li> <li>→ Capture and examine the lived experiences of pathways related to career progression</li> </ul>
<i>Develop &amp; Implement Enabling Frameworks</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Explore feasibility of aligning aspects of data capture for at least ACNI / ACNI funding applications</li> <li>→ Capture the impacts of Brexit on arts workforce</li> <li>→ Action research to explore the possibilities of, and different approaches to, a cross-island framework: examining what a framework might look like, include, and what might be needed to support it</li> </ul>
<i>Embed Access &amp; Inclusion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Gain understanding of differences in, and experience of, legislation for workers' access to work supports</li> <li>→ Develop an understanding of mobility on / off the island, including issues related to push and pull factors, diverse demographics, opportunities, and inequalities</li> </ul>

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## Support Research

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| <i>Embed Access &amp; Inclusion (cont.)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Conduct locally situated studies to address and better understand spatial nuances, population loss or gain since Census 2022 as well as demographic make-up, changing nature of identities, access to physical assets and services, industry bases, and economic, social, and quality of life concerns with particular cultural industries</li> <li>→ Work with the National Economic and Social Council to position the cultural industries within their research framework on the all-island economy</li> <li>→ Develop an understanding of how, why, and where audiences move across the island to attend performances and engage with dance and theatre practice</li> <li>→ Develop an understanding of spatial alignment, movement, and development of dance and theatre and extend this study beyond the professional, publicly subsidised aspects of the sector to include youth, education, and commercial elements</li> <li>→ Build an understanding of the potential for hubs or clusters (and whether these are physical and / or virtual, and how these are spatially connected) through literature review, research on existing international practice, and action-research on the island of Ireland</li> </ul> |
| <i>Raise Awareness</i>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Develop a public and historical archive of cross border working across art forms</li> <li>→ Capture experience, meaning, and value of cross-island working relations in the cultural industries</li> <li>→ Conduct studies similar to this one for other cultural industries: e.g., literature, visual arts</li> </ul>   |
| <i>Support Legacy</i>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Develop a digital archive of cross-island practice in dance and theatre</li> <li>→ Link with research networks, such as Cultural Policy Observatory Ireland, to develop research in and across multiple academic disciplines</li> </ul>  |
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## Concluding Thoughts

Our research indicates an increased awareness of, and attention to, Shared Island concerns in the cultural industries and associated research communities. There is much enthusiasm and drive to recognise and support interdependencies and champion our cooperative and competitive relations. Continued support for research and practice in this area will be vital to building sustainable initiatives and actions.



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# PART 1



# INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings from a research project entitled, *Building Capacity for Cultural Industries: Towards a Shared-Island Approach*, which took place from December 2021 – November 2022. The project explored the extent of what is currently shared (resources, finances, networks) across the island of Ireland within the professional dance and theatre sector and what might enable or hinder the development of shared-island ties.

Funded by the Irish Research Council’s New Foundations Scheme 2021, under the Shared Island Initiative Strand (8) supported by the Shared Island Unit (SIU) in the Department of the Taoiseach, the project brought together new and existing academic and sector-based research to understand how all-island relations within the professional, publicly-subsidised performing arts of dance and theatre may be nurtured.

The project was led by Dr Victoria Durrer (University College Dublin) in partnership with Dr Aoife McGrath (Queen’s University Belfast), and representatives from Theatre & Dance Northern Ireland, Arts Council Northern Ireland, Dance Ireland and Dylan Quinn Dance Theatre. Cavan County Council Arts Office, British Council Ireland and Arts Council Ireland / An Chomhairle Ealaíon are core research participants, with Dr Emma McAlister supporting the work as Research Assistant. All of these individuals are referred to in this document as the Core Research Group.

Within the context of the Shared Island endeavour by the Shared Island Unit, we came together to understand:

1. What cross-border / all-island relations currently exist in this specific industry?
2. What aspects of cooperation should be prioritised for future action, and why?
3. What might enable or hinder the development of relations?
4. What institutions are best placed to help us learn and support the building of capacity for cross-border and all-island relations?

## Structure & Key Terms

The report begins by setting out our approach. Part 2, *Setting the Scene*, presents the context in which cross-island relations occur in dance and theatre. Here we share what is currently known about the composition and funding of that sector as well as the working conditions for those arts workers in both jurisdictions. In Parts 3 through 5, we identify key relationship types that exist in dance and theatre and explore the features of these relationships with particular attention paid to administrative systems, functions and operations.

Throughout the report, we focus on what we have learned about the connection that cross-island working has to the livelihoods of arts workers themselves and the development of the industry as a whole. Consideration is given to the industry within each jurisdiction as well as being a regional, all-island one. Upon exploring what enables these relations in Part 5, we move to Part 6 to focus on potential areas for capacity building. This section presents key action and research-oriented recommendations for higher-level policymakers and those within the sector.



Some key terms are frequently used in the report that warrant clarification. First, while we recognise the breadth of research surrounding these terms, the descriptors *cross-border*, *all-island*, and *cross-island* are used interchangeably to denote activity that involves the movement or mobility of people and / or goods across a territorial or state border. Along with the term, *cross-jurisdictional*, these descriptors also refer to administrative activity that takes place across and through the involvement of individuals, groups, and organisations in both jurisdictions of Northern Ireland (NI) and Ireland (IRL). In cases where it is necessary to refer to activity that is particularly border proximate, or along and across the immediate vicinity of the physical site of the territorial border, it is explicitly stated.

In relation to *professional*, we accept the definition outlined in the cross-jurisdictional report on *The Living and Working Conditions of Artists in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland* (Hibernian Consulting, 2010) which states:

*'professional artists' refer to people who are active in pursuing a career as artists and who view arts work as their main profession or career, even if not their main source of income and regardless of their current employment status.*

(p. 6)

However, we extend *artist* to include the broader term *arts worker*. Arts worker is used to denote an arts manager or artist, creative or technical worker in the field of dance or theatre. These individuals may be self-employed, freelance, holding multiple and / or short-term jobs and / or employed full-time by one employer on a long-term basis.

Unless stated differently in direct quotes or referenced data, the Republic of Ireland will be referred to as Ireland in the report, in keeping with the official name of the State and usage by the Shared Island Unit.

## Research Focus

The professional, publicly-subsidised performing arts of dance and theatre are an interconnected cultural industry on the island of Ireland. We particularly utilise the term *industry* in order to “give... respect and due consideration”—what Banks (2017: 1) terms “creative justice”—to the field of dance and theatre practice as a key infrastructure on the island and an area of work on which livelihoods are based.

We take an approach to livelihoods that considers the finite resources of our planet alongside concerns regarding quality of life. In this usage, we strive to support an encompassing understanding of livelihoods that

*comprise people, their capabilities and their means of living, including food, income and assets. Tangible assets are resources and stores, and intangible assets are claims and access. A livelihood is environmentally sustainable when it maintains or enhances the local and global assets on which livelihoods depend, and has net beneficial effects on other livelihoods. A livelihood is socially sustainable, which can cope and recover from stress and shocks, and provide for future generations.*

(Chambers & Conway, 1992: 1, quoted in Durrer & McCall Magan, 2015: np).

As part of the wider ecology of the region's cultural and creative industries, dance and theatre are particularly *cultural (industry) products* because they produce and share meaning and ideas. As policy discourse shifts towards emphasising the terminology related to creativity in the development of the creative and cultural industries, it is important to recognise the arts as a connected, though distinct, area of practice with its own organisational culture and developmental needs (Oakley, 2009; Throsby, 2010). Dance and theatre play "a central role in freedom of human expression", personal and collective identity, democracy, and cultural rights (Galloway & Dunlop, 2007: 26). In doing so and as recognised by the Shared Island Unit and associated research by the National Economic and Social Council (NESC, 2021: 3), they can assist with representing and celebrating diverse identities and "promoting better understanding" amongst communities and groups (see also SIU, 2021: 4). But we cannot neglect their important role in surfacing and interrogating conflict, and challenging the status quo.

In this report, rather than focusing on SIU's acknowledged role of the arts, and thus implicitly of dance and theatre as good works or a service for our endeavour of a 'Shared Island', we are concerned with the administrative systems, functions and operations of dance and theatre as an underpinning infrastructure of this endeavour. We bring these art forms together because those individuals, companies, and groups working in dance and theatre are closely aligned in ways of working and modes of engagement with audiences (Oakley, 2009). They also rely on a similar "assemblage of people, networks, discourses, practices, and materials" (Prince 2010: 125). The nature of the professional performing arts of dance and theatre in NI and Ireland as operating within an "all-island space" has been established amongst those engaging in, and / or with the practice of this cultural industry (Hibernian Consulting, 2010: 105; see also McGrath, 2021; Durrer et al., 2019; Culture Ireland, 2017).

Yet, to date, public policies have largely neglected this interrelation (Tourism Recovery Taskforce, 2020; McGrath, 2021; Hibernian Consulting, 2010; Durrer et al., 2019; RIA, 2021; Durrer, et al., 2021). Very little documentation is available regarding how this interconnection functions and with what impact. This lack of understanding limits how to consider strengthening but also nurturing this industry collectively and within each jurisdiction in a post-Brexit and post-pandemic context. As a result, strategic development of the co-operative and competitive elements of Irish regional cultural industry development has been hampered. This absence is further concerning, especially as Brexit and the pandemic have posed strategic challenges for the livelihoods of a highly mobile cultural workforce and regional competition in cultural tourism (Durrer et al. 2019; McGrath, 2021; Tourism Recovery Taskforce, 2020; DfC, 2021; NCFI, 2021).



## Research Approach

We took a collaborative approach to scoping the extent and nature of all-island relations in dance and theatre and to understanding what needs for development might exist. Working principles emphasising learning, sharing and critical debate, mutual respect and the equal valuing of one another's perspective and experience were agreed amongst us as a Core Research Group (Durose, et al., 2014; Campus Engage, 2017). This approach meant being responsive to the evaluation of research focus and language. It has included the revision of the original research questions and the gathering of additional empirical data beyond that which was planned (see Discussion Paper 1 for details: Durrer & McAlister, 2022a).

In summary, the Core Research Group members worked together to collate and analyse the following data:

- Academic literature across political science, public administration, arts management, cultural policy, theatre and dance and social sciences
- Sector-based reports
- Sector-based workforce surveys
- Expenditure of Arts Council funding (Ireland and Northern Ireland) to dance and theatre (individual artists and companies) in the last year; only annually recurring funding strands as opposed to one-off calls, special programmes and Covid support funds
- Public policies related to pandemic closures and recovery; spatial planning; tourism; foreign affairs; arts and culture
- 4 half-day workshops to explore cross-border knowledge and experiences of a range of arts, local authority, civil society and research professionals with two accompanying Discussion papers (Durrer & McAlister, 2022a, 2022b)
- 3 Zoom meetings to review data amongst Core Research Group
- Semi-structured interviews with six case relationships to highlight the lived experience of cross-border working. Further detailed in Table 1, these involved 6 pairs of arts workers previously or currently engaging in cross-border relations: 3 pairs each of dance and theatre. Case relationships correspond to the types described in Table 1 in Part 3.
- An online focus group exploring the impact of Brexit with 10 arts workers
- Interview with a local authority network CEO
- Audit of the Arts Council Ireland / Arts Council Northern Ireland touring scheme
- Narrative experiences of the administrative and funding practices in and across two jurisdictions of the Core Research Group members

**Table 1.** *Cross-Island Relationships Studied Through Semi-structured Interviews*

Association	Art form	Form	Regularity	Form of contact	Base-site
Co-production (Co-Financing)	Theatre	Venue	A few occurrences mostly since 2014	Producing house to producing house	Belfast / Dublin
Co-production (Artistic Collaboration)	Dance	Company	Three times since 2002	Commissioning Company to company	Belfast / Dublin
Joint-Working (Artistic Collaboration)	Dance	Freelance	Recently (within last 3 years)	Freelance artist to freelance artist	Belfast / Dublin-Wicklow
Cross-jurisdiction Company	Theatre	Company	Since the 1990s	Community – engaged and professional	Dublin / Portadown
Company engaging in Cross-island Practice	Dance	Company	Regular	Community – engaged and professional	NI border / rural
Networking, Showcasing, Development	Theatre	Freelance	Recently (within last 3 years)	Developmental and showcasing	Belfast

The literature review was carried out by the Project’s Research Assistant, Dr Emma McAlister. The academic lead, Dr Victoria Durrer conducted all interviews and workshop / focus group discussions. Dr Aoife McGrath led on data collation on the sector from the two Arts Councils. Data from the research was presented at workshops by Durrer and McAlister. Core Research Group members then provided feedback and shared their data through engaged critical discussion.

The academic research team (Durrer, McAlister, and McGrath) led the collective through a thematic approach to analysis. Such an approach is appropriate for identifying common patterns of meaning and experience across a data set, but particularly so for our own inquiry regarding: a) the types of cross-island relationships existing, b) capturing what enables and hinders those relationships, and c) the identification of capacity building (Braun & Clarke, 2012).



# PART 2



# SETTING THE SCENE

While work is being conducted by Creative Ireland (2022) to map the Creative Industries in Ireland, there is no comprehensive data on the composition of the cultural industries in either jurisdiction. What exists is piecemeal. There are academics working to establish a stronger research base and agenda in dance and theatre specifically (see Durrer, et al., 2019; McGrath, 2013; 2018; 2021; Roche, 2016; FitzGibbon, 2019). There is also representation of sector-led research, from both Arts Councils as well as organisations like the National Campaign for the Arts (NCFA), Irish Theatre Institute, Theatre Forum, and Dance Ireland in Ireland. In Northern Ireland, Arts Recovery (formerly Arts Matters) and Theatre and Dance Northern Ireland are leading the effort. While local authorities may hold relevant data, it is not joined-up.

### Dance and Theatre Workforce Data

There is no recent research providing comprehensive quantitative data relating to the dance and theatre workforces on the island (e.g., number of production companies, employees, and freelancers currently active). The largest dance resource organisation for professional artists in Ireland, Dance Ireland, has a current membership of 217. Theatre and Dance NI's membership includes both dance and theatre practitioners, with current overall membership of 236 members. 67% of the 139 respondents to the latest Dance Counts Survey, an all-island survey conducted by Dance Ireland and sent to 198 Dance Ireland members and 236 Theatre and Dance NI members in 2021, stated they work predominantly on a freelance basis (Campbell, et al., 2022). Theatre and Dance NI currently has 186 fully paid members. These members include 8 dance companies and 23 theatre producing companies including opera; other members include venues, festivals and resource organisations. 70% of members identify as freelancers.

The over 15-year-old 2005 Arts Council Ireland report, *Socio-Economic Conditions of Theatre Practitioners in Ireland*, estimates that there were ca.900 employees working in the theatre industry in Ireland at the time. However, Barton & Murphy's (2022) recent final report for Creative Ireland's 'Ecologies of Cultural Production' project suggests there may have been a decline in the workforce active in the sector since then, based on the discrepancy between the total number of production companies listed in the Irish Theatre Institute database (126) and active production company members of Irish Theatre Forum (28), the leading representative body for theatre in Ireland (Barton & Murphy, 2022: 27). Apart from Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company in Derry, none of the dance or theatre companies across the island maintain a full-time ensemble.

#### Dance

Dance Ireland's 2021 Dance Counts Survey shows that dancers access regular work in urban areas across the island, with Dublin being the most common location identified in Ireland (58% of respondents) and Belfast the most common in NI (20%) (Campbell, et al., 2022). Other urban areas of significant activity include Limerick (30%), Cork (29%) and Galway (20%), with qualitative data showing that Derry is also a hub for dance (Campbell, et al., 2022).



For Ireland and NI, the respective Arts Councils continue to be the main sources of funding support for professional dance practice, with 80% of respondents to the 2021 Dance Counts Survey who were in receipt of funding over the past 5 years (67% of respondents) identifying this as their main source (Campbell et al., 2022). ACI funding data from recurring funding strands for dance therefore provide one way of measuring professional activity in the sector across the two jurisdictions, although it is important to note that it cannot be understood as capturing all activity (McGrath & Meehan, 2018). In Ireland, a summary of data across the main recurring funding schemes for dance in 2022 shows:

- Strategic funding ranging between €72,000 and >€500,000 was awarded to 6 dance companies (Ballet Ireland, CoisCéim Dance Theatre, Irish Modern Dance Theatre, Liz Roche Company, Teach Damhsa, and United Fall), 3 dance resource and/or support organisations (Dance Ireland, Dance Limerick, LD Dance Shawbrook) and 1 dance festival (Dublin Dance Festival).
- Arts Grants ranging between >€32,000 and >€150,000 were awarded to 8 dance artists and companies and 1 dance resource organisation.
- Dance Project Awards between >€34,000 and €90,000 were awarded to 8 dance artists and companies.
- Dance Bursary grants between >€4,000 and €20,000 were awarded to a further 20 individual dance artists.
- Touring and Dissemination grants (including advance planning award) between >€23,000 and >€300,000 were awarded to 4 individual dance artists and 1 organisation (NASC), and a further 2 dance festivals were awarded funding between €13,000 and >€18,000 in the Touring Investment Scheme.
- Dance Artist Residency grants between >€8,000 and €25,000 were awarded to 5 individual dance artists.
- 1 dance company received a Traditional Arts grant of €53,000, and further grants for traditional dance artists were awarded in the Bursary and Touring schemes.
- 2 youth dance companies were awarded between €90,000 and >€110,000 in Strategic Funding, with a further 4 youth dance companies awarded between >€9,000 and >€24,000 under the Young Ensembles Scheme.

**In NI, data for Arts Council Northern Ireland (ACNI) awards for dance in 2022–2023 shows:**

- 4 dance companies in receipt of Annual Funding (Lottery funding) ranging from >£47,000 to >£112,000 (DU Dance, Dylan Quinn Dance Theatre, Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company and Maiden Voyage Dance).
- 1 dance and theatre resource organisation awarded >£136,000 of Exchequer funding (Theatre and Dance NI).

**Additionally, the 2019–2020 data for the ACNI SIAP (Support for Individual Artists Programme) awards shows:**

- 1 Artist Career Enhancement award of £4,761.
- 4 General Art awards of between £2,945 and £4,000.
- 1 Professional Arts Abroad award of £8525.
- 4 Travel Awards of between £100 and £500.

## Theatre

Although there are commercial theatres in operation (the Bord Gáis Theatre and the Gaiety Theatre in Dublin, for example), the majority of professional theatre practice across the island also relies on subsidy from the two Arts Councils. As with dance, data related to this funding remains a useful, if incomplete, indicator of professional activity on the island. The theatre landscape across both jurisdictions is comprised of large producing houses in urban areas (primarily Dublin and Belfast) that receive the vast majority of funding, and a number of smaller companies and individual artists operating in urban and regional locations. As with dance, a large proportion of the sector's workers across the island operate on a freelance basis (Barton & Murphy, 2022; Maples et al., 2022). In Ireland, a summary of data across the main, recurring funding strands for theatre in 2022 shows:

- Strategic funding awards of €7,500,000 for the Abbey Theatre (Dublin), €2,500,000 for the Gate Theatre (Dublin), €1,172,400 for Druid Theatre (Galway), and €1,050,900 for Dublin Theatre Festival. Strategic funding between >€74,000 and >€379,000 was awarded to a further 7 theatre companies and 1 theatre resource organisation.
- Arts Grants ranging between >€74,000 and >€250,000 awarded to 15 theatre artists and companies.
- 105 Theatre Project Awards between >€2,000 and €149,000 awarded to individual theatre artists and companies.
- Theatre Bursary grants between >€3,000 and €20,000 awarded to 37 individual theatre artists.
- Touring and Dissemination grants (including advance planning award) between >€35,000 and >€119,000 awarded to 11 individual theatre artists and companies.
- Theatre Artist Residency grants of €20,000 awarded to 5 individual theatre artists.
- Youth Theatre Ireland awarded strategic funding of €300,000 and a further 10 youth theatre groups awarded funding between >€9,000 and €25,000 under the Young Ensembles Scheme.

In NI, the majority of ACNI funding for theatre (referred to as Drama) in 2022-23 was awarded through the Annual Funding strand to the The Lyric Theatre in Belfast (£1,015,308, Exchequer). The Metropolitan Arts Centre (MAC) Belfast, which programmes theatre alongside visual art exhibitions, dance, and workshop activities, was awarded £1,100,500 (Exchequer). Additionally, the 2022-23 data shows:

- The Belfast International Arts Festival, which programmes both dance and theatre productions, awarded £207,243 in annual funding.
- Further Annual Funding awards between >£15,000 and >£142,000 awarded to 10 theatre companies (mixture of Exchequer and Lottery funding).
- 10 theatre companies awarded between £5,000 and £40,000 across the Small Grants and Lottery Project Funding schemes.
- 1 youth theatre company awarded Annual Funding of £52,654.

The 2019–2020 data for the SIAP (Support for Individual Artists Programme) awards for Drama shows:

- 1 Artist Career Enhancement award of £5,000
- 1 Professional Arts Abroad Award of £10,000
- 4 Artists International Development Fund awards between £1,978 and £5,000
- 2 Self Arranged Residency Awards between £1,470 and £5,000
- 11 General Art Awards between £1,060 and £3,000
- 18 travel awards between £100 and £800

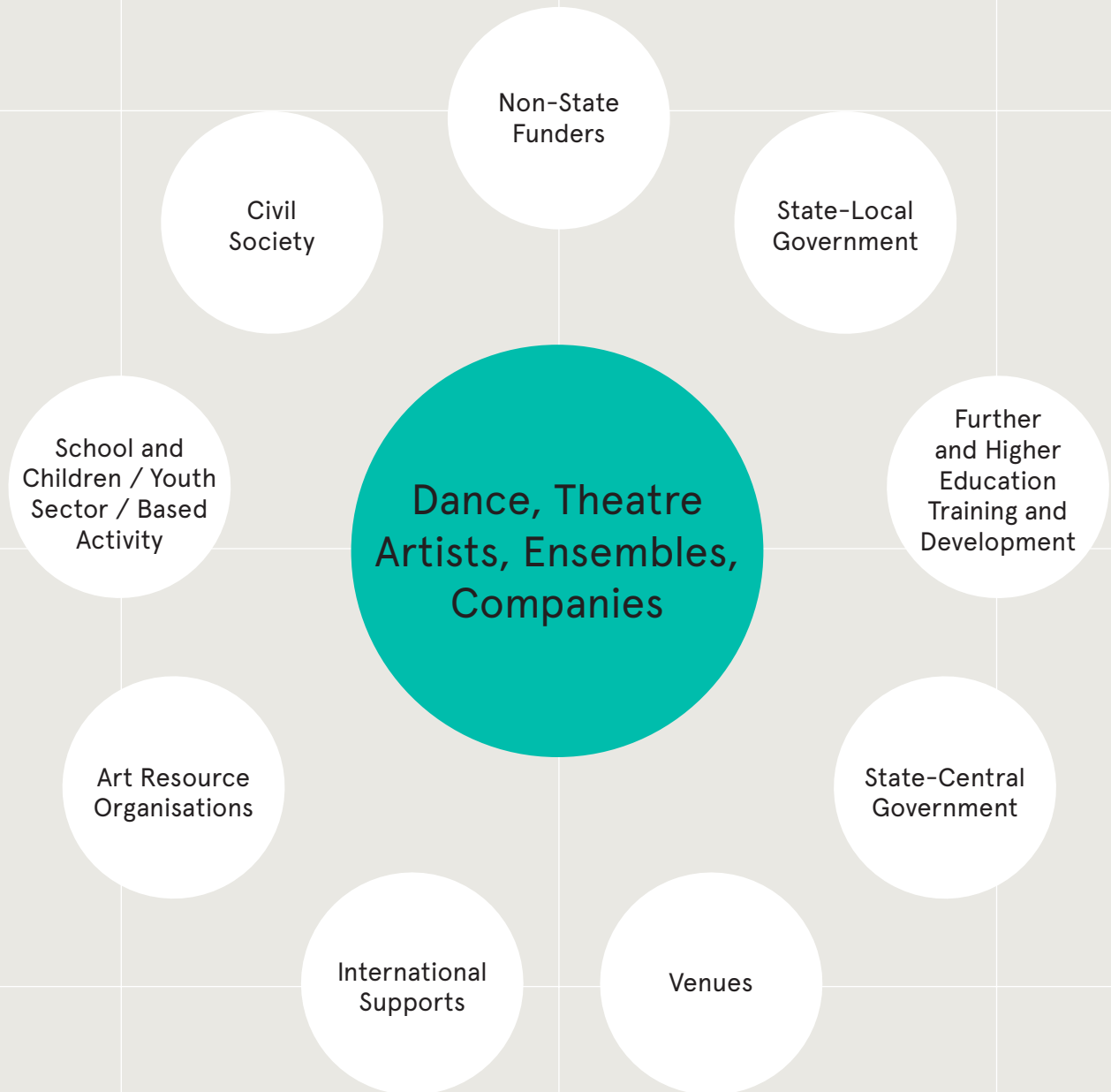
## Funding & Development Disparity in Dance & Theatre on the Island

Data convergence and thus comparable data on financial resourcing of dance and theatre between the two jurisdictions is lacking, and what data exists requires nuanced comparison. Nevertheless, it is clear there is significant disparity between the two jurisdictions in the publicly subsidy of the arts.

A number of state / public bodies provide funding to the arts, in which dance and theatre is our focus. In Ireland, state funding emanates largely from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (DTCAGSM). It distributes funding through ACI, Culture Ireland and Creative Ireland. Local authorities (especially, but not limited to arts offices) fund the arts by way of multiple sources, including individual ACI grants as well as each local authorities' use of funds from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLCG), in addition to other sources. The landscape of funding support in NI is significantly smaller with ACNI being the main body in addition to other funding supports provided by the Department for Communities (DfC) and local authorities. Both jurisdictions follow the arms-length principles of funding in relation to financial resources originating from central government. Both jurisdictions avail of funding from a range of philanthropic bodies, including Atlantic Philanthropies and the Ireland Funds, as well as supports via the Special European Union Programme Bodies, such as PEACE and the former INTERREG (with PEACE Plus forthcoming), and by way of corporate and business sponsorship. Resources are also provided to project and / or programme specific grants from other civil society and higher education related bodies.

While some, but not all of these relationships may be financial, the ecosystem that supports dance and theatre is varied and includes central and local state bodies, higher education, arts resource organisations, venues and international organisations and bodies, as generalised in Figure 1 below. Overall, financial resourcing varies, but can include spend towards capital project and development of physical infrastructure, financial allocations to arts programmes and projects as well as staffing in addition to education and training within the dance and theatre sectors (as opposed to within higher education). There is much resource provided through in-kind support of goods and / or services.

**Figure 1.** *Broad range of agencies that interact with and share resources with dance and theatre*



This variety of interaction means that it is difficult to ascertain an actual figure of investment. It suggests that investment may be piecemeal, rather than strategic. It also points to the fact that much time and resource is spent amongst arts workers on acquiring financial resources, explored further below.

Even with the difficulty this variety presents for data collection and analysis of financial resourcing, an overview does indicate that there is simply greater financial investment by the state towards the arts in Ireland. The two main bodies that support the professional, publicly subsidised sectors of dance and theatre are ACI and ACNI. ACNI has noted that “despite fulfilling almost identical functions,” spending comparisons with other regions of the United Kingdom (UK) and Ireland demonstrate “stark differences in investment in the arts with NI having the “lowest per capital Government spending” (ACNI, 2021a: 6), increasing the reliance on Lottery Funds:

<b>Table 2.</b> <i>Comparison of Government Arts Spending (ACNI, 2021a: 6)</i>	<b>Republic of Ireland</b>	£28.52
	<b>Wales</b>	£10.41
	<b>Northern Ireland</b>	£5.38

The increase in 2021 / 2022 in exchequer funding to ACI at €130 million, which was retained for 2023, differs greatly from the investment in ACNI. In addition to resourcing new posts which impacted the cultural industries workforce (DfC, 2022a), the NI DfC provided £10m as well as £1.1m for capital projects. The most recent budget announced by Ireland’s DTCAGSM includes the allocation of 35 million euro for the Artist Basic Income Scheme and dedicated funds for capital projects, climate change action, and support for the night time economy (DTCAGSM, 2022). Culture Ireland was allocated €6.6 million in 2023. It supports artists resident in NI as well as in Ireland. Yet, how this funding distribution is broken down was not ascertained in our research. While the British Council may support the cultural industries, it does not engage with the promotion of Irish arts, regardless of jurisdiction, in the same way or with the same goals as Culture Ireland.

Disparity also occurs in local level arts development and investment. The Creative Ireland initiative, which is a significant source of financial investment and profile-raising for the arts in RoI, is not similarly available in NI. ACI has strategic engagement with local authorities through their *Framework for Collaboration*, an agreement with the County and City Management Association to support arts development in every county in Ireland through financial investment and common targets and measures of achievement (ACI & CCMA, 2016). Such joint-working with local level is not the case in NI (Durrer, et al., 2019). DfC (2022b) recently announced efforts to help address this lack of alignment in its new strategy, *Culture, Arts & Heritage: A Way Forward*. While many arts and cultural officers strive otherwise, NI “policy has positioned many local council arts and cultural service staff in roles as venue programmers and building managers” at the expense of broader arts development (Durrer, 2017: 21). This circumstance limits the capacity for looking across the border, much less fostering joint-working. As local authority supports for the arts vary across territories but also based on the positioning of the arts within particular directorates and within corporate as well as community and local plans, more nuanced research on the financial and human resourcing of the arts by local authorities is needed.

Public financial investment in the arts also includes other forms of financial and welfare supports and exemptions. *Minding Creative Minds* (2022) offers wellbeing and counselling supports to a range of arts workers across the island and amongst the Irish diaspora. More recently Ireland's DTCAGSM has resourced research and an associated dignity at work programme of supports, *Safe to Create*. Managed by the Irish Theatre Institute in partnership with ACI, it is aimed at ensuring "safe and respectful working conditions in the arts and creative sectors" (*Safe to Create*, 2022: np). Aosdána, an elected all-island arts membership group, supports some members with a stipend (titled "Cnuas"), intended to support full-time arts work. Additionally, artists in Ireland can avail of the Artist Tax Exemption Scheme, though it is limited in nature for performing artists (e.g., sales from live performances remain taxable) and does not include tax exemption for the sale of choreographic works. While NI artists qualify for the scheme when receiving payment from, or in, Ireland, there is no such scheme in NI. Further, standard rates of pay are higher for arts workers in Ireland.

While briefly outlined, this disparity is complicated by wider lived realities in each jurisdiction, such as significant disparities in Gross Domestic Product per capita and living standards between the two jurisdictions (Bergin & McGuinness, 2021: 145). All of these circumstances present financially inequitable ground on which all-island cooperation in the cultural industries takes place, requiring discussion of "shared" conditions to be approached with sensitivity to these inequities.

## **Working Conditions of Arts Workers, Pathways for Development, Sustainability of Careers**

The nature of dance and theatre work is characterised by high levels of mobility and precarity. Within the context of the island an additional consideration is the lack of structures and opportunities for formal training and development in the art forms.

### Mobility in Work

Dance and theatre work is highly mobile by nature, with cross-border movement—whether transnational or more locally-based a near expectation or requirement of the industry for gaining work, making work and showcasing work (Vidović & Žuvela, 2022; Pickard & Risner, 2020). Even outside the arts, arts worker mobility,

*has been recognised as one of the essential aspects of international cooperation, external relations, and economic growth. Apart from the 'top-down' supranational levels of interest in policy agendas for mobility, the arts and cultural sectors have been engaged in mobility practice for quite a long time (Vidović & Žuvela, 2022: 2).*

Arts workers in Ireland are no exception. However, the situation of education and training on the island makes leaving the island a particular requirement, especially for those aspiring to work in certain genres of dance, such as ballet (McGrath, 2021; McGrath & Meehan, 2018; Brinson, 1985). How this mobility relates to the Shared Island context is further explored below.

### Precarity

As part of a broader turn towards the gig economy, dance and theatre work is characterised as precarious:

Some [arts workers] spend the majority of their careers within the same structure or collaboration, while many others operate in a number of different environments through freelance or other precarious statuses. Artists and cultural and creative professionals are highly likely to be self-employed, freelancers, work part-time, combine two or more jobs, or do not have a permanent contract, which means that they are often excluded or only partially covered by social security protection

(EENCA, 2020: 7).

Work is often short-term, with low-pay, and dependent upon project funding cycles. The nature of this work means that many arts workers spend a great deal of time attempting to source and ensure sustainability of income—whether that is for companies and organisations or for themselves as individual freelancers.

These circumstances infringe on time for creative and professional development, but also impact health and well-being (Campbell, et al., 2022; Maples et al., 2022). As a result of this nature of working from project to project, arts workers are understood to be “always in motion and never in [strategic] action” (Workshop 2, 9 May 2022). Non-arts related tasks are often a large part of work activity, involving heavy amounts of project-based administration, including reporting to various funders. These funders can have vastly different requirements for such reporting that can further weigh on workloads (Jankowitz & Campbell, 2019). While these activities take time and thus might account for loss of income, there are further such unacknowledged or ‘hidden costs’ of work that involve emotional labour and the caring of others, such as artistic collaborators and / or arts participants, which can be a particular circumstance (though not limited to) collective, ensemble and community based activity (Belfiore, 2021).

The cultural industries “rely on risk-taking, flexibility and experimentation” (Durrer, 2018: 77), but in order to take risks they require robust and reliable administrative and management systems (FitzGibbon, 2019). Much like critiques of the gig-economy on a wider scale, this project cycle of working fosters a fragile ecosystem, exacerbated by its dependence upon much part-time and freelance employment. It facilitates an atmosphere in which funders, arts organisations and artists are risk-averse in resourcing, programming and the creation of work. As confirmed in our own data collection, it is one in which ‘tribalism’ is borne as individuals and organisations compete for limited resources (Maples et al., 2022). It weakens income stability as well as the architecture of administrative and management required to sustain and strategically develop dance and theatre companies in either jurisdiction. The potential of the arts for image-building, cultural diplomacy and tourism –crucial elements within the Global Ireland agenda (DfA, 2020) and NI’s *New Decade New Approach* (NI Executive, 2020)—is thus unfulfilled.

Precarity results in the further marginalisation and exclusion of diverse groups of people, voices and cultural forms from being experienced and platformed. Getting work is often dependent upon self-funded professional development and training, and individual and personality-driven socialising and networking processes that can make or break job opportunities (Brook et al., 2020; Van Assche, 2020). While less data is available for Ireland and NI contexts, such circumstances are recognised in existing research and policy as resulting in high levels of inequality in terms of who can access and sustain work in the cultural sector, particularly in relation to experiences

of disability, gender, sexuality, racial and ethnic diversity, and socio-economic class (Banks 2022; Campbell, et al., 2022; Maples et al., 2022; McGrath, 2021, ACI, 2020; in other art forms see O'Brien & Liddy, 2021; Monaghan, 2021; Liddy, 2016). One of our research respondents reflected this experience:

“This [precarity] means that the voices of people with caring responsibilities are excluded... people with kids, people who care for older relatives ...are progressively lost from the sector.... basically we lose wisdom and experience and a broad range of voices...”

(Brexit Focus Group, Arts worker 4, 2 September 2022)

Even on a fundamental level, arts workers on low and / or inconsistent incomes cannot afford to buy tickets, to travel, nor to pay for overnight stays to attend performances. This inability to experience the creative work of others further limits cultural exchange and creative and aesthetic development (Banks, 2017).

While not unique to the Irish circumstance, such precarity constitutes an unstable system for fostering all-island relations in the cultural industries. The pandemic and Brexit have exacerbated the uncertainty that comes with such circumstances.

#### Covid-19 Pandemic, Brexit and Valuing of the Arts

Brexit and the pandemic both underline and challenge the possibilities for all-island relations (Durrer et al. 2019; McGrath, 2021; Tourism Recovery Taskforce, 2020; DfC, 2021; NCFA, 2021). How these challenges have been addressed and the readiness to respond is felt to be indicative of the political will to support, and thus the perceived value of, the cultural industries.

Covid-19 simultaneously and more widely exposed both the public's interest in broader artistic and creative activity (Maitland, 2021: 2) and the precarious working conditions of the cultural industries. Ireland's government is generally regarded as having responded well to the financial and organisational needs the pandemic brought upon the sector in its wake. With the addition of the Artist Basic Income Scheme, it has seemingly acknowledged the issues of financial precarity that the pandemic made (more) visible to policymakers. Despite the broader precarity and its infringement on strategic development of the industries, there are signals of good political support and value for the arts—particularly support of the artist—in Rol (NCFA, 2022).

In contrast, research participants from NI described themselves as “fighting a battle for the basic rights of artists”, especially in relation to resourcing artists (Workshop 1, 27 February 2022). The experience of the pandemic both underlined and exacerbated circumstances for artists where NI's approach to relief funding differed from its UK counterparts:

*In Northern Ireland... the delay in the delivery of Cultural Recovery Funding began to take its toll on organisations that were already in precarious financial situations. Many interviewees confided at this point that they were eating into their financial reserves and that this uncertainty around when the funding would arrive was causing emotional, logistical and financial stress to both colleagues and the wider cultural sector*

(Walmsley et al., 2021: 32).



Additionally, NI has seen a 25% reduction of staff in ACNI core-funded organisations as a result of the pandemic (ACNI, 2021b).

This experience is indicative of the perception of lessened political will towards the arts in NI as compared to peers in Ireland. This perception is complicated by the instability of the NI Executive. As we have discussed elsewhere (Durrer & McCall Magan, 2017):

*“In Northern Ireland, issues of representation and consociational party politics have played a significant part in the overall history of the [former] Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL). The ... consolidation of the Northern Ireland Executive and the rationalisation of 12 ministerial departments into nine, led to DCAL, along with aspects of the Department of Education and the Department for Social Development, being subsumed into a Department for Communities (Northern Ireland Executive, 2017). The elimination of [the words] art and culture from the Department name is indicative of what Ramsey and Waterhouse (2018: 190) refer to as a cultural policy of ‘avoidance’ and ‘ambiguity’”.*

BREXIT compounds these circumstances for the cultural industries. While there has been recognition of concerns in RoI (Durrer, et al., 2019), the response has been more subdued. For the industry, the resulting uncertainty is acutely felt in NI, politically, culturally and in terms of livelihoods, both emotionally and practically. As one research participant indicates the depth of the challenge it presents:

“Thinking about being one island, which was just automatic before, has now got contentious again. And I think we’re seeing [this] somehow as a threat to the idea of the British Northern Ireland or something like that”

(Arts worker 4, 2 September 2022).

There are also a number of operational, administrative and economic matters that seriously hamper cross-border exchange as a result of Brexit. Some key issues are detailed below:

#### **Visa issues**

With the mobility of artists core to the creation and development of dance and theatre, additional visa restrictions for artists are a concern. At the time of writing, it remains unclear what work permissions are required for inviting companies and / or developing cross-border projects that involve multi-national personnel beyond UK / RoI citizens. One research participant explains:

“[It] is problematic in terms of touring with a company of mixed nationality and also getting companies to Northern Ireland ... from the Republic. ... You get people in the Republic who have a company that’s made up of EU citizens, but not all of them have the right to travel or work in the North. So immediately everything gets complicated and planning [gets] costly. [Planning is] massively lengthened [but with]... a very short turnaround between hearing that you’ve got funding for a project and the very short periods of time to manage the practicality. And suddenly you’ve got this whole visa issue appearing as well –and multiple times, rather than just once or twice.”

(Brexit Focus Group, Arts worker 4, 2022)

Research participants note that “automatic cross-border travel and working rights [on the island] for all residents of the island” are needed.



### **An Increase in Regulatory / Legal Complexity**

A perception of “bureaucratic divergence” between the jurisdictions has emerged for practitioners post-Brexit with research participants noting that there have been “rule changes around payments, banking, ... and address location” (Brexit Focus Group, Arts worker 4, 2022) even when accepting dedicated N-S funding, such as the North-South Cooperation Scheme via Ireland’s DTCAGMS.

### **ATA Carnet and the Movement of the Goods**

The ATA Carnet, the international customs document that allows the tax-free and duty-free temporary export and import of non-perishable goods is crucial for many different cultural industries including dance and theatre. It currently costs 300 GBP and the bureaucracy around the process post-Brexit has become problematic for an industry lacking staff and administrative capacity. The sequencing is tight. Should items listed be missing a serial number, or an item not be listed, and extra paperwork is required—if anything is out of step, as one research participant explained:

“NI based promoters and venues now have to meet the costs of ATA Carnets for visiting companies from Great Britain, which just adds to the already high costs of presenting artists from outside Northern Ireland. Moreover, any delay to sets and other physical assets clearing customs runs the risk of show deadlines being missed and ultimately lost box office and other potential income if shows are cancelled”.

(Brexit Focus Group, Arts Worker 2, 2022).

While the ATA Carnet is a concern perhaps more directly relevant to East-West relations, it compounds the uncertainty across the sector. Further, such a concern can affect what kinds of shows can be toured and associated costs across the island, which further impacts the potential diversity of work available and experienced. Finally, the circumstance demonstrates the ways in which dance and theatre need the same supports and resources as regards information that other industries are provided.

### **Increased Costs and Economic Divergence**

Suppliers from Great Britain for materials for building stages or seating units sometimes have high materials and / or high delivery costs because of Brexit. While this may eventually stabilise, a lack of clarity of the “exact status of Northern Ireland vis-a-vis both the European Union and Great Britain” means further uncertainty and a lack of creative flexibility in the development of work, as “sets produced to cost in the region of three to five thousand GBP to build now cost twelve” (Brexit Focus Group, Arts Worker 4, 2022), which is further complicated by currency exchange rate fluctuations. Such circumstances will further “amplify” the economic differences existing for arts workers in each jurisdiction.

### Emotional Stress and Anxiety

The impact of Brexit on citizenship and belonging has resulted in emotional stress and anxiety for some. It has increased not only job insecurity but also right-to-remain insecurity for some research participants. Additionally, it has forced what is perceived to be an intrusive conversation amongst fellow workers regarding citizen identities, as one research participant explained,

“We’ve never been in a position before where we’ve had to sit down the team and go, ‘Okay, which of you have a British passport?’ That shouldn’t be something that has to come up... We’re really conscious [of having had] to force this conversation. Especially when] there’s a van going [abroad] with two people in it: They’re on two different passports. There’s no idea what’s going to happen. Nobody knows [will they be allowed to travel? Will they be stopped?] But that’s the biggest issue for us is actually not being able to get answers”

(Brexit Focus Group, Arts worker 7, 2022)

The persistent uncertainty and inability to “get answers” fuels a perception of valuelessness for arts workers within the political culture in NI. Even if attempting to place them in a “non-hostile context”, the “bi-polarity of political, religious and cultural divisions” in NI have been in some ways an “ossified” aspect of the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) (Adshead & Tonge, 2009: 156). While there has been shift over time, this circumstance is evident in the political uncertainty created by a lack of a sitting Executive over a number of recent periods (ie. 2017 – 2020, see also NESG 2022, p. 111), including at the time of writing, exacerbating the experience of precarity in arts work with Brexit and the loss of the artistic workforce since the pandemic. One research participant explains that this type of environment requires of arts workers “tenacity and the ability to be able to survive” (DCNI Arts Worker, 2022).

Coupled with the disparity in political and financial support NI peers appraise as taking place in RoI, there is an additional perception that some colleagues in Ireland may lack understanding or be ambivalent regarding what exactly Northern Irish arts workers are experiencing. Research participant DCNI continues:

“...sometimes I think people will ... [pause]... not hear the bit that I feel I am saying. [I’m trying to explain]... that if there are no structures in place to support people, there is nothing for them to hang on to. And therefore they’ll stop trying to hang because they can’t. There is literally nothing for them to cling on to. Because it’s either luck or ... tenacity and you need to have all of them a little bit, and not everyone can have them because of their circumstances ...”

(DCNI, 27 May 2022).

While these circumstances create challenging ground on which to initiate and develop cross-island relations, many relations exist that demonstrate the interdependence and strong affinity and support for one another within the cultural industries across the island. The report now turns to discuss our initial learning regarding the means and ways by which arts workers and organisations have connected. What we detail in the remainder of the report points a way toward building capacity for relations presented in Section 6.

# PART 3



# TYPES, EXTENT & NATURE OF RELATIONS



## Types of Relations

Despite each jurisdiction's differing contexts of policy and development, our research indicates that the professional, publicly-subsidised dance and theatre sectors are economically and developmentally connected in a number of ways. This section focuses on the types and extent of cross-island relations that we have captured.

There are a variety of relationships existing in dance and theatre across the island, presented in Table 3. While all of these relationships involve financial exchange, either in the form of actual monies or staff time, activities focus on the co-production of work; touring of work and joint working that involve artistic or administrative collaborations sometimes in the case of creating new work or programming. Also involved and sometimes overlapping with co-productions and / or joint-working are training and development initiatives: such as one-to-one mentoring or dedicated programmes on aspects of dance / theatre creation, presentation and / or administration; in addition to networking activities, involving more regular or one-off meetings between individuals, organisations and / or whole sector gatherings.

All of these activities in Table 3 take place at the behest and initiative of individual arts workers and / or whole organisations. Additionally of note, are showcasing and recognition type relations which involve the acknowledgement of Irish theatre or dance work through awards of excellence, regardless of jurisdictional location.

**Table 3.** *Classification of Cross-Jurisdictional Relations at Dance / Theatre Sector Level*

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Form of Association</b>	<b>Agents Involved</b>
<i>Co-Production</i>	Co-financing: Creative, financial (costs, income and risk) & infrastructural contributions from each (e.g. administration, marketing, space, technical). Usually involving cross-border / island touring	Typically larger scale dance / theatre venues and festivals
	Artistic Collaboration: Creative, financial (usually involving fundraising, costs, income and risk) & infrastructural contributions from each (e.g. administration, marketing, space, technical). Usually involving cross-border / island touring	Arts workers (artists / arts managers) and / or companies
<i>Joint-Working</i>	Artistic Collaboration not necessarily with an output, but for creative research / exploration	Arts workers (artists / arts managers) and / or companies
	Administrative Collaboration: e.g. joint research, development of training initiatives; all-island conferences	Dance and / or theatre resource bodies; funding bodies; local state; civil society – arts organisations; the Four Nations Group (ACNI, Arts Council Wales, Creative Scotland and Arts Council England work together and in ways that has invited inclusion of Arts Council Ireland)

**Table 3.** *Classification of Cross-Jurisdictional Relations at Dance / Theatre Sector Level (Cont.)*

<i>Training and Development</i>	Mentoring: often one-to-one meetings advising artists / companies on funding applications; work development; showcasing; administration	Arts worker and arts worker; arts worker and organisation
	Professional development courses / events	Arts worker and arts worker; arts worker and organisation
	Arts resource bodies with all-island membership	Arts worker and organisation  Dance Ireland (Ireland-based, all island membership) as well as Theatre Forum (RoI-based, all island membership) and the Irish Theatre Institute (RoI-based, all island membership)
<i>Showcasing / Recognising</i>	Awards of 'excellence' and recognition	Arts organisations, venues, festivals; amateur arts; (eg Fishamble's A Play for Ireland)
	Touring of work	Arts worker and arts worker; arts worker and venue; arts worker and funder
<i>Networking</i>	Meeting / gathering (virtual or in-person) on a common topic of interest: eg all-island conferences; festival-associated gatherings; one-to-one meetings on areas of mutual interest	Involving multiple individuals and / or organisations; membership based dance and theatre resource bodies; festivals; amateur arts; youth arts



## Financial Relations

Our scoping study indicates a number of different frameworks of financial investment related to the professional, publicly-subsidised dance and theatre sectors. Table 4 provides an overview, further explained below.

<b>Table 4.</b> <i>Classification of Cross-Jurisdictional Financial Relations at Dance / Theatre Sector Level</i>	<b>Funding Relationship</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Funding Agents Involved (Examples include)</b>
	<i>Joint-funding</i>	Organisation core and activity funding	Arts Council Ireland  Arts Council Northern Ireland
	<i>Once-off Project or Programme funding</i>	Typically aimed at supporting collaboration and / or partnership.	EU / SEUPB: Peace Plus funds, Interreg Funds; Atlantic Philanthropies; Ireland Funds; Community Foundation for Ireland; Local government funds and initiatives (including through EU support), IRL Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media N/S Programme; Dept for Foreign Affairs; ACNI; ACI
	<i>Showcase / Recognition funding</i>	Typically aimed at supporting the development or touring of work or recognising excellence in practice.	Culture Ireland and / or British Council funds; the former ACNI / ACI touring award; Dance Ireland; Theatre and Dance NI; Fishamble New Writing Award and Play for Ireland; Dublin Fringe Festival; Abbey Theatre and Dublin Fringe Creative Thinking Award; Project Arts Centre and other venue-associated artist support awards
	<i>Bi-jurisdictional accounts</i>	Companies / organisations that operate financial accounts in both jurisdictions	Individual companies across a variety of art forms



Joint-funding

Both Arts Councils jointly fund some organisations that operate on an all-island basis. How these relationships have come about is not fully captured here, but historical ties have been noted as important. These include dedicated project streams within Dublin Book Festival (Dublin City Council), the Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Visual Artists Ireland and the Irish Writers' Centre as well as archive-oriented organisations, such as the Irish Traditional Music Archive and the Contemporary Music Centre (all-island music archives). Dedicated children's organisations include Children's Books Ireland and Kids' Own Publishing Partnership. All told, writing, publishing and literary-based activity is emphasised here with Irish Pages, Poetry Ireland, Doire Press, Gallery Press, and Little Island supported in addition to dedicated publications, Irish Pages and Photoworks North/ Source Magazine and Stewart Parker Trust. While Stewart Parker Trust and Irish Writers' Centre support playwrights, only one organisation, the Tyrone Guthrie Centre, supports work in multiple areas of the arts, including theatre and dance.

Once-off Project or Programme Funding, aimed at Supporting Collaboration and / or Partnership

These include a range of funders from Special European Union Programmes Body (PEACE and former INTERREG), Cooperation Ireland, Atlantic Philanthropies, and more. Determining actual figures specifically related to funds provided toward the cultural industries, much less specific strands supporting dance and theatre, has been found to be largely impossible due to varying or incomplete reporting mechanisms across different funding bodies (Jankowitz & Campbell, 2019).

Additionally, financing for the types of relationships described above in Table 4 often arises due to arts workers taking the initiative to pool monies from a range of sources, including (but not limited to) project funding applications and awards of excellence for work.

Showcase / Recognition funding

Jurisdiction-based theatre awards, often associated with venues and companies, have been awarded to arts workers, regardless of jurisdictional base.

Financial resourcing of showcasing work has also occurred through a touring scheme. Arts Council Ireland (ACI) established the funding programme, 'Touring and Dissemination of Work Scheme', in 2010 on foot of the Touring Experiment, a multi-year action research project. The Scheme is open to artists and arts organisations across all art forms and supports the costs of creating and touring (or otherwise disseminating) art to audiences. In 2014 – following an agreement reached with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI) – the scheme was adapted to also allow for tours to be funded to visit venues in Northern Ireland. The scheme continued to be managed and processed by ACI – but ACNI staff were engaged in the assessment process for any tours that included a Northern Ireland element. Where a successfully awarded tour included a Northern Irish element, the apportioned cost of activities delivered in Northern Ireland were then covered by the ACNI. In 2017 due to budgetary restraints ACNI withdrew from providing financial support and the scheme reverted to only covering tours in Ireland. Both touring activity and planning for touring activity was significantly disrupted in the wake of the pandemic. Details of this scheme from 2014 – 2017 can be made available.

### Bi-jurisdictional Accounts

Some research participants indicated Brexit has been an impetus for establishing financial accounts in both jurisdictions, with indications that further arts organisations and individuals in NI are exploring the idea. Motivation for doing so is indicated as including opportunity to access to a wider variety of funding opportunities.

### **Workforce Mobility**

While cross-border mobility is often a matter of course for arts workers in dance and theatre, there are circumstances related to the cross-island space worth noting. Mobility around and off the island is crucial for accessing work as well as the development of the art forms; both professionally and in community-based contexts.

Arts workers often engage in 'local' work. For our purposes here, local work may be in particular cities, towns and rural areas. They can include: workshop facilitation; schools-based work; and community-based theatre and / or dance; as well as presentation of work in venues and through festivals. They may also entail artist-in-residence schemes, often with an arts worker being based in a particular locality for an extended period of time and often as the only source of dance or theatre engagement for some publics and places.

The workforce is also international, involving travel abroad for performances and other opportunities. It often also involves representing the island or 'Irish arts' abroad at festivals such as the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, or in showcases in Asia and North America. Below is an overview of this mobility:

- Arts workers are based in, and travel throughout, the island for work, to make and present work and facilitate participation through schools, community groups, youth, adults;
- Arts workers are based in, and travel throughout, the island for professional development or administrative-related work;
- Dance and theatre resource bodies meet, attend one another's events, promote one another's events, co-develop events / programmes / activities;
- Venues connect for touring and co-production of work;
- Amateur arts groups meet, share, and compete;
- Artists relocate permanently, or for short term residencies;
- Youth arts groups meet, share and (sometimes) compete.

## Locating Relations

Map-marking exercises across interviews and workshops reveal that relationships are more numerous than many research participants had expected. While policy recognises “the importance [of the]... nearest neighbour” in terms of spatial planning (DfR & DECLG, 2020: 15), our research shows that relationships and flow of connections are operating both border proximate and across the island. This movement is not only North-South. There are also strong links East-West and further afield internationally—with the work force and the showcasing of work both coming from, and going, abroad.

One respondent illustrates the inter-relations:

“We [based in Belfast] were funded by the Irish Theatre Institute, Dublin Fringe [Festival], and Fishamble: The New Play Company, [all based in Ireland] ... So that we could film in Belfast, and have some time to rehearse [our theatre show and] have some time to write it have time to pay an artist like a graphic designer to do set and ...to do the lighting and things like that.”

(TFNI-2, 2022).

In addition, arts workers are engaging in activities across multiple sectors: higher education, local authority, civil society, tourism, cultural industries with performances, participation activities and the development of work sited in a variety of venues: arts venues, schools, community halls, festivals.

While urban areas and particularly Dublin and Belfast dominate the representation of places where art workers were from and where activity takes place, rural areas emerged as places to “source” arts workers as they are where arts workers live. They are also noted as “target” locations to which arts workers travelled for work (Rau, 2012: 38).

Relations are also built and maintained in the virtual space. Digital tools and video conferencing platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams, as well as social media, have facilitated people being able to meet and develop projects, particularly in relation to places that are difficult to get to for those without access to transport and as a result of the pandemic (see also Maples, et al., 2022). Yet the depth of such engagement appears to favour those arts workers who have previously held relationships and links.

## Common Education, Training & Development Interests

There is limited offering in education and training for theatre and dance on the island. This limitation means insufficient access to formal / vocational training, especially at third level in NI where there is no longer a degree at Magee / Ulster University in Dance, and there is limited vocational training in performance or directing in theatre. The Lir Academy in Dublin offers a BA in Acting, and an MFA in Theatre Directing, and the University of Limerick offers a BA in Contemporary Dance. However, there continues to be a lack of conservatoire training for dance (i.e., from the age of 15/16) on the island, with dancers wanting to pursue a career involving classical ballet needing to train overseas. At the same time there has been development of arts management and creative producing degrees at universities including NUI Galway, Queen's University Belfast, University College Cork and University College Dublin, which has the longest standing programme in cultural policy and arts management. The MA in Festive Arts at University of Limerick closed in 2021. The latest Arts Council Ireland Dance Policy document, *Advancing Dance (2022)*, outlines plans to develop a Centres for Advanced Training scheme for dance training in Ireland, with a pilot scheme scheduled to be delivered by 2024.

Much professional development is provided from within the sector itself. Resource bodies, such as Theatre and Dance NI (NI-based, NI membership) and Dance Ireland (RoI-based, all island membership) as well as Theatre Forum (RoI-based, all island membership) and the Irish Theatre Institute (RoI-based, all island membership) support arts workers to gain new administrative and creative development skills regardless of where they reside on the island. Research respondents have noted the usefulness of "piggybacking" (Arts Worker, 2022) or linking in with training and development opportunities taking place in the other jurisdiction, as many areas of sector development are shared, for example: pathways for youth into the industry; artist training in particular areas; or need for whole-sector upskilling such as in relation to greening for climate change.

Additionally arts workers themselves have identified and addressed gaps in training provision that are all-island in nature. One arts worker describes:

"...there was nobody doing... [pause] ... we couldn't find [community drama] facilitators, so we started training our own facilitators. Then we got funded [by higher education institutes] to run what was the first third level professional training programme for drama facilitation in community context, [though that no longer exists]"

(TC1 Arts Worker, 29 May 2022).

This arts worker-driven initiative assisted in establishing a network of facilitators trained to specialise in community drama.

# PART 4



# IMPACTS OF CROSS- JURISDICTIONAL WORKING

The impacts of arts worker mobility and cross-border working are both personal and more broad reaching, recognised at supranational and national policy levels “as one of the essential aspects of international cooperation, external relations, and economic growth” (Vidović & Žuvela, 2022: 2). This section discusses the impacts of cross-jurisdictional working we have ascertained from the perspective of research respondents.

### Sharing Risk and Raising Creative Ambition

Respondents engaging in cross-border relationships indicated the ways in which they are able to share risk and raise their own creative ambition through working together. Artistic risk is “an intrinsic element in the lives of artists” consisting of three elements important to “creative sustainability” (FitzGibbon, 2019: 4). These are 1) artistic and organisational experimentation, 2) that which is related to accountability and benefit from spend of public funds, and 3) precarity, especially the “artistic, financial, and emotional risks associated with” making work (see FitzGibbon, 2019: 16 – 18). The ‘risk-averse’ culture of precarity is somewhat navigated by working together. Yet, as we will see, it is not the only, nor the primary reason that cross-border exchange happens.

Some cross-border relationships have pointed to pooling financial resources as a benefit of joint working across the border. More than about ‘value for money’ and sharing the financial risk and the administration of a production, pooling resources provides a means for bolstering the “scale” and ambition of what arts workers can create together (DRoI, 27 May 2022). Working cross-jurisdictionally also provides an opportunity to tour work that would not otherwise tour. Currently, funding in one jurisdiction only allows for touring in that jurisdiction as there is no mechanism to allow border fluidity in public expenditure for touring.

Joint working also provides a means for mutual aspiration and experimentation. One RoI-based respondent describes working on collaborations with their NI peer as being at times “an absolute life saver”, as it has provided opportunity to make work that might not otherwise have happened (DRoI Arts Worker, 2022). Another respondent in a different working relationship noted how working with a peer from NI allowed her to see another perspective on her own ideas (DFRoI Arts Worker, 2022).

### Support

Ireland’s positioning as an island on both the periphery of Europe and Great Britain is relevant to the nurturing and development of the cultural industries here. It is a source of challenge and strength. This positioning “contributes to an impression of isolation but is also a source for collective intimacy of experience [for arts workers]” (Campbell, et al., 2022: 14)

Research respondents reflected on how meeting and connecting with arts workers across the border has provided a form of support, as this arts worker indicates:

“...there was a little bit of financial support in [the other jurisdiction], and a mass of just ... people with knowledge, who were willing to share that knowledge, and willing to ... have coffees with us, take us ... under their wing. If they weren’t able to support us financially they supported us in many, many, many other ways”

(TFNI-2 Arts Worker, 2022)



The relationships we studied point to an interdependency that is absolutely reliant on a complex interlinking of resource bodies, funding and relationships that exist across the two jurisdictions, regardless of where one is based. This above respondent's collaborator agrees and expands on the importance of cross-border relationships to supporting their practice personally and professionally:

"I just I feel like if I'm ever having an issue, or struggling, or feel like funding's an issue or I'm ..., overwhelmed by what I need to put in application forms, I know that those people are always at the other end of an email. And they're very happy to kind of talk me through things."

(TFNI-1 Arts Worker, 2022)

## Industry Resilience and Development

Learning from one another is an important effect of cross-island relationships for both personal and professional development, as well as upskilling. Research respondents often pointed to the ways in which they felt arts workers on the island are "stronger together" (Workshop 4, 7 September 2022). Those engaging in cross-border working relationships pointed to building capacity for their own ways of working, gaining awareness of new procedures, tools, and techniques in areas such as:

- marketing;
- community / education-based arts development work;
- funding and artist support;
- and governance.

This exchange provides informal upskilling. It was particularly noted by those respondents based in Ireland that peers in NI are perceived to have greater experience in collecting data on arts audience experience and impact as well as on the design and development of audience engagement and participatory programming.

## Visibility and Profile Raising

Visibility and profiling is important to the livelihoods of arts workers, the development of work as well as the profile of the region.

### Artist Visibility & Profile

For artists, there is often a belief in dance and theatre that "the more you work abroad [internationally], the more valuable your work is considered" (Vidović & Žuvela, 2022: 2). Arts workers involved in cross-border relations highlighted the importance of gaining access to reviews from different critics and thus a varying assessment of their work. Another noted how recognition in one jurisdiction raised their profile in the other (TFNI-1 Arts Worker, 2022).

In addition to facilitating relationship building, participants indicated that local authorities, organisations located on the border, and international-facing bodies such as Tourism Ireland, Culture Ireland, and the British Council, have been important in raising awareness of the arts workers from the island to international audiences and organisations.

### Regional Visibility / Profile

Promoting Irish arts abroad is a key aspect of Ireland's current *Diaspora Strategy* (DfA, 2020) and the work of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DfA) for both diplomacy, and attracting foreign direct investment and international tourists. The NI Executive has also indicated the importance of this work. Research respondents have pointed to the importance of shared financial investment on the island through the DfA, Culture Ireland, and the British Council in supporting these endeavours. Additionally resource bodies such as Theatre and Dance NI and the two Arts Councils support this activity (ACI, 2019).

### **New Audiences / New Market**

Research respondents have explained that co-productions of theatre and dance are particularly helpful for facilitating exposure of work to new audiences. One respondent explains:

"It brings the company over the border. We wouldn't be pursuing that unless it's through coproduction [with an RoI partner] because we wouldn't have the capacity to do that and indeed our funds wouldn't take us down there. So we simply wouldn't be presenting our work in Cork and Dublin."

(DNI Arts Worker, 2022).

Touring of work indicates that audiences are being exposed to work from one jurisdiction they might not otherwise experience.

### **Cultural Exchange**

Our research confirms the "value of arts and culture in fostering better understanding across communities and tradition on the island" recognised in other areas of Shared Island research (SIU, 2021; NESI, 2021). Dance and theatre play an important role in representing and celebrating "diverse identities" and fostering "constructive dialogue" (SIU, 2021: 4). As such, dance and theatre practice are specific areas of broader aesthetic and social practice. They are fundamental to creative expression and thus in representing and shaping how we perceive, question and understand ourselves, one another, and wider society. Our research also finds that cross-border productions assist in raising awareness in RoI around culture and people from NI beyond traditional binary views.

Reflections from our research participants and members of the Core Research Group highlight that dialogue facilitated through opportunities to meet both in-person and online, especially through this research project and joint-working, have promoted greater awareness and mutual respect for one another's common interests and different political and economic circumstances.

# PART 5



# FACILITATING RELATIONS

In the cultural industries, cross-island work operates through a marriage of formal and informal arrangements. Formal arrangements include structures and procedures such as funding streams, resource allocation, and memoranda of agreement. Informal mechanisms refer to jurisdictional familiarity (perhaps through social or personal and / or familial ties) and social relationships that lead to trust built over time.

At the moment informal, rather than formal, and thus precarious mechanisms typically appear to dominate the initiation of a cross-island industry relationship. However, both – even if built or established over time – are required for relationships to be sustained and to flourish. These different aspects involved are taken in turn below as key enablers to cross-island relations.

Cross-island working, much like any positive partnership or joint-working experience, relies on collaborative relationships, which have a foundation of mutual understanding and trust that is often established prior to any agreement to apply for funding to work together. Trust between individuals is required, even if a relationship is enabled by particular types of project funding. Other requirements for cross- / all-island relations noted in the workshop are: enthusiasm, drive, commitment, trust, goodwill, alignment of interests and mutual benefit, as well as differing knowledge, which might include the capacity to negotiate local politics or gain access to necessary resources. Some of these points are further elaborated on below.

### **Common Institutional Frameworks and Entities:**

Top-down support, through legislation, policy, or higher level funding initiatives that are explicitly supportive of cross-island relationships was noted as a key enabler to cross- or all-island working, providing structures, permissions, arrangements, and means for meeting and connecting. Existing frameworks and entities relevant to formally enabling and helping make cross-jurisdictional relations possible in dance and theatre are illustrated in Figure 2.

**Figure 2.**  
*Snapshot of Existing Frameworks and Entities Relevant to  
 Enabling Cross-Island Relations in Dance and Theatre*

<b>Supranational</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ EU Parliament, 1984 Haagerup Report</li> <li>→ SEUPB</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ INTERREG</li> <li>→ PEACE I – IV, PEACE PLUS</li> <li>→ Cultural Cooperation programmes</li> </ul>
<b>Cross-jurisdictional</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ 1985 Anglo Irish Agreement</li> <li>→ 1998 Good Friday Agreement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ N/S Ministerial Council / Implementation Bodies</li> </ul>
<b>National</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Dept for Communities (NI)</li> <li>→ Dept of Foreign Affairs (ROI)</li> <li>→ Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media N/S Programme (ROI)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Arts Council Ireland</li> <li>→ Arts Council Northern Ireland</li> <li>→ British Council</li> <li>→ Culture Ireland</li> </ul>
<b>Local</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Local Govt partnership bodies: North West Region Cross Border Group; Irish Central Border Area Network, and East Border Region LTD</li> </ul>	
<b>Sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Dance Ireland</li> <li>→ Theatre &amp; Dance NI</li> <li>→ Fishamble New Writing Award</li> <li>→ Dublin Fringe Festival</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Irish Theatre Institute</li> <li>→ Abbey Theatre and Dublin Fringe Creative Thinking Award</li> <li>→ Project Arts Centre and other venue-associated artist support awards</li> </ul>



Some of these frameworks are explicitly aimed at supporting cross-island working (e.g. EU, GFA, local authority networks). Other entities award funds or recognition based on artistic excellence regardless of jurisdictional affiliation. Still others provide permission for cross- or all-island working. Organisations like the two Arts Councils or Dance Ireland and Theatre and Dance NI work together in ways that demonstrate a culture for sharing and connecting across the island, even if there is no explicit remit to do so. With funds often earmarked for spend only in one jurisdiction, research respondents have leveraged funding for cross-island dance and theatre performances that are not explicitly ear marked for that purpose.

There is thus no formal framework as such. However, through the practice of cross-border relations one exists. In addition to our workforce's shared geographical peripherality (in terms of accessing training and touring work, for example), the industry's placement on the importance of mobility, and our geographic proximity, these frameworks help foster a culture that is conducive to interdependency and sharing of resources with one another. In this culture more jurisdictionally and locally specific organisations like Fishamble Theatre and Project Arts Centre can be seen to support cross-island relations through providing recognition, venue space, or small development funds.

## Champions

Champions are those individuals and / or organisations that particularly support and promote cross and all-island relations. They are situated across institutional and sectoral hierarchies. As one research respondent explained:

**“Champions... [are] people in positions, high and low. ...[They work] on the ground [in the sector and] higher up in organizations [at directorial level or in policy making positions], you need them everywhere”**

(Arts worker, 13 June 2022).

Many of our research participants themselves represented these champions or had been supported by them. Champions express a genuine belief in the importance of connecting across the island. This importance regards a desire to develop the industry as one that is deeply interconnected on the island:

**“...It's about overcoming those biases that are hindering the sustainability and the creativity on this island, of all. We genuinely believe that. That is the opportunity for huge strides to be made in professional theatre and dance.”**

(Arts worker, 13 June 2022).

Local authorities, organisations located on the border, and international-facing bodies such as Tourism Ireland, Culture Ireland, and the British Council have been important in facilitating and building relations across the island.

## **Familiarity: Personal Relationships and Networks**

Openness and familiarity with one another on the island was pointed to as a key enabler of enthusiasm and appetite to engage with one another across the border. Typically, initiation and maintenance of relations are reliant upon personal interest, will and commitment, often tied to personal connections. Many respondents pointed to having friends or family residing in the other jurisdiction from which they lived, or as having previously worked in the other jurisdiction themselves, or with someone from there. As well as a broader sense of need for awareness-raising amongst the people on the island of one another, the sense of familiarity one holds in relation to the 'other' jurisdiction was pointed to a number of times as enabling both the belief in the importance of relations, as well as the capability of initiating them.

## **Becoming Familiar: In-person meetings and exchange**

This familiarity is not just personal. Becoming familiar with arts workers through word of mouth, and especially through experiencing one another's work, is an important enabler of identifying and meeting someone with whom to develop a cross-island working relationship. This factor stems in part from the ways in which work in the cultural industries is dependent upon being part of existing professional networks. Those research respondents who are currently engaging in cross-island working relationships all pointed to either having been introduced to their current cross-island partner by another arts worker, having met at an art form related event, having experienced one another's work, or having had previous working relationships built over time. These connections were cited as important factors in initiating any relationship, whether a longer-term partnership project or presentation of work in a venue. When networks do not exist, arts workers often engage in much hidden labour in order to create them, as indicated below:

“Sometimes it's just completely cold calling and building the relationship from scratch. Other times it's a historic relationship that maybe started out with the link initially and then it was developed over time.”

(TC2 Arts Worker, 2022)

## **Mutual Interest**

Common strategic concerns and creative / artistic interests are important foundations for working across the border, even when resourced or supported through top down initiatives or frameworks. Connecting on shared advocacy issues such as pay rights for artists, equality concerns, addressing the climate crisis, or upskilling in digital engagement were noted as examples for more administrative relationships. For artists, the importance of exchanging practice and sharing common artistic vision is also important.



# PART 6



# BUILDING CAPACITY



“By working together I think we genuinely can affect change.”

(Brexit Focus Group, Arts Worker 8, 2 September 2022)

The experience, effect, and reach of cross-island relations is dependent upon the “ethics” of the territorial and cultural policies that frame and influence this way of working (see Comunian & Conor, 2018: 265). Ethical policy means moving beyond simply considering how the arts are useful for realising and supporting international and economic relations. It means considering the livelihoods on which these realisations are based.

To accomplish this goal, this section of the report highlights key areas of development along with a series of higher level policy recommendations and sector-based actions.

## Responsibility & Approach to Building Capacity

We take a multi-dimensional approach to understanding capacity building. We recognise that it is about a systems change. Even so, such change is about more than altering procedures and “organisational level outcomes” (Bryan & Brown, 2015: 430). Capacity building requires people exchanging and learning from one another about our different “operating environments, ... our strengths, our weaknesses” and our congruity as well as our concerns and “readiness” (or not) in working together (Millar & Doherty, 2016: 369).

As such, capacity building is not about developing a one-size-fits-all toolkit of best practices or a training programme for cross-border relations. That approach would not work, as relationships are context dependent. Capacity building is a fuller process of gathering, researching, reflecting, and developing. It is something in which policymakers, funders and arts workers all have a stake, an interest, and some level of agency.

We call for solidarity between the sector and high level policy makers across both jurisdictions. Without agency and action from within the sector amongst arts workers themselves, the potential and reach of top-down initiatives may be limited. As noted in research:

“Much of politics takes place in our heads: that is, it is shaped by our ideas, values and assumptions about how society should be organised, and our expectations, hopes and fears about government. At the end of the day, what we believe about the society in which live may be more important than the reality of its power structure and the actual distribution of resources and opportunities within it”

(Heywood, 2002: 199 Quoted in Adshead & Tonge, 2009: 141).

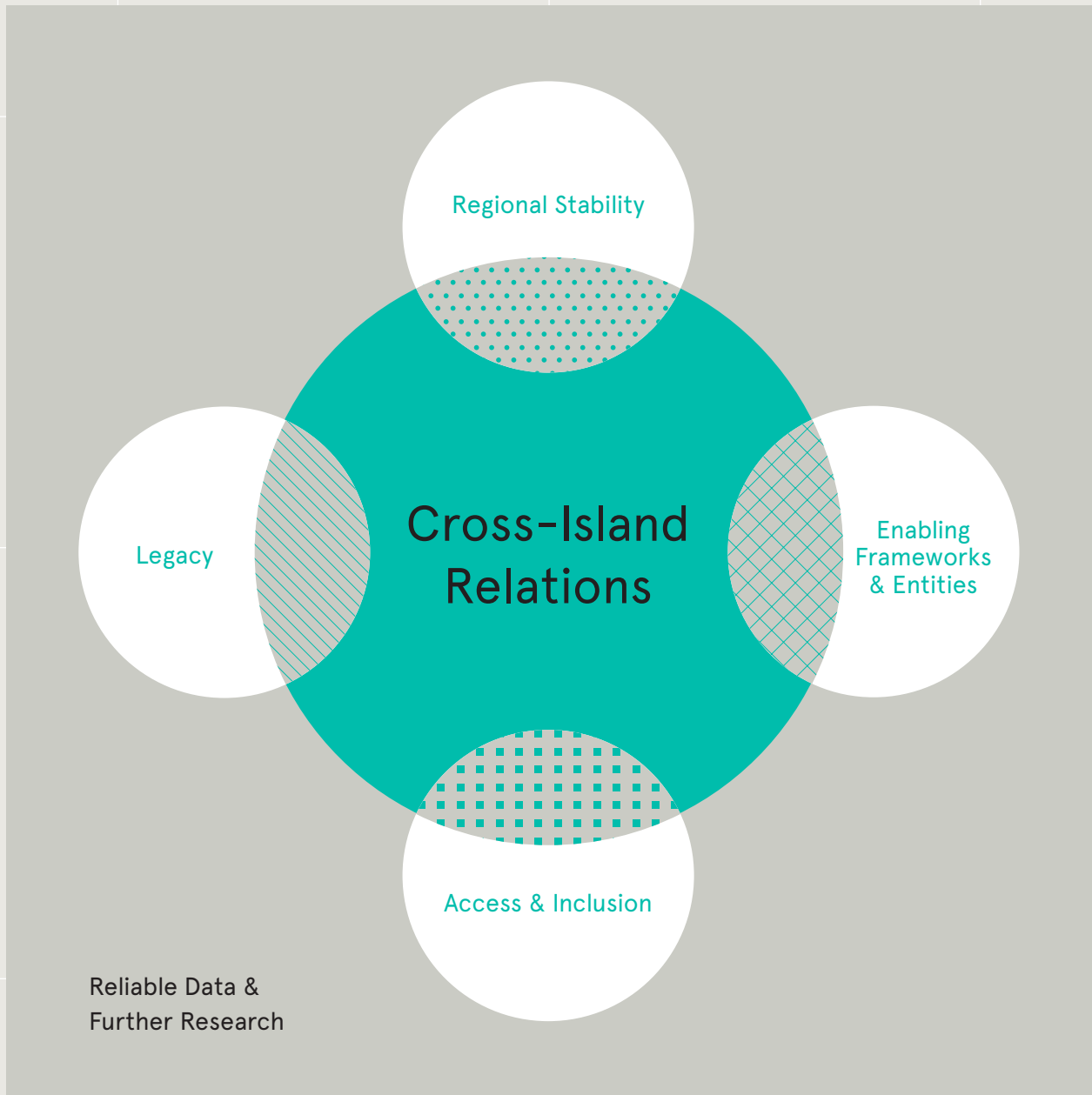
As a result, recommendations for building capacity are addressed at two, interrelated groups:

1. **Higher level Policy makers:** Those teams of elected officials and civil and public servants in both jurisdictions, including:
  - The Shared Island Unit and the NI Executive
  - Government departments in both jurisdictions with remits for culture and / or arts; enterprise; higher education; local development; planning; and foreign affairs
  - Relevant arm’s length bodies
  - Local authorities and the cross-island local authority networks: The Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN); East Border Region (EBR); The Dublin-Belfast Corridor

These agents work to develop the frame or structure that informs and impacts upon the cultural industries.

2. **Industry / Sector Professionals:** Those arts workers in the dance and theatre resource bodies and companies, as well as those who are freelance arts managers and artists. Their work informs and impacts upon government policy. We have identified five key spheres in which capacity building is required. While each is discussed in turn below. We see these areas as interconnected and interdependent and contingent upon reliable data and further research, as outlined in Figure 3.

**Figure 3.** Key Interrelated Areas of Capacity Building



### Data Capture and Research

Referenced further below, underpinning each area of discussion is the fact that our limited knowledge base is a critical capacity building issue. Further areas of research needed are thus identified for each element.

The inclusion of arts workers in shaping the research agenda is crucial to developing an ethical approach to policymaking (FitzGibbon & Tsioulakis, 2022). While quantitative and numerical data may appear de-politicised and assist in revealing broader patterns of practice, they are not neutral, nor do they capture the complexity of lived experience. Research methods that embrace the multiple ways of knowing that exist within arts work is required, as are mixed methods (quantitative, qualitative, arts-based and action research) that recognise and value experiential as well as academic knowledge (McGrath et al. 2021; Durrer & Davey, 2023, forthcoming).

### **Nurture Regional Stability**

“... It is a fire fight. The whole thing is a fire fight in terms of keeping it going.”

(DCNI Arts Worker, 2022)

Findings from our workshops to date show that there is an enthusiastic appetite for championing all-island working. However, the stability of the sector needs to be nurtured on the island for any relationship-building to flourish.

Resourcing differences, particularly funding, has emerged as a potential challenge to initiating, resourcing, and maintaining all / cross-island relations in the professional, publicly subsidised dance and theatre industries. More specifically, the difference in state investment in the arts is felt to evidence most starkly the unequal ‘footing’ on which each jurisdiction is placed when starting to build any sort of relationship, connection, or deeper partnership.

While this instability is not unique to those working on the island of Ireland, this cycle of insecure work is of particular policy interest within the Shared Island endeavour, for which the cultural industries are a key, cross cutting infrastructure as illustrated in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4. Cross-Cutting Cultural Industries Policies

<b>Health – Environmental – Social – Foreign – Education Policies</b>	<b>Fiscal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Support for capital projects, venues</li> <li>→ Subsidies and grants to arts workers and organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Tax concessions</li> <li>→ Assistance to public (e.g. subsidies on tickets, promoting awareness and information about opportunities)</li> </ul>
	<b>Regulatory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Cultural rights</li> <li>→ Freedom of expression</li> <li>→ Intellectual property law</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Access to work and disability supports</li> <li>→ Equality rights</li> <li>→ Costs of living / accommodation</li> </ul>
	<b>Industry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Industry / art form development strategies, e.g. tourism, targeted marketing; spatial development</li> <li>→ Support for Industry Research &amp; Development (R &amp; D)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Support for incubators (e.g. youth arts) and other developments (eg artist residencies)</li> <li>→ Support for Greening and addressing the Climate Crisis</li> </ul>
	<b>Labour Market</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Interventions: wage legislation, welfare supports, pension arrangements, etc. for arts workers</li> <li>→ Training and skills development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Occupational health and safety</li> <li>→ Arts worker retention supports</li> </ul>
	<b>Trade</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Export promotion of 'Irish arts' abroad</li> <li>→ International exchanges for arts workers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Import control: quotas, restrictions, tariffs</li> <li>→ Travel visas</li> </ul>

Adapted from Throsby (2010, p. 46-53)

### Foster Exchange and Solidarity

Precarious industry circumstances and jurisdictional disparity points to potential hierarchies between the two jurisdictions that will inhibit the island's spatial, and thus, regional cultural industries development. Disparity threatens the possibilities for joint working for the purposes of creative expression and engagement (arts attendance and participation), social cohesion, continued peace and reconciliation, joint initiatives in tourism, enterprise development, and climate action. The potential challenge this instability presents for nurturing all-island relationships in both cooperative and competitive ways is indicated by one research participant:

“There has been a progressive process of dislocation of the relationship between artists and arts institutions - the casualisation of the ‘workforce’ and the short term project based culture alongside the ‘competitive tendering’ model that is imposed on regional government and local authorities.

We need to stop setting up a frame of competition between organisations and individuals both in practice and in rhetoric. Collaboration should be the first form... competitiveness the second. ... It ... involves, long term structured relationships for co-operation, planning, collaboration, negotiation on rules / framing / process, etc. within which competition can take place.”

(Brexit Focus Group, Arts worker 4, 2022)

### Address Brexit with Urgency

Brexit hampers the mobility that is essential for both the cultural industry of dance and theatre and for all-island cooperation. While any cooperative framework must take this context into account, the concerns of Brexit must be urgently addressed.

### Resourcing (Regional) Research and Development as Core to Regional Industry Practice

An important part of nurturing regional stability and fostering cross-island working is recognising research and development as core to the nature of a cultural industry, particularly in relation to nurturing risk and experimentation. Research and Development, or R & D, is recognised as core to most industries and with a growing case for its importance in the arts and humanities (Bakshi & Lomas, 2017; Gibson et al., 2017; Bakshi, 2022). The shared risk and learning, which respondents noted that they have gained from cross-island working, shows that engaging in cross-island working has potential as a form of regional industry R & D in and of itself.

To enable this experimentation, there is need for flexible funding mechanisms. While flexibility in funding is argued to be useful for supporting creative experimentation as a whole, in relation to cross-border partnerships, it would allow for the kind of ‘space for learning’ that is required when developing new collaborative processes.

Provision of a rolling fund would assist with addressing and supporting learning gained and ‘the unexpected’ in cross-border working.

### Data Capture and Convergence

First, deeper analysis of data on the make-up and the working conditions and experiences of arts workers in the cultural industries and alongside the living standards on our island is required. Such study must include concerns related to the broad diversity of our population and individual experience. The last time an all-island study on the living and working conditions of artists was conducted was in 2010 (Hibernian Consulting, 2010). Since then there have been studies in both dance (recently see Campbell et al., 2022) and theatre (Barton & Murphy, 2022). However data capture is not joined up. Fragmentation of information and data on the island is hampering an understanding of a broader, interlinked ecology of the performing arts as well as the legacy of cross-border working. However, even with some data residing within sector-based organisations, the capacity to gather and critically analyse existing data is threatened by a lack of time, resources, and expertise. There is very little capacity, both in terms of time and financial resources, for arts workers to gather data and to engage with research processes, even when for and / or with external researchers.

### Recommendations for Nurturing Regional Stability

At the moment, and in the midst of the anxiety and uncertainty under which much of the NI sector is existing, initiatives are happening, but they require stability to be maintained and developed strategically. Addressing the lack of clarity around Brexit is urgent. The “development and support [for].. indigenous skills” is also needed (DHLGH & DRCD, 2022: 20) and requires building our knowledge base through support of research and networking through in-person meeting.

There is great potential in joint advocacy for common concerns in the workforce. As one research participant explained, “the [artistic] practice is what is shared” (Workshop 4, 7 September 2022). Solidarity is evident in the common sense of belonging arts workers in both jurisdictions share to the community of performing arts work on the island.

It should be noted that, while the pandemic demonstrated the potential of the digital and online space for arts activities and gatherings, this functionality does not effectively support a ‘Community of Practice’ (Wenger, 1998) where partners can meaningfully learn from each other and their contexts. It can also be difficult for those new to networks to break in, if the meeting space is mostly virtual.





## Recommendations: Nurturing Regional Stability (Cont.)

Policymaker Actions	Industry / Sector-specific Actions
<b>Foster Exchange and Solidary</b>	
Ministerial Departments charged with arts and culture in both jurisdictions work to help bring about regulatory convergence on rates of pay and support one another in aligning policy commonalities to support livelihood sustainability, as arising	<p>Meet, discuss and engage in shared advocacy efforts regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Gaps in education and training</li> <li>→ Brexit (see below)</li> <li>→ Pay standards for artists</li> <li>→ Climate crisis</li> <li>→ Upskilling needs in digital working and engagement</li> </ul>
Ministerial Departments charged with arts and culture in both jurisdictions to engage sector on, and seek to address, staffing and labour market concerns	<p>Hold gatherings across areas of work to understand and establish complementarity, common interests and goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Festivals network</li> <li>→ Local authority arts / cultural officers</li> <li>→ Venue / touring networks</li> </ul>
<b>Address Brexit with Urgency</b>	
Ministerial Departments charged with arts and culture in both jurisdictions to liaise with relevant ministerial government departments to support cross-border travel and working rights on the island for all residents of the island	
Shared Island Unit and / or Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and Department for Communities to fund and provide information for the creation of a Reference Guide for addressing Brexit changes / concerns within the performing arts sectors unique to the circumstances on the island.	Develop a Reference Guide for addressing Brexit changes / concerns. Draw on other models of practice: Visual Artists Ireland; Irish Museums Association; British Council (Higher Education Mobility Undergraduate Guide: Ireland and the UK); Touring Artists (2022)

## Recommendations: Nurturing Regional Stability (Cont.)

### Policymaker Actions

### Industry / Sector-specific Actions

#### Research, Data Capture and Convergence

Support and fund dedicated staff and dedicated staff time at Arts Councils and sector level to engage with research

Engage with researchers, higher education institutions, and existing research networks (such as Cultural Policy Observatory Ireland) to explore knowledge exchange opportunities, and hosting / co-hosting of Post-Doctoral and PhD posts in collaboration with third level institutions.

Resource and recognise R & D as core to the nature of a cultural industry, particularly in relation to nurturing risk and experimentation.

Ministerial Departments charged with arts and culture, Arts Councils and Local Authorities in both jurisdictions to allow for dedicated R & D funding across administration and creative practice, both separate and core to cross-island working

Arts Councils to meet and discuss potential of joint research / data projects and make recommendations to associated government Departments as necessary. Areas may include:

- aligning categorisation and classification of awards for data collection and analysis purposes
- audience data capture where possible

#### Support Research

- Capture the demographics and map the mobilities of arts workers on the island
- Examine the financial and human resourcing of the arts by local authorities on the island
- Capture pay / income, working conditions and experiences of arts workers
- Capture how arts workers are navigating uncertainty and / or maintaining risk and innovation in a risk averse environment
- Capture and examine the lived experiences of pathways related to career progression

## Develop & Implement Enabling Frameworks

Lack of top-down, policy and strategic level support is argued to result in less sustainable cross-island initiatives. Common frustration was expressed amongst our research participants at the lack of opportunity to engage on an all-island basis more strategically. As a result, the initiation and maintenance of industry relations are often “loose” (Arts worker, 2022) and more reliant upon the informal, personal interest, will, and commitment of individual actors or line managers. This dependency may mean that only those most personally connected to, or familiar with, engaging across the border may be keen to do so.

Without an explicit initiative for cooperation within the cultural industries themselves,

“there will be a tendency for a continuation of the previous process of essentially separate development of the two regions and an inability to complete the island economy, even as conventional North-South trade continues to expand”

(Bradley, 2006: 16).

As an “explicit [and] concerted ...cooperative initiative” (Bradley, 2007: 79 quoted in Adshead & Tonge, 2009: 224), the Shared Island Initiative marks an important and welcome moment and potential shift in all-island working.

### Develop a Framework Explicitly Supporting Cross-Border Working

To engage in cross-border working, some respondents indicated that they are required to have “permission” granted by line managers or broader institutional/organisational remit – however formal or informal.

Explicit, direct, “non-ambiguous and confident language” is needed in government policies to support cross-border working in the cultural industries (Higgins & Donnellan, 2022: 14). Tourism was noted as a sector where this approach is particularly the case, as cooperation is enshrined in the Good Friday Agreement. Another example is local authorities along the border region that have been supported or enabled to join-up practice through former INTERREG funding.

There are strengths and weaknesses to the absence of an explicit framework. Networks and relationships, even if availing of formal opportunities, are often ad hoc and initiated from the bottom up. This more grassroots and organic development was described as providing flexibility and freedom in the development of activities. In other words, without a strict timeline and required and predetermined outputs, partners were felt to have time to get to know one another, find common ground and explore (potential) working relationships. At the same time, participants explained that the lack of discourse on the topic from higher-level policy bodies hampers the development of strategic, longer-term practice.

As a result, it is important that any framework that is developed is done so as an act of co-design between policymakers and arts workers. Multi-level governance in this context requires a joining up of central government departments and administration, arm’s length bodies, such as Arts Council Ireland and Arts Council Northern Ireland, along with arts resource bodies and representative arts workers (Bohm, 2021). Developments will require a slow and multi-pronged approach to account for the multiple interests and stakes and perspectives involved. Also critical is the need for review, monitoring, and reflection on how fit for purpose the framework is, and how it may need to change and adapt over time.

### Engage More Strategically

Research respondents expressed a desire to hold strategic level meetings to address the fragmentation in data capture, funding, and administrative alignment.

### Align Administration and Financial Resourcing (and reporting)

A key challenge for arts workers seeking to build cross-island relationships is the lack of alignment in reporting, as well as the prevention of expenditure towards cross-border work. One research participant illustrates:

“...That was the biggest challenge. Because we’d have two different funders to report back to. And in different ways. And we couldn’t spend money in [Ireland]. You know the National Lottery money had to be spent for the benefit of people in NI... So, we could only pay for things up here.”

(DNI Arts Worker, 2022).

For meaningful impact, any commitment to all-island working at central government level must “filter down” to funder and organisations through organisational / funding opportunities and supports (Greer, 2002: 362). “Filtering down” can take shape through formalisation of cross-island strategies and networks (Higgins & Donnellan: 2022) and coherence in reporting formats for relevant areas.



## Recommendations for the Development & Implementation of Enabling Frameworks

Responding to the conclusions above, we make the following recommendations listed below.

Policymaker Actions	Industry / Sector-specific Actions
<b>Address Brexit with Urgency</b>	
<p>SIU to lead in supporting the recognition and consideration of the performing arts industries as industries that bring goods and products across borders (Irish and transnational) when addressing Brexit and other international trade / mobility agreements</p>	<p>Relevant Core Research Members to liaise and decide best route for sharing and circulating existing information held on Brexit through other working areas (e.g. higher education).</p>
<p>Ministerial Departments charged with arts and culture in both jurisdictions to liaise with relevant ministerial government departments to</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ issue written advice clarifying           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>rights for arts workers</i></li> <li>• <i>residency qualifications for immigrants from NI to IRL around the Common Travel Area</i></li> <li>• <i>rule changes around banking</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>→ lobby for changes to           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>the ATA Carnet and support the funding of the Carnet</i></li> <li>• <i>Visa restrictions for immigrant workers from NI to ROI around the Common Travel Area</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>→ Provide a Brexit support fund to address the uncertainty around additional costs</li> </ul>	

## Recommendations: Enabling Frameworks (Cont.)

Policymaker Actions	Industry / Sector-specific Actions
<b>Develop a Framework</b>	
<p>SIU to support the Ministerial Departments charged with arts and culture in both jurisdictions to commence co-designed processes and support exploration of action research around what form a 'Framework' might take and what it might include; in particular financially resource and take part in strategic discussions with industry resource bodies and other representatives regarding what co-designed process / approach is most suitable for the creation of an enabling cross-border framework (Arts Councils and Resource bodies)</p> <p>Ensure any explicit framework is reviewed and monitored through collaboration with industry arts workers and that there is dedicated resourcing for this activity</p>	<p>Hold and engage in sector level discussions on the priorities for an explicit cross-island performing arts framework</p>
<p>Ministerial Departments charged with arts and culture in both jurisdictions to grant permission within specified work for arm's length bodies to support cross-jurisdictional funding, and allow border fluidity in public expenditure for touring</p>	
<b>Align Administration and Financial Resourcing</b>	
<p>Arts Councils, with support of associated Ministerial Departments charged with arts and culture in both jurisdictions, to initiate and take part in strategic conversations with industry resource bodies and representative companies / arts workers, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ An explicit cross-island performing arts framework</li> <li>→ Reintroduction of the all-island touring scheme or enabling funding via a visible tick-box option on funding applications for touring in different jurisdictions N/S</li> </ul>	<p>Gather venues and existing touring networks to explore and report challenges to, and feasibility of, cross-island touring</p>
<p>Arts Councils to meet and discuss findings of the report and continue to meet annually to discuss issues arising across sectors</p>	<p>Built-in budget lines within project budgets for 'lessons arising' when working cross-border (e.g. access to work supports as noted in the Embed Access &amp; Inclusion section)</p>

## Recommendations: Enabling Frameworks (Cont.)

### Policymaker Actions

### Industry / Sector-specific Actions

#### Resource Research & Development

Arts Councils and local authorities institute mechanisms of rolling / flexible funding to allow for addressing learning gained in real-time and during the development of cross-island projects, particularly (but not limited to) co-productions

Encourage / provide funding systems change within resource bodies:

- Build in research / development time into funding bids
- Institute mechanisms of rolling / flexible funding to allow for addressing learning gained in real-time and during the development of cross-island projects, particularly co-productions

Commission cross-island Co-Productions

Commission, support and engage in cross-island Co-Productions

#### Support Research

- Explore feasibility of aligning aspects of data capture for at least ACNI / ACNI funding applications
- Capture the impacts of Brexit on arts workforce
- Action research to explore the possibilities of, and different approaches to, a cross-island framework: examining what a framework might look like, include, and what might be needed to support it



## Embed Access & Inclusion

The importance of recognition, networks and physical presence is indicated by this research respondent:

“The opportunities [to show our work] in Dublin gave us opportunities [to develop and perform work where we live,] in Belfast, because the [well-established theatre organisations] liked us and we’d have all these, like, kind of sold out shows in Dublin, all of a sudden the companies in Belfast wanted to work with us and then we were getting things in Belfast”

(TFNI-1 Arts worker, 2022)

Access to, and the potential to participate in, all or cross-island relations is not equal. While this challenge relates to the wider context of inequality in the cultural industries outlined in Part 2, we highlight two areas of capacity building here that emerged in our research: spatial connectivity and legislative coherence.

### Spatial Connectivity: Geographies and Relations

The cultural industries share concerns raised in research within other sectors that public policies tend to turn away from, or stop, at the border, thus hampering local and broader regional development (Creamer, et al., 2008; Rafferty & Lloyd, 2014). The spatial distribution of physical infrastructure, professional networks, and training and professional development, relate to the performing arts’ regional development potential and the sustainability of arts workers livelihoods (Durrer et al., 2019; O’Reilly, 2019; Quinn, 2019).

Spatial connectivity thus requires thinking about a) our political or territorial geographies, i.e. the jurisdictions of Northern Ireland and Ireland, but also b) relations and interdependencies (Duhr 2007, referenced in Rafferty & Blair, 2020: 6). Policy recognition of the relational aspects of cooperation is important to the sustainability of livelihoods as set out in this report, particularly labour markets, and broader industry and sectoral development and their associated social, economic and environmental concerns (Rafferty & Blair, 2020; see also OECD, 2002).

As is taking place within the health, education, transport and spatial planning sectors (Rafferty & Blair, 2020; Heenan, 2021), the importance of the cross-island space needs to be recognised for the development of the cultural industries. We note the following areas for development: urban / rural livelihoods and lateral relations.

### **Urban / Rural livelihoods**

Greater understanding of the push and pull factors of artist mobility across and off the island is required in order to understand the potential retention of arts workers and how this relates to the economic, social and cultural development of local places. This need arises, as “place and locality help distinctively shape understanding of what is possible in terms of creative work” (Oakley & Banks, 2020: 8). While more research is needed, it appears that there is an urban / rural divide in accessing work in dance and theatre (Campbell, et al., 2022; ACI, 2022) as well as regional funding disparities on the island (Anderson, 2022). First, as indicated in our respondents’ engagement with map marking, there is concentration of the workforce and the showcasing of dance and theatre work in Dublin and Belfast. This circumstance may be understandable due to population size and density in these cities. However, it still leaves many people and places marginalised. Lack of digital / broadband connectivity, public transport, and equity of spatial resource distribution means those who cannot be mobile for a myriad of reasons have less chance at a socially and environmentally sustainable livelihood.



While rural areas “constitute important sites of exchange between artists” and rurality in and of themselves, connectivity to networks of support and development and training are required (Quinn, 2022: np). For arts workers based in rural localities, their potential to access work is subject to a lack of “mobility- enabling infrastructure and services”, such as transport and broadband connectivity (Rau, 2012: 38; see also NESCS, 2022). It is thus challenging for arts workers to establish and/or maintain careers within and from rural areas. While some rural areas may have venues, they may not be appropriate for all art forms (Campbell, et al., 2022) and / or they may not have strong transportation links for audiences and creative professionals to connect in and out for the making, presentation, or touring of work. In such cases, one might be invited to gatherings but unable to attend them.

Those working in the border region are further isolated from centralised decision-making and on the periphery of the urban centres for cultural industries. They are also further isolated in relation to transportation links.

Urban development also presents a challenge. Dublin is an important industry centre regardless of where one resides on the island. The high-cost of living, accommodation and short-term stay in Dublin means that many arts workers that are bringing arts workers in to Dublin are spending a strong proportion of their arts grants on accommodation expenses. Spatial connectivity in the cultural industries requires recognition of the costs of work around travel, transportation and accommodation. It also needs to include recognition of types of supports the cultural industries require beyond the economic, such as venues and networks.

#### **Lateral relations**

Linking back to the importance of frameworks, enabling joined-up connections between national and local administrative supports for the cultural industries along with more joined-up approaches at sectoral level are required to support a cultural industry where mobility and networks on and off the island are core to livelihood and industry development (Rafferty & Blair, 2020). Digital infrastructure is needed to enhance virtual connectivity, but remote working policies and ‘staying local’ does not suit an industry that is collective and mobile by nature. Cultural industries-related policies both recognise the importance of lateral relations (DfC, 2022; ACI & CCMA, 2016). Strengthening these relations across the border are needed and is recognised at local level such as within the North West region (Mullan, 2022; Anderson, 2022).

There is a need for greater recognition of the presence and relationship of the cultural industries and the livelihoods of arts workers within cross-island spatial policies. Of particular note is accessibility to high quality infrastructure and professional networks for career training and development, but also for taking part in the cultural industries for the general public. Cross-island spatial development in arts policy is limited. While Arts Council Ireland’s spatial strategy (ACI, 2022: 54) largely stops at the border it does make reference to the cross-border context, particularly “Sligo, Athlone; Letterkenny; Derry; and Drogheda / Dundalk: Newry the latter two acknowledging the significance of the Border and the Dublin – Belfast economic corridor.”

There is a supportive policy framework to develop spatial connectivity, with both jurisdictions exploring the adoption of “an all-island approach to national planning frameworks” (Gol, 2021: 104; see DRD & DECLG, 2020). With specificity to the rural, Ireland policy emphasises “cultural...wellbeing and development” and the “creativity of people in rural communities”, “quality jobs” and “vibrant and live-in rural places” (DRCD, 2021), and a desire to transform rural towns into “service, social, cultural and recreational hubs for local community (DHLGH & DRCD, 2022: 5). In Northern Ireland cultural assets as the “cornerstone of rural tourism” (DAERA, 2021: 124). Key urban areas are noted with

*“Dublin and Belfast as key economic drivers [and] the linked cities and towns of Londonderry and Letterkenny, and Newry and Dundalk [as also]... important locations because of their role as administrative, educational or commerce centres and also as gateways to other places and regions” (p. 20).*

Spatially informed planning, including that relating to RoI’s National Planning Framework is a key priority informing “investment, advocacy and other actions” of Arts Council Ireland (ACI, 2016: 6, 35). While there is no explicit mention of the arts in the all-island Framework for Co-operation, Ireland’s *Project Ireland 2040*, the National Planning Framework (NPF) has paid particular attention to the role of the arts (and at local level) (Gol 2018). There has also been a growing, if limited, recognition of the cultural industries in regional and cross-border local authority network activity that can be built upon.

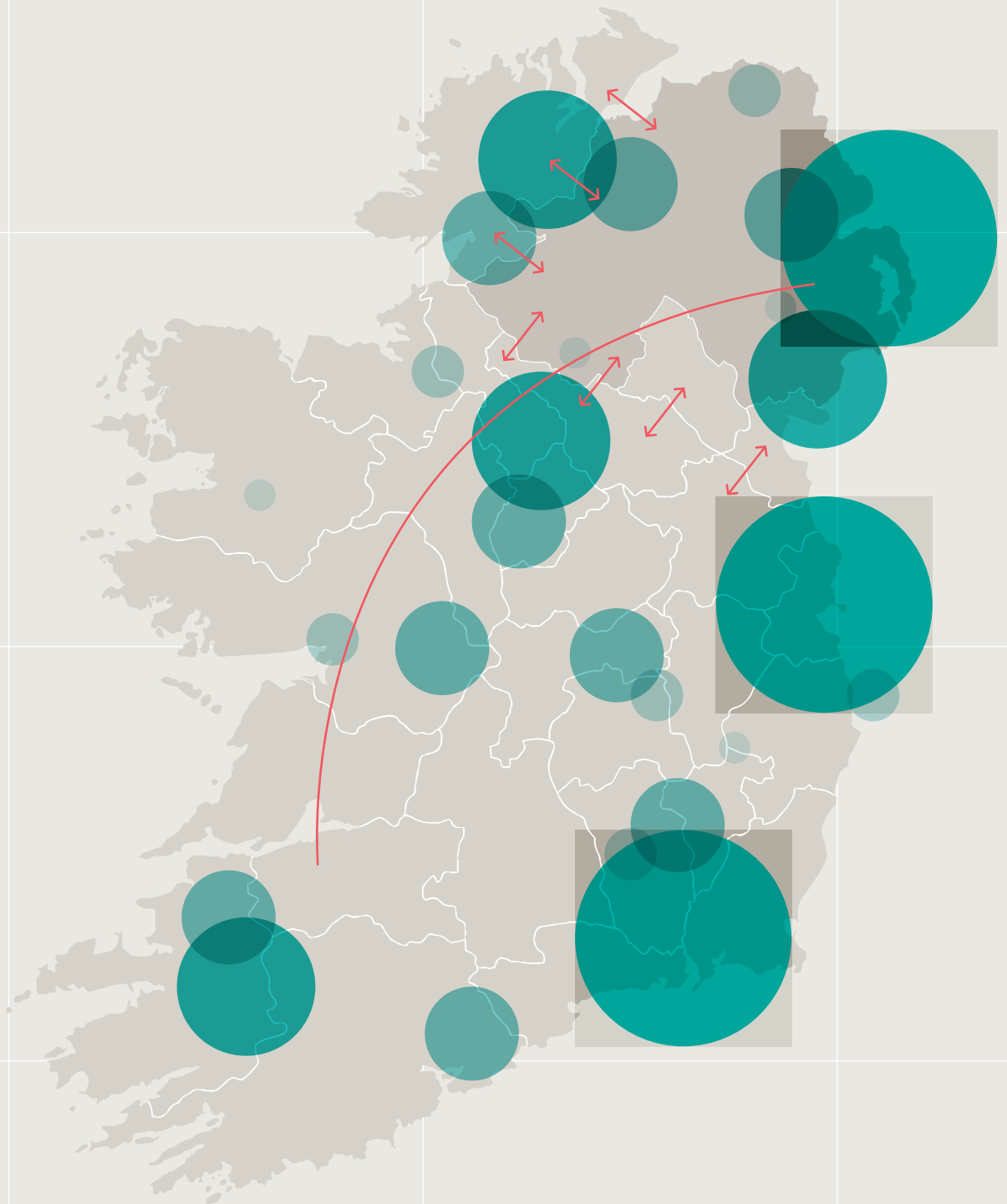
There are longstanding models for industry development at local level with a particular focus on local government partnerships aimed at connecting places for inward investment and economic development. Yet, there is currently piecemeal recognition of cultural industries amongst the Local Authority networks, such as *The Irish Central Border Area Network* (ICBAN); *East Border Region* (EBR); Within the *Dublin-Belfast Corridor* emphasis is placed on creative industries, but does indicate the potential for tourism. In RoI, local government is a key intermediary in relation to spatial planning and the arts, facilitated by their role within the NPF but also in relation to Arts Council Ireland and the County and City Management Association through their Framework for Collaboration, which sets out to take an integrated approach to promoting and developing the arts (ACI & CCMA, 2016) and the Creative Ireland initiative.

There appears to be limited engagement between the local authority border networks and the cultural industries. The North West Region is a strong starting point with ground work already begun through NESC research and a strong base of dance and theatre companies, venues and arts workers in this region.

#### Legislative and Administrative coherence for Accessing Work

Addressing spatial access and inclusion regards considering a holistic approach to returning and retaining the workforce. Not only has each jurisdiction experienced labour market challenges since the pandemic, but the lack of training and development in dance and theatre on the island means that many leave the island and do not always return. With regards to dance, this circumstance can result “in a small pool of available professional dancers for productions” (McGrath, 2021: 8) and will likely contribute to inequality in accessing dance as a profession.

# Movement and Sites of Cross-Island Relations in Dance and Theatre



Similar to broader findings in research by NESC (2022: 111) in relation to the Shared Island endeavour, our research has raised the need for consideration of legislative alignment in relation to supports for access to work for people with disabilities. We found differences in the type and nature of provision for access to work employment support programmes in the two jurisdictions, with the ACCESS to Work Scheme in NI and the Social Inclusion Voucher Scheme in Ireland providing different types of support. These differences raise challenges a) for arts workers not formerly associated with former employers trying to utilise these schemes and b) for working across the border. One research respondent indicates:

“... this Access to Work funding that exists in Northern Ireland doesn't exist [the same way] in the Republic of Ireland. So as a freelance artist wanting to work all over the island of Ireland, I have experienced great difficulties”

(DFNI arts worker, 9 June 2022).

Additionally, there are differences in sign language between the two jurisdictions, with ROI communicating in Irish Sign Language and NI communicating in British Sign Language. One research respondent explained the challenge she encountered as she and her collaborator navigated the landscape of working in multiple sign languages: both Irish Sign Language and British Sign Language:

“I had to find a different way to ... get extra funding and to bring in interpreters because I [could communicate in] Irish Sign Language, [but] there was ... I suppose a lack of awareness on my side, that I couldn't communicate with [my collaborator] fully [as British Sign Language is her first language]. And I think I really understood—obviously when you're in the situation you learn... Most people don't even know it's a different language. So there's this awareness that I have to learn.”

(DFROI Arts worker, 2022)

To embed full inclusion, the interpretation of both languages are required for cross-border working. The expense and the lack of available skilled interpreters is a concern. Finally, the lack of capability to share disability support funds – either state or sector-based, such as through Arts and Disability Ireland, is restricted by the border, hampering the inclusion of people with disabilities in cross-island working.

### Recommendations for Embedding Access & Inclusion

The recommendations below take into account the need for greater spatial connectivity and coherence around inclusion and access legislation and administration.

Policymaker Actions	Industry / Sector-specific Actions
<b>Spatial Connectivity</b>	
Hold an annual meeting of the local authority arts and cultural officers to discuss common concerns, with the presence and support of senior officials / directors	Advocacy support regarding legislative coherence on worker access supports (e.g. disability)
Recognise the cultural industries as a key infrastructure within the cross-island Spatial Planning Framework	Engage in cross-island discussions regarding disability supports in order to raise awareness of common concerns and explore ways of working
Recognise and address arts worker mobility as a key area of Arts Council policies in NI and IRL through co-designed policy processes, include considerations for migrant communities post-Brexit	Support the funding of arts workers to see work on / across the island through resource bodies
SIU to assert the commitment and value of the cultural industries as a key infrastructure by assisting with bringing their representatives (e.g. resource bodies) into discussions on spatial planning at local level	Create R & D funding allocations for cross-border working that takes into account access and inclusion concerns
Ministerial Departments charged with arts and culture in both jurisdictions to encourage cross-border local authority networks to engage with the cultural industries (not just the creative industries) through provision of dedicated funds	Festivals and Resource bodies to meet and explore feasibility of an all-island arts festival network (recognising the work of the AOIFE (Association of Irish Festivals and Events) network)
Fund and develop place-based, short-stay residencies without expectation of output for arts workers living in different parts of the island: urban-rural / rural-rural (N/S) to learn about one another's experiences via local authorities / venues / festivals	Build connections with, within and across local authorities. Local authority border networks were noted as having much experience in all / cross-island relations that extend across a number of different sectors, such as enterprise and tourism and some in the arts field

## Recommendations: Embedding Access & Inclusion (Cont.)

Policymaker Actions	Industry / Sector-specific Actions
<b>Legislative and Administrative Coherence for Workers</b>	
SIU, and Ministerial Departments charged with arts and culture in both jurisdictions to meet with cultural industries through interactive dialogue events to explore the unique circumstances of worker access and quality of life in relation to disability, further and higher education / training, and spatial planning. These government departments to initiate links for discussion with other relevant departments.	Engage in advocacy and dialogue events regarding the unique circumstances of worker access and quality of life in relation to disability, further and higher education / training, and spatial planning
Arts Councils implement flexibility of funding for 'lessons arising' when working with and supporting arts workers with access to work requirements	Build-in budget lines within project budgets for 'lessons arising' when working with and supporting arts workers with access to work requirements

## Support Research

- Gain understanding of differences in, and experience of, legislation for workers' access to work supports
- Develop an understanding of mobility on / off the island, including issues related to push and pull factors, demographics, opportunities, and inequalities.
- Conduct locally situated studies to address and better understand spatial nuances, population loss or gain since Census 2022 as well as demographic make-up, changing nature of identities, access to physical assets and services, industry base and economic, social, and quality of life concerns with particular cultural industries.
- Work with the National Economic and Social Council to position the cultural industries within their research framework on the all-island economy (NESC, 2022: 37)
- Develop an understanding of how, why, and where audiences move across the island to attend performances and engage with dance and theatre practice.
- Develop an understanding of spatial alignment, movement, and development of dance and theatre and extend this study beyond the professional, publicly subsidised aspects of the sector to include youth, education, and commercial elements
- Build an understanding of the potential for hubs or clusters (and whether these are physical and / or virtual and how these are spatially connected) through literature review, research on existing international practice, and action-research on the island of Ireland

## Raise Awareness

The perceived ambivalence or lack of awareness between “ordinary citizens” in the two jurisdictions has long been recognised in academic research as a historically embedded disassociation (Adshead & Tonge, 2009: 1). In order to support the Shared Island endeavour, three forms of awareness of cross-border working in the cultural industries are required: 1) within the sector 2) between the cultural industries and other relevant cross-border sectors and 3) outward as a form of celebration.

### Awareness within the Cultural Industries

First, those working in the cultural industries need to meet, see, and engage with another and their work. One respondent explains:

“Anytime I work with people in that part of Ireland [the Republic of Ireland], I’m always emphasizing the wealth of talent that’s here and how they need to continuously be coming ...here to see shows, reaching out to other artists and opening up those opportunities on the island of Ireland. So just from my perspective as a freelancer, I think we need to have discussions with key members of the Republic of Ireland in terms of freelancers, but also people who run buildings to really just continue to reach out to us and continue that conversation”

(BREXIT Focus Group, Arts Worker 6, 2022)

Despite the types of all-island information available through, for example, organisations like Theatre Forum, which lists all local authority arts / cultural officers, there is a lack of knowledge exchange taking place about what is happening on the island. There appear to be potentially more strategic links occurring where this knowledge exchange does take place.

Raising awareness of one another across the sector could take place in a number of different formats. Drawing from our research, it is indicated that opportunities should be immersive, with time spent in one another’s locale and / or organisation. Such an approach should allow for both output-oriented exchanges as well as more open-ended opportunities. Additionally, there is a need for opportunities for meeting both virtually and in-person, and within and between different sub groups, such as: theatre venues; touring networks; festivals; local authority arts and cultural officers; theatre and dance companies and arts workers.

### Awareness of Cultural Industries outward to other Sectors

There is a lack of awareness as to how the cultural industries relate with other sectors across the island. Participants indicated that the fields of heritage, tourism, and climate action appear to have stronger links within one another, but not necessarily with the cultural industries. Tourism is a particular area of neglect. Resistance has been met by some who are trying to build these links. Strategic support from higher level policy makers as well as senior local government officials would be beneficial here. Tourism Ireland makes much reference to the broader creative and cultural industries, and there is missed potential here for dance and theatre to assist in building Irish competitiveness. Currently there is very little engagement with these areas of the cultural industries, with festivals, and “nightlife” being the only (vaguely) related fields that are referenced (Tourism Ireland, 2022).

### Profiling & Celebrating All-Island Working Abroad

Thirdly, sector professionals should work together to platform and celebrate cross-island working where it is taking place. Doing so would support the effort to give “permission” to others. It would also work towards further understanding what aspects of working together remain strong, which need further development, and the strengths and learning areas for each jurisdiction. Examples of this work exists in other cultural sectors, such as through the all-island body, the Irish Museums Association. High level policy makers should seek to support this platforming, highlighting cross-island working in tourism development and international showcases. Doing so would aid the Arts Councils’ aim to support international engagement with Irish practice, particularly development of international dissemination and critical engagement with practice (ACI, 2019; ACNI, 2014), and align with the goals of Culture Ireland to enhance collaboration with Northern Ireland (2022) and British Council to promote exchange (2022)

### Recommendations: Raising Awareness (Cont.)

<b>Policymaker Actions</b>	<b>Industry / Sector-specific Actions</b>
<b>Awareness within the Cultural Industries</b>	
Encourage consideration of a wider variety of cultural industries more strategically within tourism policies	Advocacy support on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Brexit issues</li> <li>→ working with tourism officers</li> <li>→ workforce equality and diversity</li> </ul>
	Hold an annual meeting of the local authority arts and cultural officers to discuss common concerns
Arts Councils Fund and support place-based, short-stay residencies without expectation of output for arts workers living in different parts of the island: urban-rural / rural-rural (N/S) to learn about one another’s experiences.	Develop place-based, short-stay residencies without expectation of output for arts workers living in different parts of the island: urban-rural / rural-rural (N/S) to learn about one another’s experiences.
Arts Councils fund arts workers to see work on / across the island	Resource bodies and festivals to continue to fund and encourage arts workers to see diverse work on / across the island



## Recommendations for Raising Awareness (Cont.)

Policymaker Actions	Industry / Sector-specific Actions
<b>Awareness of Cultural Industries outward to other Sectors</b>	
Ministerial Departments charged with arts and culture in both jurisdictions, Culture Ireland and British Council support and resource the profile-raising and celebration of cross-island work through funding of platforms that recognise the diversity of our workforce	Engage with Tourism Ireland, local authorities, Culture Ireland, and the British Council as key partners in exploring stronger links
Ministerial Departments charged with arts and culture in both jurisdictions to meet with colleagues in planning, climate, local government, enterprise and health to share findings on cross-cutting interest from this report	Work together to platform and celebrate cross-island working where it is taking place
Local Authority Cross-Border Networks to connect with arts and cultural officers on related findings in this report	Local authority arts and cultural officers to discuss common concerns with Local Authority Cross-Border Networks
<b>Profiling &amp; Celebrating All-Island Working Abroad</b>	
International facing bodies consider platforming cross-island working / productions via a publication or a media presentation	Festivals / Resource bodies consider platforming cross-island working / productions
Commission Co-Productions	Commission Co-Productions
<b>Support Research</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Develop a public and historical archive of cross border working across art forms</li> <li>→ Capture experience, meaning, and value of cross-island working relations in the cultural industries</li> <li>→ Conduct studies similar to this one for other cultural industries: e.g., literature, visual arts</li> </ul>	

## Support Legacy

While informal networks are indicated as a very strong source of cross / all-island working, they are also fragile. Due to the nature of informal work, there may be a lack of record-keeping. As a result, there is a real possibility that networks which nurture cross-island activity are lost because they are not embedded in working practices or held in institutional memory when a colleague moves on. The connections and operations developed through longstanding relationships may subsequently be lost as one respondent indicates:

“It’s difficult because it was a very strong relationship with [this organisation], and now the ...staff has totally changed, and we’re finding it quite difficult to maintain that relationship with the new staff”

(TFNI-1 Arts Worker, 2022).

Another respondent explains the resulting loss of knowledge and limited legacy:

“I think for things to grow...I think it’s stability and continuity. Because it’s like so much of the development is down to the individuals’ personality and when that person runs out of steam, it’s like it just ends in that space. And people who have been around long enough to know that, know that”

(DRol Arts Worker, 2022).

Some research respondents voiced frustration, noting that information about cross-island networks is already known. Others noted that this knowledge still largely resides within the sector itself and is thus not being collectively examined. Colleagues also noted that individual projects that are all-island or cross-border in nature may not be readily visible within the data of funding streams. There may be invisible or unrecorded cross-border or corridor-related activity that is difficult to map because it happens informally and not due to any particular initiatives or funding streams, as we have uncovered.

There is an opportunity to support legacy not only by profiling work but also through capturing and archiving cross-island relations and development. Support from the IRC and through the Shared Island Initiative by the Shared Island Unit validates taking time to reflect. Greater engagement with research processes will help to embed commitment to cross-border / all-island relations more formally and ensure a lasting legacy of practice.

Recommendations for Supporting Legacy (Cont.)

As supporting legacy is equally dependent upon the other areas of capacity building discussed in this report, the recommendations below are brief but aimed at helping to ensure institutional legacy and the prevention of lost knowledge.

Policymaker Actions	Industry / Sector-specific Actions
Shared Island Unit to keep cultural industries on the agenda and maintain awareness of sector needs	
Ministerial Departments charged with arts and culture in both jurisdictions to engage with discussions with sector on staffing and labour market concerns and staffing cross-border related posts	Embed practice:  Review and embed cross-island working (where relevant) in organisational plans and staffing roles  Resource staff time for meetings and research development
Resource the development of a digital archive of cross-island practice in dance and theatre	Put all-island topics on the agenda of existing networks
Engage with cross-disciplinary research networks to further capture, grow and develop our knowledge-base	

## Concluding Thoughts

The collaborative research team has worked together to develop actionable capacity-building plans and recommendations for more coordinated policies and supports for regional cultural industry development. Building on experiential knowledge, academic expertise, and sector-based research from shared projects between local authority arts offices in the border regions, the island's two Arts Councils, cultural businesses working within both jurisdictions, artists, arts development agencies, and invited professionals from other sectors, the research has explored specific and relevant ways to help make connectivity of networks, infrastructure, and resources more purposeful and to develop shared administrative and operational elements, where appropriate.

While the funded research for *Building Capacity for the Cultural Industries: Towards a Shared Island Approach* is itself completed, the endeavour remains. Capacity building begins through the time and space that support for dedicated research provides. As one of our core members shared:

“Often conversations with sector colleagues are focused on expediency and actions defined by funding opportunities. It isn't often we have space (and facilitated space) to explore issues in depth and acknowledge facts... having space to look at how we relate to each other and our contexts without a funding deadline or output in mind is rare in a formal discussion...I wouldn't underestimate the power of dialogue as part of this process”

(Workshop 2, 9 May 2022)

Allowing time for dialogue and process that is in aid of both sustainable creative practice and network establishment / evolution has emerged as a crucial element needed for future development of all-island capacity. Several new research projects have commenced that continue investigating some of the areas of potential growth identified by this project. The academic leads are working on a project investigating youth dance across the island funded by the HEA North South programme, and some Core Research Group members and research participants have initiated further projects incorporating cross-border and all-island elements. There has also been some significant policy development, with the new Arts Council Ireland (2022) Dance Policy including plans for the development of an all-island dance company.

An increased awareness of, and attention to, Shared Island concerns in the cultural industries and associated research communities is evident, and there is much enthusiasm and drive to recognise and support interdependencies and champion our cooperative and competitive relations. Funding and development disparities between the two jurisdictions requires that discussion and research of “shared” conditions be approached with sensitivity to inequities. Continued support for research and practice in this area will be vital to building sustainable initiatives and actions.



# APPENDIX

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### Project Team and Author Credits

This report was co-authored by academic lead, Dr Victoria Durrer (University College Dublin), Dr Aoife McGrath (Queen's University Belfast), and Dr Emma McAlister (University College Dublin).

Research conducted in partnership with representatives from Arts Council Northern Ireland, Arts Council Ireland, Dance Ireland, Theatre and Dance NI, British Council Ireland, Cavan County Council Arts Office, and Dylan Quinn Dance Theatre.

## Photography Credits

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Building Capacity for the Cultural Industries: Towards a Shared  
Island Approach, Research Workshop, Queen's University Belfast

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**Victoria Durrer**  
University College Dublin

**Aoife McGrath**  
Queen's University Belfast

**Emma McAlister**  
University College Dublin



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