

Design & Crafts  
Council of Ireland

# Strategic Plan

2017–2020



## Our Vision

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Ireland is recognised and valued for its culture of design and craft.

## Our Mission

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We are the national agency for the commercial development of Irish designers and makers, stimulating innovation, championing design thinking and informing Government policy.

## Our Values

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**Excellence** – maximise the potential of our clients through nurturing their ambition and developing their capability

**Innovation & Creativity** – stimulate innovation and champion design thinking nationally to foster a creative culture

**Partnership** – drive support for design and craft through collaboration with key partners

**Expertise** – lead market intelligence and sectoral knowledge

**Heritage** – build on Ireland’s unique design and craft heritage and traditional skills to inspire contemporary work

# Introduction

Ireland's design and craft sector is vibrant, diverse and innovative. It provides vital jobs in every county, sustains the skills on which Ireland's unique heritage for design and craftsmanship is based and makes an immense contribution to our economy and culture.

The value of design to drive the betterment of innovative and forward-thinking societies and economies is internationally recognised. Throughout Europe, governments have invested in and mobilised the design agenda. The Design & Crafts Council of Ireland's ambition is to position Ireland at the forefront of this movement, stimulating innovation, championing design thinking and informing Government policy on the development of Ireland's design and craft sector. Our new strategy focuses on:

**ensuring the sector is well positioned to deliver on opportunities**

**inspiring and helping clients to achieve their ambitions in scaling and successfully competing in domestic and international markets**

**supporting membership organisations in growing their capability**

**engaging with stakeholders and strategic partners in championing the adoption of design thinking across Government and industry**

**embedding the potential for design to transform our economy and society for the benefit of all**

*National Design Strategy* launched by Government in February 2017 and leading to the establishment of the country's first National Design Forum. Over the term of this plan and building on the success of Irish Design 2015 (ID2015), we aim to extend our offering beyond supporting craft and product-related design through programmes that support a broader client base to meet the future needs of the sector.

The potential impacts of Brexit on the commercial development of the sector have been taken into consideration in devising these plans. We are strategically investing in the export, online and domestic markets to drive demand for Irish design and craft, and developing market insights and intelligence to support our clients in understanding and satisfying the needs of the consumer now and into the future.

Establishing discipline-specific Centres of Excellence and driving the development of a design innovation framework will enable the sector to meet the future needs of industry. Working with partners in building the business case for a high-profile presence in Dublin will ensure that the wealth of creative talent in Ireland and the best of Irish design and craft can be showcased in our capital city.

This plan aims to build on the growing awareness and appreciation for both the work of Irish designers and makers

in domestic and international markets and the value of the sector to Ireland's economy and society. We are committed to working with Government and stakeholders in embedding design in Government policy, placing design at the heart of Ireland's innovation agenda.

Our Strategic Plan 2017–2020 outlines the high-level actions we aim to undertake over the coming years and reflects our dedication to achieving measurable impacts, providing value for money and national economic benefits.

Collaboration with key public and private partners at national and local Government level, and in the areas of enterprise, education, culture and tourism will be critical to the successful implementation of actions contained within this plan.

We look forward to continuing our work with the Department of Business, Enterprise & Innovation and Enterprise Ireland to deliver on our ambitions for the future of design and craft in Ireland. We plan to expand our extensive network of strategic partners and work closely with them over the years to come. Together we can ensure that Ireland's culture of design and craft is recognised and valued both at home and internationally, leading to a strengthening of our sector and of the economy as a whole.

**Breege O'Donoghue**  
Chair

**Karen Hennessy**  
Chief Executive

Our strategy for 2017 to 2020 aligns with the objectives of *Ireland - the Design Island*, a consultation paper towards a

# Our Strategy 2020

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## Enterprise

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Drive demand for Irish design and craft by strategically investing in export, online and domestic markets. Support clients to understand and satisfy consumer needs.

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## Research & Innovation

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Lead research and innovative practice in design and craft to embed design as a strategic enabler for the future development of Ireland’s competitiveness, economy and society.

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## Knowledge & Skills

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Collaborate with education, industry and other partners in supporting knowledge and skills development to meet current and future needs.

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## Promotion & Awareness

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Promote the work of Irish designers and makers in domestic and international markets. Collaborate with strategic partners in raising awareness of the design and craft sector.

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## Policy & Advocacy

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Grow awareness of the value of design and craft to society and the economy. Work with Government and stakeholders on the integration of design thinking into Government policy and industry.

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## Theme 1

# Enterprise

### Focus

#### Develop client capabilities



#### Invest in growing international markets



#### Help clients grow e-commerce



#### Grow the domestic market



### Objective

Drive demand for Irish design and craft by strategically investing in export, online and domestic markets. Support clients to understand and satisfy consumer needs.

### Strategic Aims

- Identify client enterprises with potential to grow
- Mentor and support clients



- Build the international reputation and commercial potential of Irish design and craft
- Identify and assist client enterprises with export growth potential



- Lead the industry to create an online presence to drive brand awareness and e-commerce



- Support clients who primarily sell in the home market
- Maintain awareness and appreciation with all stakeholders in Ireland



### Actions

1. Work with DCCoI clients to identify, appreciate and satisfy the needs of the modern consumer
2. Work with Enterprise Ireland (EI), Local Enterprise Office (LEOs) and other partners to develop the capabilities of DCCoI clients in the areas of strategic planning, research, product development, pricing, branding, distribution and digital marketing
3. Improve the DCCoI mentoring panel in the areas of export and e-commerce

1. Provide market insights and intelligence to DCCoI clients
2. Position Ireland as a recognised centre for design and craft at international trade fairs, at retail and online
3. Support individual clients to exhibit at trade fairs
4. Working with EI, grow the international buyer attendance at Showcase
5. Promote the PORTFOLIO programme to international galleries as the 'halo' of the industry

1. Build digital marketing activity to drive e-commerce
2. Create quality digital assets - video, imagery and storytelling - to enable strong consumer engagement
3. Work with DCCoI clients to scale and develop their digital presence and e-commerce sales
4. Partner with significant customers in Ireland and overseas to promote Irish design and craft online

1. Build the business case and consensus for an appropriate venue to showcase the best of Irish design and craft
2. Maintain partnerships with relevant retailers in Ireland
3. Collaborate with partners on direct selling opportunities for DCCoI clients and leverage opportunities in tourism
4. Promote the Design Ireland brand through targeted media partnerships

**Theme 2**

**Research & Innovation**

**Focus**

**Support design-driven innovation**



**Objective**

**Lead research and innovative practice in design and craft to embed design as a strategic enabler for the future development of Ireland’s competitiveness, economy and society.**

**Strategic Aims**

- Grow Ireland’s reputation in design-driven innovation



**Actions**

1. Demonstrate Ireland’s innovative approach in using design-oriented solutions through Radical Design Challenges
2. Work with partners to leverage funding for research
3. Drive the development of a design innovation framework

**Champion design thinking**



- Embed design thinking across society



1. Conduct research to demonstrate the added value and competitive advantage brought through applied design process
2. Advocate the development of initiatives that embed design thinking
3. Work in partnership with LEOs and other agencies to promote the early adoption of design

**Target research and innovation funding**



- Explore potential funding mechanisms for design-led innovation and research



1. Identify appropriate EU and other funding streams for developing design, innovation and commercial opportunities for the sector

**Develop engagement through the National Design & Craft Gallery**



- Research, define and shape future programming of exhibitions, experiences and events



1. Build a dynamic exhibition and events programme to engage and connect key stakeholders, diverse communities, sectors and disciplines
2. Develop a multifaceted programme, embedding research, education and outreach as a central part of the exhibition and event experience

**Theme 3**

**Knowledge & Skills**

**Focus**

**Develop Centres of Excellence**



**Objective**

**Collaborate with education, industry and other partners in supporting knowledge and skills development to meet current and future needs.**

**Strategic Aims**

- Support the needs of key industry sectors through the development of relevant Centres of Excellence



**Actions**

1. Strengthen the Centres of Excellence in Ceramics and Jewellery & Goldsmithing
2. Partner in the development of Centres of Excellence in Glass and Textiles

**Develop career progression routes**



- Develop career opportunities in design and craft



1. Develop clear career progression routes
2. Deliver the Future Makers programme as the premier Higher Education design and craft programme competition in Ireland

**Increase early learning opportunities**



- Develop learning opportunities in design and making across all levels of education



1. Collaborate with education and industry sectors to integrate design thinking and making skills in all levels of education
2. Engage with Government and national agencies on curriculum development in design and making
3. Continue to strengthen the CRAFTed primary level programme
4. Develop the designED secondary school craft and design programme and extend it in collaboration with partners

**Identify emerging needs and influence future developments**



- Build new platforms that address the changing needs of business, communities and societies



1. Influence the development of programmes that provide future thinking, leadership and design skills to businesses, public sector, educators, communities and societies
2. Build a platform for collaboration across craft, design, innovation, science, business and technology
3. Develop programmes for designers and makers to increase their knowledge and use of new technologies



## Theme 4

# Promotion & Awareness

### Focus

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**Grow awareness**



### Strategic Aims

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- Build awareness of the sector through DCCoI initiatives



### Actions

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1. Champion design and craft at national and international level to maximise commercial potential
2. Position DCCoI as the authoritative voice for design and craft

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**Create and leverage promotional opportunities**



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- Collaborate with partners and media to promote Irish design and craft



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1. Proactively work with partners in aligning and coordinating promotional opportunities
  2. Continually expand DCCoI's engagement with international media
  3. Align targeted campaigns with key events and activities internationally

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**Engage audiences**



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- Exploit digital communications to engage with existing and new audiences



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1. Communicate a clear and consistent message through DCCoI's digital platforms
  2. Drive engagement through DCCoI's social media activity

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**Empower clients and membership organisations**



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- Guide membership organisations in their promotion



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1. Develop networking opportunities and meaningful engagement with membership organisations
  2. Develop user-friendly toolkits and online resources
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## Theme 5

# Policy & Advocacy

### Focus

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#### Embed design in policy



### Objective

**Grow awareness of the value of design and craft to society and the economy.  
Work with Government and stakeholders on the integration of design thinking into Government policy and industry.**

### Strategic Aims

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- Work with Government and stakeholders to embed design policy



### Actions

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1. Promote design and design thinking in Government policy
2. Engage with Government-wide initiatives such as the National Design Forum, Innovation 2020, Creative Ireland, Enterprise Policy 2025, EI and IDA policies
3. Encourage Government departments and relevant agencies to review policies for public procurement

#### Empower membership organisations



- Support DCCoI membership organisations in building creative communities



1. Strengthen the network of membership organisations through relevant supports
2. Develop a heritage strategy for design and craft in consultation with membership organisations and partners

#### Develop a design society



- Develop a framework for evaluating design and craft
- Grow recognition of the value and importance of design and craft to the economy and society



1. Develop a framework to measure the contribution of design and craft from social, cultural and economic perspectives
2. Work with partners including Government and industry to understand and appreciate the value of design to the economy and society



The Design & Crafts Council of Ireland (DCCoI) is the national agency for the commercial development of Irish designers and makers, stimulating innovation, championing design thinking and informing Government policy. DCCoI's activities are funded by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation via Enterprise Ireland.

[www.dccoi.ie](http://www.dccoi.ie)



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