

## Strategic Plan

# Our Strategy



2007 - 2009

Crafts Council of Ireland  
Strategic Plan 2007 - 2009



THE CRAFTS COUNCIL OF IRELAND IS SUPPORTED BY



## Acknowledgments

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Kilkenny, 31st March 2006

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## Preface

The Crafts Council of Ireland was set up in 1973 to promote and advance contemporary and traditional crafts in Ireland. The Council's members include over sixty representative and professional organisations that between them represent the vast majority of craft practitioners in the country. The Crafts Council of Ireland receives the bulk of its funding from the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment through Enterprise Ireland. It also generates revenue from its international trade fair, Showcase. In addition, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland funds the participation by craftspeople from Northern Ireland in a number of Crafts Council of Ireland projects.

The Council adopted its first formal Strategic Plan in 2000, covering the period to 2003, and a second Strategic Plan in 2004, covering the period to 2006. The strategy presented in this document builds on these previous two plans. It does not represent a change of direction for the Crafts Council of Ireland - the Council believes the priorities identified in its previous plans to be absolutely correct and relevant. The plan for the next three years is to concentrate effort and resources on a number of issues that the Crafts Council of Ireland has identified as being the most effective and efficient use of resources, based on its understanding of the state of the industry, and of the requirements of the market at home and abroad.

In drawing up this document, the Crafts Council of Ireland has taken into consideration the findings and recommendations of the Enterprise Strategy Group and the Small Business Forum as these pertain to the crafts sector. The needs of craft enterprises for sustainable growth and competitive strength are absolutely aligned with those of other sectors, although the crafts sector has certain unique characteristics that demand different responses, both from the enterprises themselves and from the support bodies and agencies.

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## Foreword

The local is now global. What was true in an artistic sense is now true in an economic sense. The arts have always striven to express the universal through the particular. Crafts are a perfect example of this. They are local expressions of universal objects. As we know, this is now true of the economy. Local business is going global in an ever-increasing sense. This is the opportunity.

Of course the global is now local too and this is the challenge. The impact of increased international competition on local businesses is recognised by the Small Business Forum. Small businesses are the core of the Irish economy, accounting for 97% of all enterprises and providing employment for over 50% of the workforce. The challenges that face small business are those that face crafts because crafts are small business. There are 1700 craftspeople registered with the Crafts Council of Ireland and a further 1800 are involved in the sector, which had consumer spending of €121 million and exported a further €16 million worth of goods in 2005. It is of strategic importance both as a wealth generator and as an ambassador for Irish creativity abroad.

Irish crafts have made - and continue to make - a major contribution to Ireland's reputation for creativity. Craftspeople take extraordinary pride in their work. They learn, practice and hone their skills daily, they study the properties of different raw materials, and they produce both beautiful and functional objects that are treasured by people around the world.

The characteristics of a good craftsman - the dedication to quality, the constant learning, the blending of tradition and innovation - are characteristics that are needed in every business in our knowledge-based economy. The qualities of a good craft product - fitness for purpose, efficient use of materials, customer appeal - are qualities that are becoming more and more important as markets become more global and customers become better informed.

In order for crafts to expand they must address the business aspect of their art and that is precisely what this document does. I am pleased to welcome the vision of the Crafts Council in creating a new strategy, which focuses on craft as business thereby taking advantage of this opportunity and rising to the challenges.

The Crafts Council of Ireland's Strategic Plan addresses the objectives of the National Development Plan, which aims to strengthen and improve Ireland's international competitiveness and foster regional development. It complements the work not only of the Small Business Forum but also the Enterprise Strategy Group and the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, which emphasised the need to foster creativity and innovation, to develop the business skills of owner-managers, to focus on accredited training and, above all, to deepen the relationship between the producer and the customer.

The Crafts Council of Ireland has put the consumer firmly at the centre of its thinking in this strategy. I particularly welcome this emphasis. By studying the preferences and buying habits of consumers, craftspeople can identify promising business opportunities.

The Crafts Council of Ireland's research has identified some of the necessary ingredients for success in the years ahead: a stronger emphasis on design, the need to improve access for customers who are 'cash-rich but time-poor', and the need to raise public awareness of craft as an authentic, attractive option for Irish and international markets. Over the coming three years, the Crafts Council of Ireland will work with individual craftspeople and crafts enterprises, with their guilds and professional and business organisations, and with partner organisations in the State and private sectors to ensure that the sector continues to thrive.

**The success of this ambitious plan will not only benefit the crafts sector;  
it will have a positive effect throughout the whole economy.**

Micheál Martin, T.D.  
Minister for Enterprise, Trade & Employment  
24 April 2007

## Chairman's Introduction

The word 'craft' is multi-dimensional; it evokes an array of mixed images, feelings, and expressions as today we celebrate both the traditional and contemporary skills of the craft maker. Craft is constantly evolving, along with the skills, technologies, tools and materials of the maker. The Irish economy is also evolving and undergoing rapid change, with increased job opportunities, wealth and a range of new opportunities. Easy access to the world market has furthermore led to the rise of a new global consumer culture that is increasingly savvy, market-led and trend orientated.

The Crafts Council of Ireland's role is to continue to grow and strengthen the Irish crafts industry by monitoring the market and continuing to adapt and respond to the rapid changes. The challenges are many but the opportunities are great, with the Crafts Council working towards turnover to increase by 42% and registered craftspeople by 29% by 2009. The onset of mass production and the phenomenon of the global brand have seen the explosion of a new consumer onto the market, one who actively seeks and desires well designed, unique, authentic and collectable product - craft has huge potential to explore and exploit this market. To take advantage of this, design and innovation are now, more than ever, increasingly important features of the Irish crafts industry and are central to its future success. In addition, the importance of marketing Irish craft is critical to enhancing the commercial craft offer, and plays a leading role in this strategic vision.

This plan outlines the programmes of activity that are strategically linked to the key market trends and requirements over the coming years. It aims to equip the industry with the necessary skills and knowledge to adapt and remain flexible in a complex market place. The target markets have been identified, broadly, as the Irish and US collectors market and the mainstream Irish consumer market. Key features include: exploring new sales channels for makers, increasing market-led product and enhancing the image of Irish craft. Furthermore, the programmes that arise out of this plan will encourage enterprises to develop their businesses through a collaborative approach to training and mentoring developed alongside other key partners and industry experts. Sustaining the industry by actively encouraging school leavers and graduates to consider 'craft practice' as a rewarding career is also critical to the long-term success of the Irish craft industry.

The Crafts Council of Ireland believes this consumer-led approach will position the industry to confidently embrace the challenges ahead and collectively work towards a brighter and more sustainable future.

Gerry Wycherley  
Chairman, Crafts Council of Ireland



## Crafts in Ireland

Irish crafts are among the finest in the world. They are sought after by consumers and collectors; they are prized by their owners, given as gifts to mark special occasions, and handed down from generation to generation. As global culture becomes more and more homogenised, the value of the distinctive, the individual and the local increases.

The importance of crafts to the Irish economy is both direct and indirect. Directly, over 800 craftspeople in Ireland make their living from their craft, and a further 900 derive substantial income from their craft. In 2005, consumers spent some €121 million on craft products in Ireland; craft enterprises exported products worth a further €16 million (at wholesale prices). Indirectly, the sector underpins a great deal of modern industry, as the manual skills and the understanding of materials that have been developed by generations of craftspeople form the basis for a great deal of today's manufacturing, and are essential foundations for much science and technology.

Training young people in crafts has several benefits - it ensures that knowledge and skills are passed on to future generations of craftspeople; it fosters the kind of creative thinking and practical problem-solving that is increasingly in demand as Ireland progresses towards a knowledge economy; and it builds an appreciation of functional and aesthetic design that is essential for the development of a sophisticated market, not only for craft products, but for products of all kinds.

Crafts also make a significant contribution to tourism. Tourists - and particularly high-spending tourists - see Ireland as a distinctive destination with a tradition of creativity, and are attracted by crafts, craftsmanship and the associated images of beauty, attention to detail, and striving for perfection. Many of them travel within Ireland specifically to seek out craft products, to meet the craftspeople and to learn the story behind the products.

The crafts industry in Ireland is under pressure. International trade puts a wide variety of well-designed mass-produced products on retail shelves, as well as many craft products imported from low-wage economies. Buyers and potential buyers today are 'cash-rich but time-poor', and make most of their purchases in retail outlets in urban centres, whereas craftspeople increasingly opt to sell their products directly from their studios. Collectors and others who value high-end craft products are scarce and widely dispersed - craftspeople have considerable difficulty in identifying these buyers, in bringing their work to their attention, and in making their work available to them for appraisal and purchase.

Irish craft enterprises operate in a high-cost environment, and many find it difficult to make and sell products at a price that is attractive to potential purchasers. This difficulty is compounded by the small scale of craft enterprises, and the high level of business skills required to operate in a sophisticated, geographically dispersed market. Small scale inhibits the craftspeople from conducting adequate consumer research, and from keeping up to date with developments in technology, materials, and markets. The small size of the market and the difficulty in achieving an economic price for their work hinder expansion of the business - even the traditional way of passing skills on from master to apprentice is not generally viable.

While many of these issues are common to all small businesses, and have been addressed in the work of the Enterprise Strategy Group and the Small Business Forum, some are unique to the crafts industry and are the particular focus of the work of the Crafts Council of Ireland.

<sup>1</sup> In *Ahead of the Curve* (2004), the Enterprise Strategy Group highlighted the need for Irish enterprises to develop knowledge of markets and customer needs, to develop high-value products and services and to build cost-competitiveness. In *Small Business Matters* (2006), the Small Business Forum stressed the need for developing management capability and stimulating innovation in small enterprises.

## Headline economic indices for craft enterprises on the CCol Register

	Number of craftspeople on CCol register*		Estimated Sales - €m (based on 2004 CCol register)	Of which exports (from Ireland) (based on 2004 CCol register <sup>2</sup> )
	2005	2004		
Jewellery	219	201	13.7	14%
Ceramics	224	294	16.0	4%
Textiles	349	329	10.5	24%
Furniture	117	105	19.7	11%
Woodwork	174	161	2.9	15%
Other <sup>3</sup>	522	463	30.9	12%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,605</b>	<b>1,553</b>	<b>93.7**</b>	<b>12%</b>

\* Membership of the Crafts Council of Ireland includes over sixty associations, guilds and societies that between them represent some 20,000 craftspeople. However, most of the craftspeople who are full-time employed in craft industries are registered with the Council and represented in the figures above.

\*\* The Council estimates that the total value of sales in 2004 was €126.8 million.

## Employment in CCol-registered craft enterprises

Full time	883
Part-time/seasonal	722

## Size of enterprises registered with CCol

One-person operations	66%
With less than 2 employees <sup>4</sup>	21%
With between 2 and 9 employees	11%
With more than 9 employees	1%

<sup>2</sup> Export figures do not include sales in Ireland to tourists.

<sup>3</sup> Others include: Basketry (45 businesses on CCol register), Bookbinding (4), Candle Making (21), Fly-Tying (1), Fresco Painting (1), Glass Making (124), Horology (5), Leather Working (15), Calligraphy (7), Metal Working (75), Mixed Media Constructing (49), Musical Instrument Making (15), Paper Working (69), Printing (21), Silversmithing (21), Soap Making (3), Spinning (1), Stone Working (42), Thatching (4), and Toy Making (5).

<sup>4</sup> Employees other than the registered craftsperson.

**Mission**

*The Crafts Council of Ireland is the main champion of the craft industry in Ireland, fostering its growth and commercial strength, communicating its unique identity and stimulating quality, design, innovation and competitiveness.*

**Core Purpose**

*The Crafts Council of Ireland exists to support and promote Irish craft.*

## The Role of the Crafts Council of Ireland

The Craft Council of Ireland's role is to facilitate the development of Irish crafts and craft enterprises, so that they realise their full potential. This translates into a concern for craftsmanship, for design, for marketing and for sales. It requires the Crafts Council of Ireland to nurture creativity, talent and innovation, as well as traditional skill, and demands that it continually develop its awareness and appreciation of trends and developments in international markets, technologies, techniques, materials and business practices. It requires the Crafts Council of Ireland to engage in an ongoing two-way dialogue with craft practitioners on these and related issues; and it places an onus on the Crafts Council of Ireland to educate, inform and raise awareness among the general public of the value of crafts and the essential differences between craft and mass production.

Based on its analysis of the Irish and international market for crafts, of the craft sector and its needs, and of the Crafts Council of Ireland's role in supporting and promoting it, the Council identified five high-level goals in its Strategic Plan 2004 - 2006:

- **Design:** To enhance the standard and quality of design in contemporary and traditional Irish crafts and to promote and broaden an appreciation of design in craftwork across society as a whole;
- **Marketing:** To promote Irish crafts directly, and to help craftspeople develop commercially successful businesses by understanding market requirements and behaviour and by identifying and exploiting market opportunities;
- **Knowledge:** To position the Crafts Council of Ireland as an easily accessible source of knowledge and information relevant to the practice and business of crafts;
- **Education:** To facilitate the development of education and training programmes to meet the emerging needs of the crafts sector, and to expand and strengthen access of craftspeople to these programmes;
- **Recognition:** To raise the profile of Irish crafts in Ireland and internationally, and to ensure that practitioners who demonstrate consistent mastery in their craft receive public recognition.

## Progress 2004 - 2006

Over the past three years, the Crafts Council of Ireland pursued these goals, and made substantial progress in each area.

**Design:** The Crafts Council of Ireland's seminar and mentoring programme focused on the role of design and the development of design skills - 1,500 craftspeople attended different forms of design training between 2004 and 2006. Two new initiatives in particular aim to stimulate design-led craft - *Avantcraft* and the *50% scheme*.

- The *Avantcraft* initiative brought twelve craft enterprises together with eight designers, with the aim of developing new craft products designed to meet market demands, and of raising the craftspeople's awareness of market-led design.
- The *50% scheme* provided resources for craft enterprises to develop products specifically designed for identified markets. Thirty companies benefited from the scheme in 2005, and a greater number is expected to participate in 2006.

**Marketing:** The Crafts Council of Ireland undertook extensive research into the performance of craft enterprises, into the market for crafts, into consumer and retailer attitudes to craft, and into emerging trends that affect the competitive position of crafts. The commercial metrics from this research are published annually in the *Irish Craft Industry Report*. This combination of industry and consumer research is used by the Crafts Council of Ireland to continually refine its policies and programmes, and to ensure that its activities are relevant and productive. It is also used by craft enterprises as an input to their strategic planning. The Crafts Council of Ireland continues to research specific markets, such as the French market, and the US collectors market. The research into the French market has already led to an invitation to recruit potential exhibitors for an exhibition curated by the VIA Centre, Paris, on Innovation in Irish Craft and Design.

The Crafts Council of Ireland also operates a number of active marketing programmes to promote Irish crafts:

- The *Portfolio* project targets the Irish and international collectors market by profiling leading Irish designer/makers of craft.
- The *Showcase* international trade fair is another important vehicle for raising the profile of Irish craft and design - some 9,000 national and international buyers attend the fair each year.
- International *research missions* also help craftspeople to plan market entry - some 140 craftspeople participated in such missions in 2004 and 2005.
- The *exhibition programme* has expanded at regional, national and international level - an average of 225,000 members of the public attended exhibitions in 2004 and 2005. In 2005, the Crafts Council of Ireland brought exhibitions of Irish craft to the USA, the UK, Spain and Lithuania.

### Values

The following values underpin how the Crafts Council of Ireland gives effect to its core purpose:

**Innovation and creativity:** stimulating design innovation and creativity in product development as critical components of future competitiveness.

**Community:** supporting the capacity of craftspeople to live and work on a sustainable basis as successful enterprises, whilst remaining rooted within their local communities.

**Development:** supporting craftspeople and enterprises at all stages of development to realise their ambitions.

**Partnership:** harnessing the support and expertise of other agencies to meet sectoral objectives, rather than attempting to achieve them solely from within the Craft Council's own resources.

**Excellence:** promoting excellence in all aspects of Irish-produced craft.

**Accessibility:** ensuring that consumers can find, experience and buy Irish craft products.

**Information and insight:** sharing understanding on industry and craft dynamics with the sector and the public.

**Heritage:** celebrating the distinctive identity of Irish craft, including both traditional and contemporary values and the unique landscape, colours and materials that inspire this work.

**Lifelong learning:** encouraging craftspeople at all stages of their development to continually renew their skills.

**Value of crafts:** promoting the value of craft as a source of personal enrichment for all.

**Knowledge:** The Crafts Council of Ireland has made considerable advances in how it acquires, develops, stores, segments and disseminates information of relevance to the crafts industry and to craftspeople. In pro-actively communicating key information to craftspeople, the press and the general public, the Council exploits the full range of information dissemination mechanisms, including a dynamic website coupled with downloadable publications and documents, other online resources and multimedia CD-ROMs, and physical publications, including the bi-monthly newsletter, *Stopress*, corporate and industry reports, exhibition catalogues and other general information publications.

In addition, the Crafts Council of Ireland responds to queries from the press and the general public - typically regarding the accessibility or availability of crafts, and it makes its extensive picture library available to the press to accompany articles about Irish crafts.

The Crafts Council of Ireland also deals with queries and requests for advice from craftspeople, both technical and business-related.

**Education:** The Crafts Council of Ireland has been working actively with the Higher Education Training Accreditation Council (HETAC) and the Further Education and Training Accreditation Council (FETAC) to develop accreditation for the current jewellery and ceramics courses to degree level, and to establish a Standards Development Group for training in the craft sector.

In order to stimulate interest among schoolchildren, with the aim of attracting the next generation of craftspeople, the Crafts Council of Ireland introduced a *Craft in the Classroom* pilot in County Cork. This initiative involved 400 students and 15 craftspeople (all of whom were trained for the exercise).

At third level, the Crafts Council of Ireland introduced an award scheme to encourage and support final-year undergraduate and postgraduate students who wish to acquire additional skills or training, either by attending further training in Ireland or abroad, to carry out research into materials, technologies or practices, to purchase materials or equipment, to rent studio space, or to produce promotional materials.

**Recognition:** The Crafts Council of Ireland introduced a bursary scheme to profile excellence in Irish craft and to develop a cadre of standard-setters. The *Irish Arts Review*, with the support of the Crafts Council of Ireland, now includes a regular feature on design portfolios. And the Crafts Council of Ireland is working actively with the National Museum Collection and the Department of Foreign Affairs to raise the profile of Irish craft at home and abroad.

## The Changing Market

The Crafts Council of Ireland regularly surveys craftspeople to gain insight into the practitioners' view of the industry and the trends within it. To complement this, the Council in 2005/2006 conducted in-depth market research with consumers and retailers.

This research showed that, at consumer and retail level, craft is becoming less relevant. Between 2000 and 2004, sales of craft as a percentage of overall consumer spending declined from 0.28% to 0.19%. The market into which craft has been selling is changing fast, and craft needs to catch up quickly.

There are still significant opportunities to grow the sector, both creatively and commercially, and to make craft available to a wider, increasingly discerning Irish and international audience. To realise these opportunities, craftspeople need to understand their target markets better, and then use their creative abilities to develop products with compelling consumer appeal. However, the relationship between consumer and craft is complex: craftspeople can make their personal story central to their product, and thus can stimulate, rather than simply reflect, consumer preferences.

The Crafts Council of Ireland Business and Marketing Plan describes a programme of activity which will impact on the four key areas that define the relationship between CCol clients and their existing and potential customers (*see Figure 1*).

### External and internal context

The plan contains the external market influences and the internal analysis of our industry which dictates the flow of CCol activity. The impact of well designed, low cost imports on Irish craft continues to be a major external threat. The negative image of Irish craft amongst domestic consumers - highlighted in research - is also significant. However, when consumers were actually shown the wide range of Irish craft goods being currently produced, they reacted very positively. This emphasises the need to develop a new image and position for craft to counter the perceived view that craft is for tourists and trades on "Oirishness".

Consumers' perception of craft is open to change. This change will be dependent on craft being more easily found in the outlets and retail areas that consumers choose to shop in. The absence of design-led craft in primary outlets has resulted in this negative perception amongst domestic consumers. Access to contemporary craft goods will be the key to unlock the potential expansion of sales in the giftware, homeware and fashion/accessories/jewellery categories. This will require a new working relationship between the existing craft retailer and craft supplier, as well as the creation of new channels which could be developed with the support of private or public sector partners.

As access channels expand, so must the supply of well designed craft goods, because for consumers 'design' is the key reason for purchasing. 'Hand made' is a secondary value addition, although one that can increase what consumers are prepared to pay for craft goods. If the industry is to be market-led, it must continually innovate in design.

### Market Segmentation

While the external and internal analysis determines the type of programme offered to support the craft industry, there is also a need to focus its delivery. The craft industry is not homogeneous. Craft companies segment by scale and type of manufacture, as well as business experience and product quality. A 'one size suits all' approach is ineffective and the 1600 craftspeople who have registered their businesses with CCol must be clustered so that the appropriate support is offered to the appropriate client.

The segmentation of consumers into mainstream and collector in the Plan, is essential because each group has different values and drivers when purchasing. In the mainstream market, the under 35 year female consumer will be a particular target in the repositioning of the craft image. They need to be recruited as older craft consumers purchasing declines, and they represent a substantial discretionary spend with high potential for the craft industry in the giftware, homeware and fashion/accessories/jewellery categories. The sheer scale of the US market for fine craft aimed at the collector, and the proven competitiveness of Irish craft in this market, dictates that it will also be a focus for the 2007 - 2009 period.

Figure 1

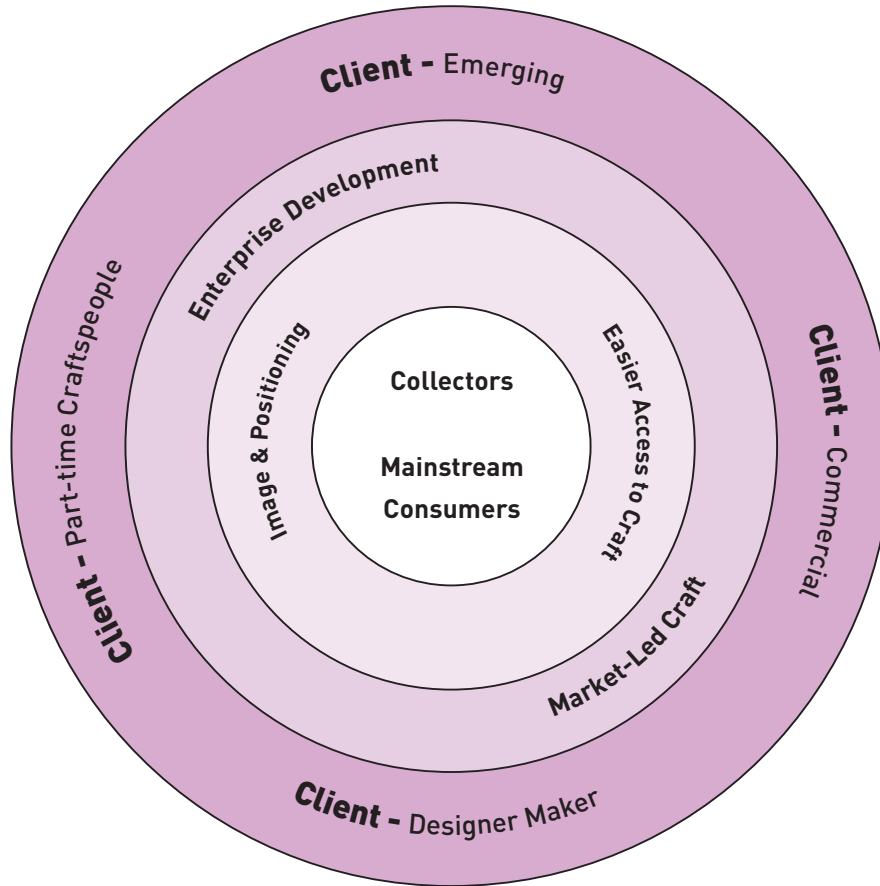


Figure 1 illustrates a new operational approach for CCol where its activity is entirely focused on facilitating the most effective and commercially viable relationship between a clustered client base and their target consumers.

The CCol clients are loosely clustered into four groups - Designer Maker, Commercial Craft Manufacturer, Part-time Craftspeople and Emerging Maker. Each group has distinct development and support needs. Consumers are divided into two target groups - Collectors and Mainstream Consumer. Again, both consumer groups have specific and distinct needs in terms of craft and the way that it is promoted to them.

All CCol activity impacting on **Image and Positioning** is aimed directly and exclusively at the Consumers.

The CCol activity aimed at increasing the production of **Market-Led** craft and the initiatives in improving consumer **Access to Craft**, will create a new relationship between craft and consumers. The new designs and ranges of craft being offered to the consumer as a result of CCol Market-Led support will reinforce and directly feed activity aimed at developing Access to Craft and Image and Positioning.

## Priority Issues for the Next Three Years

The Crafts Council of Ireland has drawn up its plan for the next three years based on its experience over the past three years, the insights into consumer attitudes and behaviour revealed in its research, and recent changes (and impending changes) in the social, economic and commercial environment.

The goals set out in the 2004-06 Strategic Plan - design, knowledge, marketing, education and recognition - are still valid, and will continue to set the overall direction for the Crafts Council of Ireland's work for the next three years.

The Crafts Council of Ireland's research has emphasised the need for the industry to be more responsive to changing patterns of consumption, and in this Strategic Plan, the Council places the consumer firmly at the centre of its thinking. It has considered the needs of the sector over the next three years in recognising and meeting the consumers' needs, and it aims to address these needs as effectively and efficiently as possible. Four issues have been identified as having the potential to yield greatest results for effort and resources expended:

- Image and positioning: To promote Irish craft and design as an attractive and valued alternative for the consumer and as an expression of contemporary Ireland.
- Market-led Craft: To stimulate the creation of Irish craft that directly relates to consumer needs and preferences, in terms of product design, quality, and craftsmanship.
- Easy Access to Crafts: To make craft products more accessible to consumers. This will mean exploring a variety of ways to bring craft to consumers.
- Developing Craft Enterprises: To work with craftspeople to facilitate the growth of their businesses in a way that fulfils their creative and commercial ambitions.

These issues overlap and complement the priority areas of the 2004-06 Strategic Plan, as illustrated below:

Strategic High-level Goals \ Priority Issues 07-09	Image and Positioning	Stimulating Market-led Craft	Making Crafts Accessible	Developing Craft Enterprises
Design		•		•
Marketing	•	•	•	•
Knowledge		•	•	•
Education		•	•	•
Recognition	•	•		•



## Crafts Council of Ireland

### OPERATIONAL ROLES

The CCol staff will focus exclusively on the following roles, which will define all activity over the next three years:

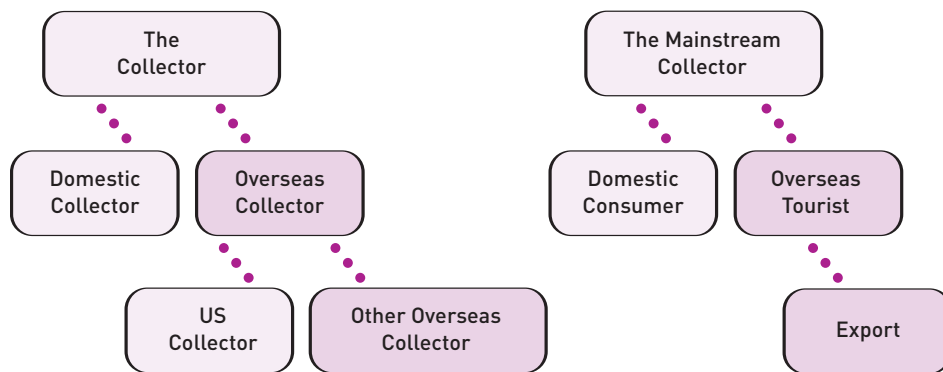
1. To research the needs of target consumers, the marketplace for craft and to quantify the best market segments and opportunities offered.
2. To research industry performance in terms of measuring the impact of CCol programme activity and the impact of a changing market.
3. To communicate its research to key stakeholders, i.e. craftspeople, retailers, media and funders.
4. To facilitate new product development in craft companies that fits defined consumer needs and market opportunities.
5. To develop and communicate a defined image and positioning for the 'Craft' brand.
6. To support the education of the next generation of consumers for the 'Craft' story.
7. To seek partnerships (Public & Private) that increase access channels for craft to the target consumers.
8. To select craft suppliers who will accept the challenge of developing their goods and businesses to benefit from new access channels to the target consumers.
9. To identify and recruit partnerships with:
  - a. regional bodies to ensure that there is local provision of enterprise development support for the craft industry,
  - b. education bodies to ensure that appropriate technical skills training will be offered to sustain commercial production quality in the industry,
  - c. external expertise needed to mentor on marketing and sales skills for locally provided development programmes.
10. To recruit new talent into the industry.

## THE MARKET

### Market Segments

The two segments with most commercial potential in terms of craft are the Collector and the Consumer.

Figure 2: Consumer segments

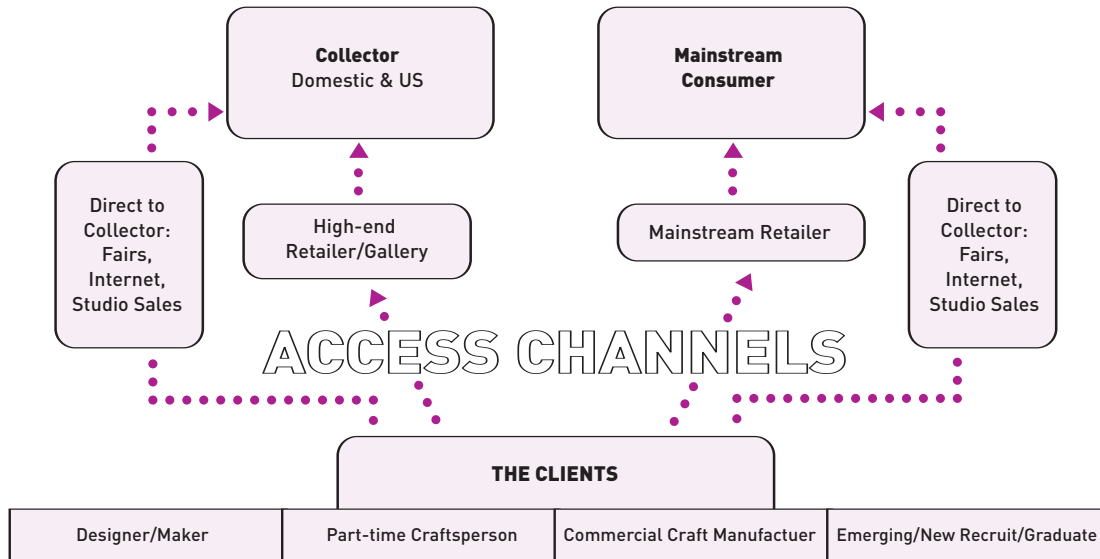


- The consumer breaks into two distinct types - **the Collector** and the **Mainstream Consumer**.
- Research shows that the Irish ABC1 mainstream consumer represents the single largest economic opportunity for Irish Craft with a €1.2 billion potential.
- While research dictates that resources are focused on mainstream Irish consumers, it follows that goods satisfying their purchase needs will also meet the needs of overseas tourists and export markets.
- The Collector is split between the domestic AB collector and the overseas collector.
- The overseas collector market with the most potential and best fit for Irish craft, is in the US, valued at between \$200 to \$400 million per annum.

Therefore, the activity in the Plan is focused on the three target consumer segments outlined in Figure 2:

1. Domestic Mainstream Consumers
2. Domestic Collectors
3. US Collectors

Figure 3: Routes to Market / Access Channels



Target Market Size

	Consumers	Potential Market Value
<b>Consumer Market</b>		
Irish 25+ year olds	2,448,000 <sup>5</sup>	€1,214,000,000 <sup>6</sup>
<b>Consumer Market</b>		
Irish	165,000 <sup>7</sup>	€35,000,000
USA	(Target for 2007 research)	€250,000,000 <sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> CSO, 2002.

<sup>6</sup> B&A Consumer Survey, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> B&A Consumer Survey, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> At 2001 values (US Market for Collectable Fine Craft, 2006).

## Image and Positioning of Craft

### The Ambition

The Crafts Council of Ireland's ambition is to promote well designed, skillfully made Irish craft that is an expression of contemporary Ireland and that offers an attractive, valued choice for consumers.

### The Challenge

Craftspeople in Ireland are producing some outstanding work, with the potential to attract, excite and compel consumers. However, the Crafts Council of Ireland's research shows that consumers and retailers do not always identify these attributes with Irish crafts - there is a perception that crafts have failed to keep pace with Irish tastes, habits, and lifestyles. While consumers are receptive to well-designed and executed crafts in general, they are not always aware that such products are made in Ireland, or they believe them to be over-priced compared to mass-produced imports. Likewise, retailers are reluctant to stock products for which they do not see any steady market or, at the other extreme, a reliable source of supply.

Craftspeople need to be able to identify and communicate what is distinct and intriguing about their product, as well as understanding the price points for different markets. In distinguishing craft products from mass-produced ones - and in justifying the higher price tag - the 'story' of the craftspeople and their craft is important, and this must be communicated to potential consumers.

There is, therefore, an urgent need to position and promote Irish crafts as desirable, exciting and valuable, incorporating the best of contemporary design and traditional Irish craftsmanship.

### The Crafts Council of Ireland's Priorities

The Crafts Council of Ireland is uniquely placed to work with craftspeople, consumers, retailers, and Government to reposition Irish craft in a way that appeals to today's consumers.

The Council's aim is to establish an exciting, compelling identity for Irish crafts in the mind of the consumer - one that immediately associates Irish crafts with creative, contemporary design and skillful execution, while at the same time being uniquely and recognisably Irish.

The identity must reflect the reality: consumers who respond to it will seek out craft products that complement and enhance their current lifestyles. If this identity is successfully embedded in the consumers' mind, it must be reflected in the quality, quantity and range of products on offer, and this creates both opportunities and challenges for craftspeople. The Crafts Council of Ireland will work with craftspeople and crafts enterprises to ensure that the repositioning of the image of Irish crafts is paralleled by the development of craft offerings and business models that reflect the needs of today's consumers.

The Crafts Council of Ireland will work to raise the profile of craft, both in Ireland and internationally, so that more potential buyers are aware of what is available. This is particularly important in Dublin, where there are many potential buyers, but few outlets where quality Irish crafts are available. The Council will also build on its current exhibition programme to raise the profile of Irish craft at home and abroad.

The Crafts Council of Ireland will also encourage Government to be 'ambassadors' of Irish craft and in particular to commission more craft. The Council's ambition is to work more closely with national cultural institutions, such as the National Museum, Farmleigh, the Heritage Council, the Office of Public Works, the Arts Council, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, the Department of Foreign Affairs and other Government departments and agencies in Ireland and Northern Ireland, and with the business community to raise the visibility and profile of craft among both Irish people and visitors.

The Crafts Council of Ireland's research has identified two markets in particular that have significant potential for Irish crafts; over the coming three years, the Council will focus its efforts on these markets:

**Irish consumers aged 25-35:** The Crafts Council of Ireland will explore innovative and inventive ways of appealing to younger consumers. This will mean:

- Identifying and profiling 'emerging talent' to appeal to the young consumer market, using the most appropriate media;
- Identifying the distribution channels that reach younger consumers;
- Increasing the use of the Internet, both as a marketing and a sales tool; and
- Conducting further market research on younger consumers in order to establish the optimum ways of interacting with them.

**'Collectors', both Irish and international:** Collectors of craft work, in this context, include individuals in both the public and the private sector who commission work, and private individuals who are attracted to craft (but who may or may not identify themselves as collectors). It is essential to develop this market, as it is an important way of building the profile of individual craftspeople and of adding to the desirability, exclusivity and value of their work.

The Crafts Council of Ireland will build on its success over the past three years in developing the collectors market and increase its market potential by:

- Extending and expanding 'CCol Portfolio' to include more leading designers and makers of craft;
- Identifying and profiling craft and design leaders, not only to promote their own work, but to enhance the image of Irish craft at home and abroad;
- Providing support to craftspeople in selling and exhibiting their crafts through, for example, enhanced imagery and photography;
- Connecting craftspeople with public and private organisations who wish to commission craft; and
- Developing the appeal of Irish crafts both to those who see themselves as collectors and those who are discerning buyers of high-value craft but do not see themselves as collectors.

## Image and Positioning of Craft

Objectives	Key Performance Indicators
To re-position the craft brand by mid 2007	New brand positioning and proposition
To work in partnership with retailers to raise awareness of craft in-store	Raised profile of the craft brand in retail outlets
To develop partnerships with key media to promote the craft 'brand'	Media plan and increased media coverage
To provide media with the consumer-led images that will encourage them to cover craft	Quality of campaigns
To educate and inform consumers of the unique nature of craft through targeted advertising and/or PR campaigns	Quality of campaigns
To build key strategic promotional relationships with partner bodies through co-funding of National Craft Collections	Number of pieces purchased for the collections
To promote the image of craft for excellence in creativity and craft making	The high standard of craftsmanship receives awards National Applied Arts Bursary - present 1 to 3 each year to leading makers in partnership with regional bodies
To promote the benefits of representing Irish Designer Makers to US Gallery/Event owners	Develop relationships with key galleries in US towards Increased representation of Irish Designer Makers
To develop awareness and positive image of Irish Craft amongst target audience	2 collector events at SOFA per annum
To research the opportunities and challenges as defined by US Gallery/Event Managers/Owners	2 seminar/clinics per annum, Stopress Articles, Website downloads with relevant information
To research the needs of US Collectors	US Collector Research
To build partnerships with key media to create awareness of Craft as a collectors item	Production of a Year Book for collectors in partnership with Irish Arts Review
To promote the benefits of representing Irish Designer Makers to US Gallery/Event owners	60 galleries targeted for visits by end 2009
Use SOFA status and CCoI Portfolio as promotional tools for exhibition exchange, tour of target galleries by Designer Makers	12 to 15 galleries representing Designer Makers by end 2009

## Stimulating Market-led Craft

### The Ambition

The Crafts Council of Ireland's ambition is to stimulate Irish craftspeople to create work that relates directly to consumer needs and preferences. Based on the Council's research, this means work that:

- Stands out for its exceptional design;
- Is superbly executed;
- Is rooted in Irish craft traditions, and adapted to today's domestic, technological and business environments.

### The Challenge

The Crafts Council of Ireland's consumer research shows that in choosing a product, consumers care more about good design than they do about whether the product is hand-made or mass-produced. This presents twin challenges for craftspeople: first, their design has to equal or surpass the best available from mass manufacturers, and second, they have to educate consumers regarding the essential difference between the unique, hand-made craft product and the standardised manufactured one.

### The Crafts Council of Ireland's Priorities

The Crafts Council of Ireland recognises that in appealing to today's consumers - and particularly to younger (25-35 year old) consumers and the 'collectors' market that have been identified as key markets - design has the potential to distinguish Irish crafts, and the Council regards the promotion of design and innovation as its single most important priority.

Over the coming three years, the Crafts Council of Ireland will build on the progress achieved under the 2004-06 Strategic Plan. The Council will continue to highlight the role of design as a creative and commercial tool, and will work closely with those craftspeople who wish to develop their design capabilities and to use design to as their competitive differentiator<sup>9</sup>. The Council will pursue this objective directly with craftspeople and their representative and professional organisations, and also with Government, enterprise support agencies, educational institutions and retailers.

The Crafts Council of Ireland will also continue to foster active collaboration between craftspeople and designers through schemes such as Avantcraft and the 50% scheme. It will also explore other models of collaboration to raise the quality and design of crafts.

The Council will also continue to promote crafts and to establish in the public mind the difference between hand-made objects and mass-produced ones. This will mean:

- Providing buyers with opportunities to observe the process of bringing a craft object from initial concept to design to final product;
- Profiling emerging and established designer/makers of craft;
- Identifying high-profile events and expanding the current exhibition programme to showcase Irish design-led craft; and
- Nurturing the creative and design process early in life by working at primary school level to develop creativity, design and craftsmanship.

<sup>9</sup> In setting this priority, the CCol accepts the key recommendations on design in two reports: the Irish Council for Science, Technology and Innovation's Design and Development, 2002 and the Cox Review of Creativity in Business: Building on the UK's Strengths which was commissioned by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 2005

## Stimulating Market-led Craft

Objectives	Key Performance Indicators
To provide co-investment for relevant product research and development, specifically for this market	Number of product ranges successfully launched
To commission research on product and pricing	Quality and timeliness of research
To disseminate the information gained to clients and relevant stakeholders (i.e. retailers)	Number of clients and retailers informed of research results
To provide craftspeople with up to the minute information on current trends in the global marketplace through seminars, Stopress and web site	Website articles Stopress articles 4 seminars per annum
To measure the annual performance of the industry in terms of turnover, segment share, exports and employment	Annual Industry Survey
To research best practice in export and deliver to client base	'Export Best Practice' Clinic PDF on line
To inspire primary school children through the craft making process and to lever additional funding for provision of craft teaching from Education Authorities	Number of children/schools/craftspeople engaging in the craft making process, during and beyond the life of the project Development of relationship with Department of Education and Science



## Making Crafts Accessible to Consumers

### The Ambition

The Crafts Council of Ireland's ambition is to make crafts more accessible to consumers, so that potential buyers are given every opportunity to experience, appreciate and buy Irish craft products.

### The Challenge

In order to realise the potential of the craft sector for commercial growth, craft enterprises must make their products more accessible to consumers. The Crafts Council of Ireland's research shows that craft's presence in retail is reducing, while the importance of retail is increasing. The prime target markets - young (25-35 year old) Irish consumers and collectors - are mainly urban, whereas craft enterprises are mainly rural. Most craftspeople currently depend on direct sales<sup>10</sup>, and thereby miss opportunities for non-direct retail sales.

The relationship between craftspeople and retailers is complicated by different perspectives and expectations. Retailers like standard, replicable products, easily stored and displayed, well packaged and presented, at well-defined price points; they expect reliable delivery and a business-like approach to financial dealings. Craftspeople are not always able to meet these expectations, sometimes because of the nature of crafts, sometimes because the craftspeople does not see himself or herself as a business person, and sometimes because the scale of the craft enterprise is too small.

Part of the attraction of a craft product, and part of the justification for its price tag, is the story behind the product - the story of the craftspeople and how they acquired their skill, the source of the raw materials, the traditions reflected in the product, and the processes involved in making it. Research shows that consumers want to hear these stories, and if the craftspeople is to reach a market by any means other than direct sale, he or she must package and present the product in such a way that the essence of the story is effectively communicated to the buyer.

The Crafts Council of Ireland's research also indicates that while the Internet is not a significant sales channel (online sales by craftspeople are actually falling), it has significant potential for marketing, for arousing the interest of buyers, and for communicating the story behind the craft and the craftspeople. The majority of sales happen only when the purchaser can actually see and touch the product.

### The Crafts Council of Ireland's Priorities

Over the coming three years, the Crafts Council of Ireland will work with craft enterprises to achieve a better mix of routes to market. Currently, the retail channel is under-exploited for a variety of reasons - mostly relating to the different business models of the supplier and the retailer, which leads to unrealistic expectations on both sides. Over the coming period, the Council aims to build better relationships with key retailers, particularly in Dublin and other urban centres, and establish the Crafts Council of Ireland as their preferred source of research advice on the craft sector and market. The Council's growing credibility with the retail sector will enable it to act as a trusted mediator between craft enterprises and retailers. The Crafts Council of Ireland will also work with craft enterprises to build their understanding of the retailers' needs and the constraints they operate under.

The Council's approach will be selective - it will focus on routes to market that are appropriate to high-value craft. High-profile retail outlets for craft must be developed in ways that reflect the lifestyle of Irish consumers. Besides working with high-profile

<sup>10</sup> Direct sales account for 75% of sales by craftspeople.

retailers, the Crafts Council of Ireland will work with networks and clusters of craft enterprises (both existing and new) to develop innovative ways of making craft more easily accessible to consumers, for example through exhibitions, galleries, craft fairs and commissions. The Council will also work with tourism bodies and other key partners throughout the island to showcase crafts around the country.

The Crafts Council of Ireland will position itself as the first point of contact for market intelligence and research on the craft sector. It will prioritise the development of its website as a pivotal information and promotional tool that is recognised for its excellence and user-friendliness.

The Crafts Council of Ireland will also increase its support for craft enterprises developing their use of the Internet for marketing and sales. This route is widely used by younger consumers to find out about products that are available and where they can be seen and bought. In the coming years - and in particular for certain types of craft and for repeat orders - it will be increasingly used to place orders. Irish craftspeople must be encouraged to exploit this opportunity.

Objectives	Key Performance Indicators
To increase sales channels for the Designer Maker	An increase in craft presence in galleries
To work in partnership with existing galleries to increase sales of craft	An increase in craft sales in established galleries and high-end outlets
Increase the number of directional CCol craft exhibitions in Dublin and the regions	An increase in the number of exhibitions in Dublin and the regions
To optimise the value of the National Craft Gallery to the broader CCol strategic objectives	The implementation of a new management policy for the NCG and exhibition programme
To initiate a feasibility study on the creation of a new Collector Fair (as COLLECT, London or SOFA, Chicago) in Dublin by October 2008	Completion of the study
To launch new regional craft outlets in 2007-2009 (modelled on Leitrim Design House, Louth CRAFTmark)	6 Regional Craft Outlets established by end 2009
To research access opportunities for 'Irish Craft Offer' On high street outlets and in shopping centres	Quality and timeliness of the research
To launch an 'Irish Craft Offer' in a leading department store	Establish partnership with a Department Store Store by end 2007
To launch an 'Irish Craft Offer' in at least one specialist retailer (e.g. Meadows & Byrnes, Avoca and Carraig Donn) in 2007-2009	A 'Craft Offer' launched in specialist retail outlet in 2008
To launch an 'Irish Craft Offer' in 12 garden centres by the end of the plan	Number of 'Craft Offers' launched in garden centres
To facilitate access to mainstream buyers by supporting and promoting craftspeople at Showcase	Increased craft performance at Showcase
To review of the potential of Showcase as a vehicle for craft	Review completed by end 2007
To ensure that a critical mass of Designer Makers are affiliated with key galleries in the USA and become part of their stable of regular artists by 12/2009.	Number of Designer Makers affiliated with US galleries

## Developing Craft Enterprises

### The Ambition

The Crafts Council of Ireland's ambition is to facilitate the growth of craft businesses by encouraging craftspeople to produce well-designed, skillfully made products for which there is a market, and by working with craftspeople to build economically viable, sustainable craft enterprises.

### The Challenge

All craft businesses - almost by definition - are small. The vast majority are operated by one person, who is thus responsible not only for design and production, but also for marketing, sales, accounting, supplies and inventory control. In addition, many craftspeople regard their endeavours as artistic, and have scant regard for the market. These challenges pose a serious threat to the long-term viability of the enterprises.

The survival and growth of craft enterprises - their ability even to yield a living wage for the craftsman - depend in the first instance on their understanding of market requirements and their ability to meet them.

While some craft sectors and some individual businesses are well positioned to achieve further growth, others have important capacity gaps. To realise the potential of the sector, these deficiencies - which are for the most part business-related - must be addressed, and the craftspeople cannot - and cannot be expected to - do this on their own.

The immediate challenge is to communicate detailed market research to the craft enterprises, and to help them set goals and priorities that take this research into account. This needs to be complemented by training programmes that are suited to the needs of craftspeople, in terms of both content and delivery.

### The Crafts Council of Ireland's Priorities

Understanding the market for crafts from the points-of-view of the craftsman, the retailer and the consumer is vital to creating vibrant and sustainable craft enterprises. The Crafts Council of Ireland is already conducting detailed research on the market for crafts, and it will continue with this work. The Council will communicate its research findings directly to craftspeople, and explore the implications of these findings for the craftspeople, their products and their enterprises.

The Crafts Council of Ireland will continue to work to develop the business skills of craftspeople and their ability to produce craft more commercially and within the timeframes needed by retailers. The Council will work with partners in education and in the development agencies to ensure that appropriate training is available, and with craftspeople to encourage the take-up of the training opportunities. The Council itself will directly provide specialist seminars where these are not otherwise available.

Over the past three years, the Crafts Council of Ireland has been working with the Higher Education and Training Accreditation Council (HETAC) and the Further Education and Training Accreditation Council (FETAC) to achieve accreditation for its training courses and to create a role for the Crafts Council of Ireland as the principal advisor on the training needs of the craft sector. The Council expects to participate in setting award standards over the coming months, and it expects this to raise awareness and take-up of training and education within the craft sector.

The Crafts Council of Ireland will work closely with the enterprise development agencies, such as FÁS, the County and City Enterprise Boards and the Leader programmes, to create and tailor business supports for craftspeople and craft enterprises.

The Council will develop and pilot a targeted mentoring programme for the crafts sector that will help craftspeople to clarify their business goals and ways of achieving them. It will also develop an online goal-setting and business analysis template to help craftspeople analyse their businesses and identify future directions.

The Crafts Council of Ireland will explore with the industry ways of overcoming some of the limitations imposed by the small scale of individual craft enterprises, such as the development of collaborative approaches, clustering and networking, shared services and facilities, and joint marketing.

The Crafts Council of Ireland will also work with its counterpart agencies in Northern Ireland - and in particular with Craft Northern Ireland - to secure, as far as possible, an all-island approach to developing craft.

In order to sustain the craft sector in the longer term, the Crafts Council of Ireland will continue to promote crafts in schools at primary and secondary level, extending the *Crafts in the Classroom* pilot programme to primary schools in other counties and planning a development programme for second-level schools. It will work with other State agencies to help craftspeople to secure teaching qualifications. It will work with the third-level colleges of art and design and with career guidance teachers to promote craft courses to school-leavers, and it will work with the third-level institutions, through its 3rd Level Award Scheme and through the co-development of business-related modules in their courses, so that graduates are able to make the transition from college to enterprise more easily and successfully.

Regarding the continuing development of excellence in craftsmanship and design - which is central to the Council's strategy - the Crafts Council of Ireland will raise the profile of its bursary programme, and build the profile of craftspeople who are exemplars of superb craftsmanship and design. It will explore ways in which the craftspeople who are true masters of their craft can conduct master classes to coincide with high-profile exhibitions/events, and so pass on some of their knowledge and skill.

Existing schemes for encouraging the development of design-led craft, such as *Avantcraft* and the 50% scheme, will be expanded, and the Crafts Council of Ireland will direct craftspeople to other sources of finance that are available for the development of their craft or their business.

## Developing Craft Enterprises

Objectives	Key Performance Indicators
To communicate key policies, standard setting, emerging issues, development opportunities and current research to both client and wider community groups	Commissioning articles for publication in print and on website.  Design and print trade publication.  Website  Targeted emails
To pilot a programme which will ensure appropriate product and marketing development to craft businesses	Agreeing a programme with the CEBs for launch in spring 2007. Local mentoring in design and marketing, in partnership with CEBs to a cluster of participants in a region  Number of programmes implemented
To host clinic style workshops in Kilkenny	2 clinics per annum
To provide a basic Business Guide to developing and emerging craft businesses	An online PDF publication to guide enterprise through their development
To provide specific craft business skills to craftspeople identifying the areas they need support in to bring them to amore commercial status. Co-investing with CEBs in a Mentoring Programme	Number of participants on the programmes
To co-fund market driven network initiatives that are aligned to the CCoI Strategic Plan	Number of networks who undertake market-driven activity
To provide a local or regional fast track programme to guide Emerging Makers in product and marketing development and monitor progress by establishing 'Making it' scheme based on the CRAFT NI / UK model, co-funded and co-managed by Enterprise Boards/Leaders etc.	Feasibility study completed in 2007  Pilot established 2008  Extended 2009
To provide co-investment for relevant product research and development.  Co-investment offered through the 50% Scheme /Research mission.	Establish, promote and monitor the criteria for success with target audience.  Evaluate economic impact of co-investment.  Number of product ranges successfully launched
Attain accreditation for the CCoI skills courses through HETAC	Accreditation achieved
To promote the image of craft for excellence in creativity and craft making	The high standard of craftsmanship receives awards  National Applied Arts Bursary - present 1 to 3 each year to leading makers in partnership with regional bodies

## EDUCATION

### The Ambition

The Crafts Council of Ireland's ambition is to inspire a future generation of craft consumers to believe in the 'craft story' and to recruit the next generation of craftspeople into the industry.

### The Challenge

For graduates of the Crafts Council of Ireland's Skills Courses employment in the craft sector is achieved in the vast majority of cases, contrasting starkly with art college graduates. CCoI surveyed all the main colleges of art and design in 2006 in an attempt to obtain comparable figures, but without exception, college personnel contacted stated that their institution did not have any effective system in place for tracking graduate career development. However, anecdotal evidence indicates that numbers entering the craft sector are low, particularly in comparison to CCoI's graduates, hence the need for graduate programmes such as Craft NI's 'Making it' scheme.

The craft sector needs to attract a new generation of makers who will be inspired to develop creativity and innovation in the application of design, technology, and use of materials. They will have developed a good work ethic, self-motivation, self-confidence, initiative and professionalism in order to acquire the knowledge, skills and competencies required by a modern, international industry.

### The Crafts Council of Ireland's Priorities

At first level, the Craft in the Classroom pilot project, which gives craftspeople the opportunity to inspire primary school children through the making process, will be further developed and extended. Activity at 2nd level will be introduced via a pilot initiative promoting craft as a career to transition year students in 2007, with roll out of the defined model in 2008/9. In order to recruit more 3rd level craft graduates into the industry, an audit of final year students will be undertaken in key colleges, while the 3rd Level Awards Scheme and associated NCG exhibition will serve to strengthen relations with colleges and promote craft as a career to their students. Graduates likely to move towards craft enterprise will be encouraged to participate in a Graduate/Emerging Makers Fast Track Business Development Programme, delivered in partnership with key bodies.

The Crafts Council of Ireland is already undertaking many activities (2 internationally recognised courses, delivery of conferences, seminars, short courses, workshops, bursary scheme, local touring and international exhibitions, linkages with 1st, 2nd and 3rd level education, life long learning opportunities; research & development programmes, archives and collections, publications etc) that could constitute an entity such as a 'centre of creative excellence' or an 'Irish Academy of Craft'. Research and development of such a centre will be a priority over the next three years.

The Centre would be built around the Crafts Council's programmes in Enterprise Development & Education of which the 2 current courses would be pillars. The courses would also serve as a model for the development of training programmes in other disciplines for which there is a demand and commercial/industry relevance. CCoI's Design and Skills Courses, established in 1990 and 1993 to address the Irish craft industry's need for high quality technical training, have evolved in tandem with those needs to become internationally significant. Both are now two-year 88-week intensive courses concentrating on design and production skills, and as a result industry entry and retention levels of graduates are consistently extremely high.

The Centre's hub would be located in Kilkenny, in order to take account of the established resources of the Crafts Council Ireland, and the crafts heritage of the wider Kilkenny geographic area. It would involve partnerships and forms of collaboration working at national and transnational levels and cross-border in the Irish context.

By placing enterprise and education at its core, it would articulate the economic and cultural values that the craft sector can contribute to a confident society; and at the same time secure the image, positioning and future well being of Irish craft as distinctive and world class.

Objectives	Key Performance Indicators
To inspire primary school children through the craft making process and to lever additional funding for provision of craft teaching from Education Authorities	<p>Number of children/schools/craftspeople engaging in the craft making process, during and beyond the life of the project</p> <p>Development of relationship with Department of Education and Science</p>
To promote craft as a career in secondary level education	<p>Number of beneficiaries</p> <p>Number of third level art/craft/design entrants</p>
To recruit craft graduates into the industry	<p>Number of craft/design graduates &amp; career changers progressing towards/setting up craft businesses</p> <p>A new strategic relationship with Third Level course providers to achieve a higher career uptake amongst graduates</p>
To identify and build a partnership with an appropriate educational body, resulting in the transfer of CCol's Skills Courses, ethos intact	<p>Creation of workable partnership</p> <p>Continuation of both Skills Courses in present locations with CCol retaining management/ advisory role</p> <p>Establish Centre for Creativity / Irish Academy of Craft</p>
To continue to run the Skills Courses to honour CCol's commitment to current trainees	Number of graduates entering respective sectors
Attain accreditation for the skills courses through HETAC	Accreditation achieved
To ensure that the standards applied to further education awards are the commercial standards required by a consumer centred, market-led industry	Creation of Standards Development Group for the craft sector

## Conclusion

*In this document, the Crafts Council of Ireland has identified its strategic priorities for the next three years - the Council believes that addressing these priority issues will make a significant difference to the sector, in terms of the sustainable development of craft enterprises, the quality and quantity of craft products made, sold and exported, the remuneration of craftspeople, and the international image and reputation of Irish crafts.*

The Crafts Council of Ireland recognises that it cannot achieve its ambitions for the craft sector on its own. The Council has traditionally worked closely with craftspeople (in essence its main constituency), with their guilds and associations, and with the educational institutions and State agencies supporting the sector. Over the coming months and years, the Council will strengthen its links with its other partners and potential partners in promoting Irish crafts, craftsmanship, design and enterprise. It will engage more fully with consumers, retailers, government and others in order to realise its ambition for crafts in Ireland.

Implementation of the strategy will also ensure that Irish craft traditions are kept alive, passed on to a new generation of craftspeople, and integrated with contemporary technologies and design. And, as Ireland progresses towards a knowledge society, the increased understanding and appreciation of crafts and craftsmanship will greatly enhance the national potential for creativity and innovation.