



Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure  
Feedback Report on the Creative Industries  
Workshop,  
The Mount Centre - 2 May 2006.

June 2006

## **Background**

DCAL is the lead Department for the Unlocking Creativity initiative. Others involved are the Departments of Education (DE), Education & Learning (DEL), Enterprise Trade & Investment (DETI) and Invest NI (INI).

The third Report in the Unlocking Creativity series entitled “Unlocking Creativity: A Creative Region” was launched by Angela Smith MP and Barry Gardiner MP in October 2004 on behalf of the Departments. This interlocked the worlds of education, enterprise and culture and outlined a three-year action plan for Northern Ireland. This plan outlined 51 action points to be taken forward by Departments, Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies covering the period up to March 2007, when the current strategy ends.

## **Purpose of Workshop**

The main aim of the Creative Industries workshop held on 2 May 2006 was to engage with representatives of the Creative Industries and public bodies to determine how close they felt Northern Ireland was to becoming a creative region, to consider what support and other needs the sector has and to use comments and feedback to inform future strategy for the sector.

DCAL commissioned Delivery & Innovation Division (DID) of the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) to assist with the design and facilitation of the workshop. The event was compered by Eddie O’Gorman, Business Correspondent with the BBC.

## **Policy Context**

The workshop was opened by David Hanson MP, then Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure, who set the event in context and outlined the Government position. The following quotes from his address illustrate the main points that he put across:

- **“This is an initiative that I personally was keen to get off the ground and I see this as very much the first step in an on-going dialogue on how together we can support and grow the Creative Industries sector in Northern Ireland”.**
- **“DCAL estimates that in Northern Ireland in 2003 there were some 2,500 creative enterprises generating some 33,500 jobs which equates to 4.7% of the local workforce. It is interesting to note that the number of farmers in Northern Ireland is 32,500. We estimate that the Creative Industries sector has an annual turnover of £900 million which is around 5% of the local economy. By all accounts, the Creative Industries constitute one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy and its importance must not be underestimated”.**
- **“In addition, there are wider benefits for the community here such as an improvement in the quality of cultural life and the sense of a being part of a creative and innovative region. The success of our Creative Industries can also generate a more positive perspective of Northern Ireland on the world stage”.**
- **“I believe that Northern Ireland has the creative talent to make the world sit up and take notice. The challenge for all of us is to nurture and harness this talent for the benefit of all”.**

There is a clear recognition that the Creative Industries are an increasingly important sector of the Northern Ireland economy. While there are obvious economic advantages to a successful Creative Industries sector, there are also less tangible benefits, such as improved quality of life and a better image of Northern Ireland abroad. The Minister stressed that the workshop was the start of a process that would inform the development of Government strategy on the Creative Industries. He wanted to hear

participants' views on how the sector might be supported and developed. The comments made on the day have been captured and reflected in this report.

### **Process on the day.**

David Hanson MP, Minister for DCAL, opened the event and following his address, case studies were provided by Darryl Collins from Banjax, Wendy McCaughan from Kan-Teq, Brendan McGoran, Creative Industries Officer with Belfast City Council and Tanya McGill, Networks and Partnership Manager in Northern Ireland for the National Endowment for Science, Technology and Arts (NESTA).

**Darryl Collins** is the Chief Executive of Banjax Ltd., an animation company he launched with a brief to produce and distribute a wide range of animated content. His case study presentation was based on the highs and lows of building an internationally focussed animation company in Northern Ireland and in the process also having to kick start an industry. In just over 3 years in operation the Company has been able to move to a brand new studio in the Northern Ireland Science Park's Innovation Centre. Some of the company's work has already been exported around the world and last year Banjax announced that it is working on a new pre-school animation series "Luke the Lifeboat". It is the first time a major animation series has been entirely produced in Belfast.

**Wendy McCaughan** is the Managing Director of Kan Teq and comes from a technical background with a long pedigree in designing performance clothing. Wendy's experience has won her design consultancy contracts with various garment and body armour manufacturers. The case study followed the origins of the company, how it started and how it recognised a gap in the market with global potential. Body protectors are a recommended safety item for all horse riders, but these are generally designed for men, and are not particularly suitable for female riders. In

response to this, the company has recently launched its first product, an innovative equestrian body protector, designed specifically for women.

**Brendan McGoran** is the Creative Industries Officer for Belfast City Council. Brendan's presentation highlighted the support of Belfast City Council for the development of the Creative Industries in Belfast. Brendan is the lead Officer for the development and implementation of Belfast City Council's Creative Industries Strategy within the context of the Local Economic Development Plan. He outlined his work on an extensive portfolio of projects which forms the Council's support structure for Belfast's Creative Sector under the themes of Creative Economy, Creative Talent and Creative Clusters. Projects under these themes include Investment and Intellectual Property, Export Marketing, Dare to be Digital and Business Incubation.

**Tanya McGill** is Networks and Partnership Manager in Northern Ireland for the NESTA. Tanya's presentation set out the agenda for NESTA's Creative Industries Report (launched on 26 April 2006) and in particular the need to take a commercially-focused approach to the sectors. She looked at the growing global market and the opportunities for the United Kingdom. The presentation also addressed the issues facing the UK creative businesses including their awareness of innovation and the challenges of reaching the market.

### **Breakout groups**

The core business of the day was carried out in breakout sessions in the morning and afternoon. Initially, a short briefing session was taken by Stephen Magee, the DID facilitator and a set of ground rules agreed. Participants then split into four groups, each of which was led by an independent chairperson. The chairperson was responsible for posing a number of pre-set questions provided by DCAL, leading discussions, capturing group comments and feeding back priorities in plenary.

The issues addressed by the breakout groups were:

- **Northern Ireland – A Creative region, how close are we to this goal?**
- **Identify strengths and weaknesses within the industry;**
- **Skills issues facing the industry;**
- **Support models - what works best for the creative/cultural sector?**
- **Communication issues - how can the voices of the industry be heard?**
- **Innovation - how can the creative industries work together for the benefits of growth, develop competitive advantage and develop creative partnerships with other countries?**
- **Business Clustering: how do Government local/regional policies affect cluster formation?**
- **Technology: How can technology assist the creative industries in their work whether it is communications or task based?**
- **Intellectual Property (IP): What is the impact of IP policies and practices on the creative industries?**

## **Workshop Findings**

The following pages outline the comments made by participants in relation to the questions posed during the breakout sessions. The range of comments have been analysed under the following headings, which reflect key issues for the Creative Industries in Northern Ireland identified by participants:

**1. Northern Ireland leadership on Creative Industries**

**2. Promotion of Creative Industries**

**3. Support mechanisms**

**4. Targeting resources**

**5. Risk aversion**

**6. Disparate sub-sectors/diversity**

**7. Global aspect**

**8. Business skills/entrepreneurship**

**9. Education**

**10. Skills**

**11. Northern Ireland image**

**12. Clustering/networking**

**13. Intellectual property (IP)**

## **1. Northern Ireland leadership on Creative Industries**

Clear leadership to drive the agenda is required. Currently we have different people looking after different areas – need to agree on who does what.

Too many overlaps between agencies.

All public bodies need to be better interconnected.

The whole strategy at Government must change to empower the agencies to do the job.

Government must use an expert to decide what to invest in – someone who knows.

Invest in content – Government must lobby the BTs etc. of this world to do more.

There needs to be a group with somebody to take a leadership role in carving up who does what with whom with what resources.

The key people in Northern Ireland in delivering Government Initiatives do not know each other. There needs to be more integration.

There is a need to look at what agencies are doing, what the industry needs, what is happening in the market place and what is being done to address this.

London put big money into supporting Digital Media etc.

Someone needs to take the initiative i.e. a 'task force' to be a continuing event.

Independent body? i.e. not to be biased to one particular area

Strategic development plan is needed

Quicker response from government to facilitate industry time to market.

## **2. Promotion of Creative Industries**

Sell our Positives.

Creativity is here but we need action to harness that

Exploiting our creativity is marginal

Absence of design awareness and promotion

Need to educate customers i.e. public in some sectors

Need to build local 'brand' for creative business

Promotion of local talent on an international level should be a priority

Information should be easier to access.

Credibility building and building confidence

Changes happening i.e. filming of new Movie in NI (Closing the Ring)

Need to consider image.

There is a need to engage with the media, so that the media tell people what is out there.

Need to have a media partner, communication plan and quick wins, which can be promoted and communicated as part of the communications plan.

Smaller craft/design businesses promotion through media, arts listing

No structure for the music industry – undervalued

In terms of NI partnering with other countries, the group recommended that other countries be invited to NI to show their work and create new networks. The DCAL Folklife event in USA next year was cited as a good example of how partnerships could be developed.

## **3. Risk aversion**

Nobody taking risks

Pressure for returns kills risk

Best results come from the extremity

Pick what should be the focus and take a risk on that

To pump prime companies the agencies must reshape their help - risk, flexibility etc.

Take funding risks on all projects and some will make money.

Screen industry in NI slow to embrace the concept of digital media.

Unwillingness to take risks. This can be reduced through availability of skill and capital.

#### **4. Support mechanisms**

Need Incubation to support business start-ups, with a focus on export business models

Any support model will not be a catch-all. Different industries will have different needs and a range of sympathetic models needs to be identified to meet the diverse needs of the sector.

The model must respond to different needs over time.

Need for different support models and flexibility

Need to focus some action on providing market opportunities for the creative sector.

What does industry need and what does the market want.

Need larger, more impact changes e.g. reduction in corporate tax.

Better visibility of technological trends-market scanning/foresight.

More support to Directors/people at senior level.

#### **5. Targeting resources**

There is already a lot of money out there but it is not doing enough, needs to be focused.

Use available money better

Grants available for starting up etc but how to sustain business after grant has run out

Try to get new start-ups to focus on what will work

Must be able to say no and support the right things.

Cannot support everything.

Introduce competitions to qualify for support.

There is a need for a commitment to long term funding and not a one-year measurement process – make longer.

Use Government money to get private money in.

If a 'go-nowhere' business is doing the rounds of the agencies they need to be stopped to allow good entrepreneurial talent to get supported – culture is wrong.

If it were my own money – what would I back?

The idea of an 'innovation pot' of money/funds was also mooted – for new ideas and with no boundaries/criteria limitations.

Sharing the risks through 'match funding' was strongly supported.

Golden Rule – only invest in technology if it will save you money or make you money.

Big issue was high level of freelancers in the industry. Companies do not employ many staff and this should be taken into account when funders are looking for outputs e.g. measurement of turnover as proportion of salaries rather than number of people employed.

Scale of funding should be increased to give parity with other industry sectors.

Too many small new companies? Perhaps take ideas to existing companies instead.

## **6. Disparate sub-sectors/diversity**

Creative Industries are too disparate

Too many disparate websites.

All industries have different demands, but when everyone sees where they sit in relation to everyone else, it helps see the bigger picture.

Government to recognise the diversity of the sector through more flexible relationships and tailoring of schemes.

Recognise the complexity of the industry

## **7. Global view**

Keeping people and creativity here – big challenge

Need global positioning to promote creativity

The route to export must be a high priority. For example, in the theatre industry, the West-end and Broadway are the main export markets. There should be somebody to help with a route – links, contacts, where to get the opportunity to hone the skills?

E-commerce across all areas.

Need to expose design graduates to more global skills.

Everything is Belfast centric in relation to Creative Industries.

Most businesses Belfast-centered, need to look further afield.

## **8. Business skills/entrepreneurship**

Need to Integrate business skills with creativity

Few creative industries are “Investor Ready”. They lack the basic business skills required.

Need business skills support – practicalities of running a business, how to approach international markets

Should creative people be partnered with the business skills?

There is a need for more business acumen to negotiate deals for Creative Industries people

Knowledge of how rights/IP can be protected and retained is vitally important.

Need for more business related content in Graduate programmes. Lecturers are too theory based. Industry needs to define what outputs it wants.

Need to equip graduates with entrepreneurial skills. Use of clustering strategy and partnerships may be helpful for this.

There is a need to help small one-person businesses develop their own marketing skills.

Importance of core business, finance and legal skills in the industry.

Suggestion that downloadable template documents should be available, e.g. business plans, pro forma legal forms etc to reduce legal expenses.

## 9. Education

How to educate the next generation about creativity in the curriculum

Curriculum change from primary school needed

For Government to effectively stimulate innovation they need to look at education.

Educating Creative Industry practitioners has started but there needs to be much more

There should be emphasis on education – helping place people in creative industries, networking with industry, promotion of local talent – for example, there are hundreds of fashion designers coming out of Belfast but they are not getting a foot up.

Despite speaking over many years, about the need to create a link between education and industry, it just doesn't happen – more work-based learning is needed.

It is also about industry getting an education and developing new skills through education – mutual benefit for industry and educational institutions.

## 10. Skills

We need to address how work experience is done. More mentoring is required, partnering people with ideas with people with business sense.

How to promote individual skills and build/develop them? eg. if an actor you need a stage

Need providers of training in specific skills

Need to work with education to set-up accreditation programmes which are skill/industry based and fit on an international level

Need to redress 'work experience' and have more nurturing

Estimated one year shortfall between graduates and industry requirements.

At Higher Education level there was little engagement with employers.

Courses seem to be based on demand from bigger companies.

How can the more craft related companies get support?

Is the apprenticeship model worth looking at?

Skill development should not just be aimed at graduates.

Development of senior management in companies is critical. It is these people who will create a sustainable demand for their products. There is an important link between skills and demand. Senior people need time for creative skill development.

Industries skills panel in creative sector will create a foundation from which to build. There should be more targeted interventions from this and better value for money.

The group recommended a comprehensive package to cover business skills, HR skills, finance skills, technical skills (very much dependant on the quality of University courses etc) plus softer skills such as creative thinking, communication skills, negotiating skills.

The group also suggested an 'access path' into a career in the industry and some form of management development programme that could be aimed at post employment in the industry. For example, a 12-week placement type programme covering all the key skill areas outlined above.

## **11. Northern Ireland image**

Northern Ireland is on the up!

Need to shout louder. For example, credibility building, confidence building, building a cultural identity in the minds of the wider audience,

Celebrate success.

Promote the culture and living properties of NI.

Other measures of success - recognise intangible contribution e.g. cultural, social.

Film Industry example - just few years ago, the infrastructure was not there. Now there is good quality of life for people who want to work here, local talent is available and used and there is good infrastructure – hotels, restaurants etc.

## **12. Clustering/networking**

Managed workspace is beneficial. Many young artists are leaving Belfast as there are not enough affordable places for them to be based. Incubation is a high priority.

Managed workspace – young graduates looking for studio space, cathedral quarter, but need more. Laganside – good start

Creative Industries should work together to enable them to grow.

Clustering. Collaboration is required but possibly needs a 'big idea' to start process. The Italians had a world vision!

Packages of Incubation, Money & Mentoring.

Bring in a PIXAR to accelerate the whole landscape to change – Catalyst/Exemplar.

The group felt strongly that partnerships of a non-competitive nature were essential to save resources and avoid overlap in provision.

Clustering beneficial - synergy, cross-fertilisation

Networks would allow a forum for the industry and an opportunity to share ideas and experiences.

A commercialisation facility/group was also discussed – to help bring ideas to the market.

Need e-mail/web communication to facilitate clustering.

Ebay is profitable for some. All micro-businesses can use the web, as it is a new way of selling to all.

## **13. Intellectual property**

Key revenue driver for creative industries, source of inspiration, key to future growth and sustainable growth.

The group stated that IP must be retained within NI and maximised.

IP is where the wealth is and so it is important to protect it.

Government procurement dictates that IP rights go to Government. This stifles innovation and creativity.

Policies need to be focussed on encouraging development of local IP so companies can hang on to and exploit rights and generate revenue.

Software games industry is becoming a sub-contractor to larger industries with little in the way of IP rights.

Piracy – need to find ways to control distribution and the policy must be to always prosecute.

Need advice and guidance on patents – IP support in Northern Ireland is much stronger on the design side than for products.

Marketing opportunities create copyright theft opportunities.

Policy issue – where can we get advice on IP rights?

There must be clear definition and regulation of IP rights. We are competing with China and India where there is no regulation and where copyright theft is rife.

Music – Big steps in avoiding conventional market access – Protection, educate musicians regarding their rights.

## **Conclusions:**

- The sector feels that clear leadership is needed from Government
- Government engagement with the sector needs to be more focused and joined up
- Communication between the sector and Government is vital and structures for doing so should be developed.
- There is a need for a task force or similar forum to bring stakeholders together to drive policy implementation.
- There needs to be more done to promote the Creative Industries.
- There needs to be better promotion of the Creative Industries through a communication plan/media partners.
- Support and resources need to be targeted better to move us towards Northern Ireland being a hub for world class Creative Industries.
- Resources need to be better targeted at businesses that have potential to succeed and be available to sustain over time.
- Annual funding is too tenuous and longer commitment is required, balancing security and flexibility. Speedier decisions on funding applications required
- Support models need to be tailored to suit the disparate range of Creative Industries.
- Skills development is a major issue and should be targeted at the specific needs of the Creative Industries.
- Delivery agents need to work more closely with the sector to cater for the range of skills development required.
- Clustering and networking are vital to businesses being competitive.
- Access to information and advice on IP needs to be clear and more readily available across the range of Creative Industries.
- New technology opens up new opportunities and markets but needs to be harnessed appropriately.

## **Acknowledgements**

The Department would like to thank Eddie O’Gorman for compering the event, Darryl Collins, Wendy McCaughan, Brendan McGoran and Tanya McGill for their presentations on the day and Ian Bennington, Peter Richards, Paul McKeever and Dr Sarah McAleer for acting as Chair People for each of the groups. DCAL would also thank Stephen Magee, DID for his assistance in planning, designing and facilitating the workshop and his colleagues Jim McManus, Terry McNamara and Joe Swail in their role as facilitators. Thanks also go to all the Creative Industry representatives who took time out of their busy schedules to participate in the workshop. A full list of delegates is attached at annex A.

## **Outcomes**

DCAL propose to include the Case Study presentations on their Web Site and to make this report available, initially to all attendees and eventually on the web site. The findings of the workshop will help to inform the development of Government policy on the Creative Industries.

## CREATIVE INDUSTRIES WORKSHOP

THE MOUNT CENTRE, 2 MAY 2006

## DELEGATE LIST

NAME	POSITION	ORGANISATION
Bennington, Ian	Director	Triplicate Design
Bond, Katherine	Head of Cultural Development	University of Ulster
Campbell, Hazel	Head of Arts and Creativity Branch	DCAL
Collins, Darryl	Managing Director	Banjax
Conaty, Anne	Head of innovation and Policy Unit	DETI
Dixon, Valerie	Arts & Creativity Branch	DCAL
Doyle, Jackie	Artistic Director	Tinderbox Theatre Company
Durkan, Donal	Director: Creative and design based Industries	Invest NI
Graham, Ian	CEO	Momentum
Graham, Ross	CEO	NI Music Industry Commission
Hewitt, Frank	CEO	NI Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Huffam, Mark	International Production Manager (Film)	G & H
Jack, Colin	Director of Culture	DCAL
Jardine, Edgar	Deputy Secretary	DCAL
Kelly, Joe	Director	Craft NI
Lynch, Martin	Playwright	
Magee, Stephen	Facilitator	Delivery and Innovation Directorate
Mann, David	Arts & Creativity Branch	DCAL
McAleer, Dr Sarah	Director	Gold-digger 79
McCafferty, Neil	Regional Manager	Skillfast UK
McCaughan, Wendy	Director	Kan Teq
McDonough, Roisin	CEO	Arts Council for NI
McGill, Marty	Head of Music	Nerve Centre
McGill, Tanya	NI Development Officer	NESTA
McGoran, Brendan	Creative Industries	Belfast City Council

	Officer	
McIlveen, Sam	Media Director	AV Browne
McKeever, Paul	Director	Front
McManus, Jim	Facilitator	Delivery and Innovation Directorate
McNammara, Terry	Facilitator	Delivery and Innovation Directorate
Mullen, Stephen	Client Manager	Invest NI
Parkinson, Caroline	Executive Director	Creative and Cultural Skills
Richards, Peter	Director	Golden Thread Gallery
Robinson, Betty	Inspector	Education and Training Inspectorate.
Rose, Paul	Innovation and Policy Unit	DETI
Smith, Alasdair	Director	Skillset
Smith, Janice	Managing Editor	Blackstaff
Stevens, Heather	Director Skills and Industry Division	DEL
Stewart, Stephen	Director	Green Inc
Swail, Joe	Facilitator	Delivery and Innovation Directorate
Sweeney, Paul	Permanent Secretary	DCAL
Trundle, Anne	Arts & Creativity Branch	DCAL
Williams, Richard	CEO	NI Film and Television Commission