



**An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán**
Department of Tourism, Culture,
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

Basic Income for the Arts Stakeholder Forum

Discussion Paper

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Contents

| | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 1. | Background | 2 |
| 2. | Objectives..... | 3 |
| 3. | Eligibility | 5 |
| 3.1 | Established Artists and Creative Arts Workers Stream | 6 |
| 3.2 | Developing Artists Stream..... | 8 |
| 4. | Selection Process..... | 10 |
| 5. | Responsibilities of Participants and Data Collection..... | 11 |

1. Background

The Arts and Culture Taskforce, established in September 2020, was tasked by Catherine Martin, T.D., Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media with producing a report to include a set of recommendations on how best the arts and culture sector could adapt and recover from the unprecedented damage arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. The no. 1 recommendation from the taskforce was to pilot a Basic Income scheme for a three-year period in the in the arts, culture, audio-visual and live performance and events sectors.

As part of the National Economic Recovery Plan launched on June 1st 2021, the Minister for Tourism, Arts, Culture, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Catherine Martin TD, secured a commitment from Government for a Basic Income Pilot Scheme for artists. The Minister allocated €25m as part of Budget 2022 to provide for the launch of the pilot scheme. The delivery of the pilot is a key priority of the Minister to underpin the recovery in the arts and culture sector and provide much needed certainty to the artists and creatives who choose to avail of the pilot scheme. The three year pilot scheme will be open to eligible artists and creative arts sector workers.

It is important to note that that the Basic Income for the Arts **is not** a Universal Basic Income. This is a sectoral intervention to support practicing artists and creative arts workers to focus on their creative practice. This policy is separate to the Universal Basic income as outlined in the Programme for Government. The Programme for Government *Our Shared Future* commits to the introduction of a universal basic income pilot in the lifetime of the Government. The Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment has requested the Low Pay Commission to examine the commitment in the Programme for Government and the Commission has agreed that this request will form part of its work plan for 2021. While this pilot project may provide relevant findings to the Low Pay Commission to inform their project, these are two individual and separate projects.

Over the past months, the Department has been engaged in a policy development process which has involved discussions with the Arts and Culture Recovery Oversight Group, engaging with sectoral stakeholders, convening an inter-Departmental working group to assess challenges, and reviewing international research and best practice. The Department has used this work to inform its proposal for a pilot Basic Income for the Arts (BIA), and the Minister is interested in now bringing this proposal to stakeholders for consideration and feedback. There are also a number of outstanding matters which have arisen over the course of the policy development process that the Department would like to seek the views of sectoral stakeholders before finalising a position paper on the scheme.

This document sets out current position in relation to:

- The objectives of the scheme;
- The eligibility criteria for the scheme;
- The selection of scheme participants;
- Responsibilities of scheme participants;
- The collection of data.

The Minister is looking forward to hearing your views at the Stakeholder Forum, and would be grateful for your consideration of this document in advance of the 8th of December.

The detail set out in this document is the Department's current thinking on how the Basic Income for the Arts will work. Following the conclusion of the Stakeholder Forum, the Department will use the feedback received from stakeholders to help guide further policy development of the Pilot prior to its rollout. It is anticipated that a position paper will be published in January at which point stakeholders will have an opportunity to provide further feedback.

2. Objectives

Informed by the policy development process, the proposed pilot has been developed with the intention to deliver on the following objectives:

- To give recognition to the intrinsic value of the arts in Irish society.
- To pilot a sector specific support for the arts, in the form of a basic income, to provide financial support for practicing artists to recognise the value of unpaid work in creative practice and for arts workers who make a key contribution to the creative production process.
- To enable artists and creative arts workers to focus on artistic production/practice without having to enter into employment in other sectors to sustain themselves.
- To support participants to develop their practice by providing income during periods when practice and portfolio are being developed.
- To minimise the loss of skill and experience from the arts sector.
- To reduce reliance of the arts sector on the social protection system.
- To reduce the barriers to pursuing entrepreneurial endeavours/self-employment by enabling participants to take on short term contracts without losing a minimum level of stable income.

During the policy development process the Department has come to the view that it is necessary to administer a secondary stream within the pilot to ensure that developing artists at the outset of their artistic career are represented within the pilot. In addition to the above objectives, the following stream-specific objectives are proposed.

Developing Artist Stream

- To support developing artists to develop their practice at the outset of their career.
- To retain the sectoral skills and expertise developed through third level education within the sector, capitalising on the State's investment in education.

Finally, the Department also considers that there are additional *context objectives* that the proposal may address. Context objectives are secondary objectives that are not the main intention of the scheme, but which may be progressed as a result of the implementation of the scheme. The Department is therefore interested in collecting data on these context objectives throughout the administration of the pilot, in order to evaluate whether the pilot contributed to the achievement of any of these objectives.

Context Objectives

- To generate an increase in artistic creation, interpretation and expression of the arts.
- To provide a new baseline from which artists and arts workers can negotiate contract prices, with a view to increasing the market value of artistic output.
- To reduce the barriers for artists in relation to pursuing self-employment in the arts sector.
- To increase diversity of voices within the arts sector by contributing to the improvement of standards of pay in the sector.
- To mitigate push factors which lead to arts sector workers leaving the sector including reasons of economic necessity, caring responsibilities, stability of income, etc. and incentivise the return of artist and arts workers to the sector who have previously left.
- To stimulate the arts sector's recovery post-pandemic.

Considerations for Stakeholders

The Department is interested in stakeholder views on the following matters:

1. What are your/your organisation's views on the objectives as set out?
2. What are you/your organisation's views on the streams as proposed?
3. Are there any additional objectives that you believe should be included in the overall objectives or stream-specific objectives?
4. Are there any other considerations that you believe the pilot basic income for the arts scheme could impact on, which should therefore be included in the context objectives for monitoring and evaluation by the Department?

3. Eligibility

Eligibility for the scheme will be underpinned by should be based on the definition of the arts set out in the Arts Act 2003, in which Arts is defined as “any creative or interpretative expression (whether traditional or contemporary) in whatever form, and includes, in particular, visual arts, theatre, literature, music, dance, opera, film, circus and architecture, and includes any medium when used for those purposes”.

In line with the Taskforce recommendation BIA will be available for those working in the arts, culture, audio-visual, live performance and events sector who are engaged in a creative or interpretative expression of one of the arts forms set out in the Arts Act i.e. visual arts, theatre, literature, music, dance, opera, film, circus and architecture.

A key challenge for the scheme design lies in identifying suitable eligibility criteria for artists and creative art workers, given that any determination of eligibility criteria will necessarily include and exclude certain people or groups as scheme participants.

The key factors that drive the complexity of this task, are as follows:

- The challenge of ensuring a broad pool of applicants while remaining within the definitions set out in the Arts Act (2003);
- The need for eligibility criteria to meet the objectives of the pilot, the intention of Government as set out in the Programme for Government, and be guided by the recommendations of the Arts and Culture Recovery Taskforce’s *Life Worth Living* report;
- The necessity for criteria to be clear, concrete and verifiable to ensure that administrative burden and cost is kept to a minimum, and a meaningful appeals process can be put into place;
- The need to ensure that criteria are not unnecessarily burdensome for potential applicants who may be required to provide supporting documentation;
- The nature of artistic work, may impact on the viability of certain criteria and pose a challenge for data collection;
- For creative arts workers, the delineation between workers providing a meaningful creative or interpretive contribution to the production process and those working in the arts sector without a creative or interpretive contribution to the production process;
- The need to ensure good value-for-money for the taxpayer.

In considering possible criteria, the Department has reviewed existing approaches used for current arts supports such as Jobseekers Allowance for Artists scheme, the Artist Tax exemption, Arts Council bursary awards, international schemes, and other relevant interventions.

Following this review, the Department is proposing that membership of a recognised certifying organisation will stand as an automatic determinant of eligibility for the *Established Artists and Creative Arts Workers* stream, recognising that this process is already in use as part of the Jobseekers Allowance for Artists scheme. However, given the Department’s intention to broaden eligibility beyond those that are members of professional

organisations, it is proposed that there will be an additional option whereby applicants may self-certify as an artist or creative arts worker and provide supporting documentation for review. The Department will put in place mechanisms to review and/or audit applications.

The Department is interested in hearing the views of sectoral stakeholders in relation to this proposal, including consideration of the most appropriate criteria by which self-certifying artists or creative arts workers can demonstrate evidence of their eligibility. Further information on the proposals for both streams are set out below.

3.1 Established Artists and Creative Arts Workers Stream

Arising out of the definition in the Arts act, under this stream eligible participants are considered to be artists or creative arts workers who are actively pursuing a career in *creative or interpretive expression* in one of the arts forms identified under the Act i.e. visual arts, theatre, literature, music, dance, opera, film, circus or architecture and who consider their arts work as their main profession or career. **A creative arts worker is someone who's work is intrinsic to and makes a key contribution to the production or exhibition/display of artwork that is an original and creative work and whether it has, or is generally recognised as having, cultural or artistic merit. The input provided by workers in this category is intrinsically creative. This differentiates creative art workers from other supporting workers, whose input is better categorised as administrative, organisational, security, hospitality and so on.**

As set out above, it is proposed that eligibility under this stream can be affirmed either by

- Demonstrating membership of an approved certifying body
- Self-certifying as either an artist or a creative arts worker, meeting the definition set out above.

At present the established system of certification by recognised certifying bodies used in the Jobseekers Allowance for Artists scheme uses the following professionals and certifying organisations.

Architecture is not represented on this list; the Department is proposing that applicants within this art form must demonstrate that they are registered architects with the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland.

Where an applicant meets the definition set out in the Arts act, but is not a member of a recognised certifying organisation, it is proposed that applicants can self-certify as either an artist or creative arts worker, and provide evidence of this.

The Department has considered a range of mechanisms by which applicants could demonstrate eligibility, and has come to the view that the most appropriate mechanism in each case may vary by art form.

| Artform | Professionals | Certifying Organisations |
|----------------|---|---|
| Visual Arts | Visual Artists | Visual Arts Ireland |
| Theatre | Actors | Actors Equity/SIPTU |
| | Costume Designers | Actors Equity/SIPTU |
| | Theatre Directors | Actors Equity/SIPTU |
| | Set Designers | Actors Equity/SIPTU |
| | Stage Designers | Actors Equity/SIPTU |
| Literature | Writers | Irish Writers Centre |
| Music | Musicians including traditional, popular and rock music | Musicians Union of Ireland/SIPTU |
| Dance | Dancers, Choreographers | Dance Ireland |
| Opera | Composers | Musicians Union of Ireland/SIPTU |
| Film | Actors | Actors Equity/SIPTU |
| | Screen Writers | Writers Guild of Ireland |
| | Film Directors | Screen Directors Guild of Ireland |
| Circus | Street Performers | Irish Street Arts, Circus & Spectacle Network |

Considerations for Stakeholders

The Department is interested in your views on the following matters:

1. Are there any additional professions, not currently outlined, which meet the definition of *creative or interpretive expression* in visual arts, theatre, literature, music, dance, opera, film, circus or architecture, that should be included on this list?
2. Do all arts professions have suitable representative bodies, if not what other means could applicants use to certify that they work in a particular art form?
3. How “creative or interpretive expression” is best defined?

Considerations for Stakeholders

The Department is therefore interested in the views of sectoral stakeholders in this regard, and will seek to take views at the stakeholder forum on the appropriate self-certifying mechanism for each art form:

- Visual arts
- Theatre
- Literature
- Music
- Dance
- Opera
- Film
- Circus
- Architecture

In all cases, the proposed mechanism must be open to the Department to review and/or audit as appropriate.

1. What is the most appropriate mechanism to provide evidence of eligibility, where an applicant is not a member of a recognised certifying organisation e.g. CV/references to demonstrate track record, proof of income earned from work in the arts, recent qualification?
2. What are the pros and cons of the various potential mechanisms, including the use of references, proof of earned income, receipt of arts council funding, relevant qualifications, and curricula vitae?
3. Are there any potentially eligible artists or creative arts workers who may be excluded from the scheme through the use of such mechanisms?

3.2 Developing Artists Stream

There are additional considerations for the pilot in relation to developing artists. In addition to the main objectives of the proposed scheme, the Department is interested in ensuring that sectoral skills and expertise developed through third-level education are retained in the sector, capitalising on the State's investment in education.

Recognising the need to ensure representation within the pilot scheme for developing artists at the outset of their artistic career, the Department is proposing a secondary stream for developing artists which may have different eligibility criteria to ensure that applicants **are not excluded from the BIA**.

In relation to qualifying criteria for this stream, it is the Department's view that eligibility based on graduate status alone should not be relied on exclusively, given that the potential to be a graduate in an arts area varies by art form and that many artists might not have gone through formal third-level training.

The Department is proposing that developing artists are therefore recognised as those who have trained in and/or are planning to work in the field of visual arts, theatre, literature, music, dance, opera, film, circus or architecture. **The Scheme will encourage participants to develop/increase their practice, and will collect evidence that the BIA has assisted in this objective.**

Considerations for Stakeholders

The Department is therefore interested in the views of sectoral stakeholders on the following

1. What is the most appropriate mechanism(s) for developing artists to provide evidence that they are a developing artist?
2. What is the most appropriate mechanism(s) for developing artists to provide evidence that they are planning to work in the fields of visual arts, theatre, literature, music, dance, opera, film, circus or architecture?
3. Are there other considerations that should be accounted for in the final scheme design?

4. Selection Process and rate of payment

Where the number of applicants exceeds the number of places to be provided under the pilot, the Department proposes to use an anonymised random sampling process to determine the pilot participants from the pool of eligible applicants.

Candidates that are not selected to receive the basic income may be invited form part of a control group for the study.

The steps involved in such a process would be as follows:

1. Once applications to the scheme have been assessed, all eligible will be included for possible selection.
2. In order to guard against a pool of applicants that is unrepresentative, the Department may endeavour to use stratification to ensure alignment between the selected sample and the general population with reference to age and/or gender etc.
3. Eligible applications will be anonymised and assigned a number.
4. A randomiser software will be used to select participants at random with reference to the assigned application numbers.

It is important to note that any proposed stratification must be based on the availability of appropriately rigorous data.

In relation to the appropriate rate of payment both the Arts and Culture Recovery Taskforce and the Oversight Group were in agreement that the hourly minimum wage would be appropriate i.e. €10.50 per hour. The rate of payment has not yet been finalised and the Minister would like views from stakeholders on the number of hours the basic income for the arts should apply for per week.

Considerations for Stakeholders

The Department is interested in the views of sectoral stakeholders on the following:

1. Do you have any views on the proposed selection process?
2. Do you have any views on the appropriate level of payment or number of hours per week participants should be paid for?

5. Responsibilities of Participants and Data Collection

Given the important role of a pilot in providing useful data and insights for the potential wider roll-out of a scheme, the Department is proposing that scheme participants be committed to certain responsibilities for the duration of their participation in the pilot to ensure the success of research conducted on the pilot.

- At the outset of the scheme, the Department is proposing that scheme participants agree to provide base-line information that will aid the Department’s monitoring and evaluation of the pilot’s achievement of its objectives. For example, this may include the submission of income information and/or the submission of survey answers relating to the scheme objectives, such as an estimation of average weekly hours spent on artistic and creative practice prior to pilot participation.
- The Department will also seek to conduct ongoing, periodic monitoring of the scheme, as well as *ex-post* evaluation at the conclusion of the pilot. The Department therefore proposes that scheme participants must commit to engagement in any ongoing pilot-related research conducted by the Department for the duration of the pilot.

Given the additional potential for comparative research, the Department is proposing that it may also seek to engage with unsuccessful applicants to the scheme in order to collect the equivalent data for those who are not recipients of funding under the pilot.

Considerations for Stakeholders

The Department is interested in the views of sectoral stakeholders on the following:

1. Do you have any views on the proposed responsibilities for scheme participants to engage in the Department’s research efforts?
2. Do you have any views on the most appropriate data collection mechanisms, or specific questions that should be considered in the Department’s research efforts?
3. Thinking back to the scheme objectives, are there any specific questions that you feel should be included as part of the Department’s research efforts?

The Department is also considering a responsibility for scheme participants to demonstrate their meaningful engagement with creative or interpretive expression in visual arts, theatre, literature, music, dance, opera, film, circus or architecture during their participation in the scheme, as part of the Department’s ongoing monitoring and evaluation research. This may be via an annual report setting out the work in an applicant’s art form for the preceding year and/or CV and references showing work within an art form.

Considerations for Stakeholders

The Department is interested in the views of sectoral stakeholders on the following:

1. Do you have any views on the appropriate mechanisms by which participants could demonstrate meaningful engagement with their arts practice or creative arts work e.g. income earned from the arts?
2. What kinds of data would be useful to measure achievement of the schemes objective would be useful and practical for participants' to provide?
3. What is an appropriate interval for the collection of such information?