

Theatre Forum CLG trading as Performing Arts Forum Strategy Consultation Background

Throughout 2023, the board and executive worked to formulate Theatre Forum CLG's 2024-2028 strategy taking account of altered conditions after Covid and anticipating challenges ahead of the performing arts sector.

Over 20 years, Theatre Forum CLG's charitable objectives have been to support, develop, provide resources to members, and raise standards in the performing arts. These are set out in the Constitution:

- to support, develop and promote all aspects of performing arts on the island of Ireland;
- to provide a resource organisation to all members of the Company and to all who profess an interest and commitment to the development of performing arts;
- to raise the standard of arts leadership, management, and governance through the provision of services to the Company's members.

Since 2018, Theatre Forum described itself as the membership resource organisation that builds a stronger performing arts community:

- To strengthen the sector by providing professional development, resources, and events; and
- To highlight the needs of its diverse member groups, including artists, artworkers and organisations, to secure resources needed for a sustainable performing arts sector.

Right at the start of the strategy review process in 2023, Theatre Forum's roles of making connections, providing services, representing members' interests and issues, as well as enabling and sometimes leading change were acknowledged. So too was Theatre Forum's adaptability and agility in response to the needs of members throughout the Covid period.

Strategy 2024-2028

To signal a shift in outlook and focus, a new organisation name was proposed: [Performing Arts Forum](#)

Vision

Performing Arts Forum is a forum that supports artists, arts workers, and organisations to build a better connected, more diverse, and stronger community and secures the resources needed to sustain the sector.

Mission

Performing Arts Forum's mission is to be an effective point of connection for the sector, facilitating opportunities for information sharing and collaboration, carrying out research and collecting evidence to effect change where it is needed, promoting effective models of practice, and providing relevant resources for member artists, arts workers, and arts organisations.

Values

Connection

We believe that knowledge is strength and Performing Arts Forum is the point where connections are made, and the expertise and resources of the sector are shared.

Change

We believe that the ability to adapt and change is vital to the sector's future and, as required, Performing Arts Forum is a catalyst for and agent of positive change.

Diversity

We believe that greater diversity leads to a more vibrant arts sector and to embed this value in the organisation, Performing Arts Forum is inclusive and equitable in all its activities.

Goals

Performing Arts Forum has three goals:

- Facilitate Connections
- Enable Change
- Provide Resources

Goal 1 Facilitate Connections (for a stronger arts community)

The first goal is to define pathways for members to engage with the organisation and facilitate the creation of deeper connections amongst members as well as across the performing arts community. Activities are designed to generate higher levels of co-operation and more collaborations amongst the following groups:

- Artists and arts workers
- Arts organisations, including venues and festivals
- Production companies and hubs
- Resource organisations and partners
- Funders and policy makers.

Goal 2 Enable Change

The second goal is to be responsive to the needs of members and work collaboratively with 'coalitions of the willing' to model and identify the conditions necessary for systemic change. When needed, collect evidence to influence sectoral policy and strategy formulation and represent member and sectoral interests to partners, funders, and policy makers in the following areas:

- Access and inclusion for artists, arts workers, and audiences
- Artists and their professional development pathways
- Audience development
- Climate action and sustainability
- Employment and welfare
- Models of production and practice.

Goal 3 Provide Resources

The third goal is to provide pathways for members, partners, and stakeholders to engage with the organisation and to provide support and share useful resources with all. The organisation plays several key roles:

- **Service Provider**
To be an obvious provider of useful and accessible resources for members as well as the performing arts sector.
- **Connector/Forum**
Be the forum where people get together and find ways to co-operate and collaborate around sectoral conversations and challenges.
- **Developmental role/ Incubation**
Respond to gaps in ecosystem, support new networks and coalitions to emerge but to become self-sufficient.

Performing Arts Forum framework

The framework for engagement has three components: members and partners, the agreed goals, and working in responsive, strategic, and collaborative ways to deliver on these goals. This framework is underpinned by communications to maximise connectivity and engagement with all members, associates, partners, and the sector's stakeholders.

Evaluation

Agreed criteria is used to assess the strategic importance of resources and activities. For example:

- How does this activity contribute to the strategic change we are aiming for?
- Does this activity address structural imbalances, diversity, and equity needs?
- Does this activity renew or strengthen existing connections between different parts of the sector?
- Is it possible to communicate with the membership or sector about this activity, make it visible, and to find ways to engage others/ join more dots/build connections?
- How could this expertise or these resources be made available in accessible, opensource and inclusive ways?
- Is this a valuable addition to the Performing Arts Forum resources?