Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Digital Creative Industries Forum

2nd March 2026

Meeting 6

CHATHAM HOUSE RULES APPLY

Minutes: The minutes from this meeting are to be agreed under Silence Procedure and will be available on www.enterprise.gov.ie

Attendees

Chairs: Rebecca Minch (DCCS), Karen Hynes (DETE)

Secretariat: Adele Mealey (DCCS) and Gary Ward (DETE)

Attendees:
Tania Banotti, Department of Culture, Communications and Sport (Creative Ireland Programme)
Ian Brannigan and Teresa Hooks, Western Development Commission (WDC)
Camille Donegan, Eirmersive
Colm Larkin, Imirt
Gareth Lee, Furthr
Anne Ribault, Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS)
Mary Blanchfield, Design and Craft Council Ireland (DCCI)
Tom Watts, Design and Craft Council Ireland (DCCI)
Caroline McDonagh, Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs)

Item 1: Welcome, opening remarks and introductions

- The minutes of the previous Forum meeting held on the 19th June 2025 were agreed and it was noted that they are due to be published online.

Item 2: Update on Memo for Government

- A Memorandum for the Information of the Government providing an update on the implementation of the *Digital Creative Industries Roadmap 2024-26* was submitted to Government on 3rd December 2025 and the contents of the Memo were agreed by Government on 9th December 2025.
- All representative bodies were thanked for their contributions to the Memo.

Item 3: Presentation on research into the Future of Design in Ireland

- The Institute of Designers in Ireland (IDI) presented the findings of their research into the Future of Design in Ireland, which served as a temperature check on the industry.
- The research is looking at a 10-year horizon (*Design 2035*) and sought understanding of and engagement with the industry using both quantitative and qualitative research methods.
- Findings:
    - Design drives strategy and delivers impact
    - Success requires co-working clusters and collaboration
    - Design helps shape systems not solutions
    - Designers could lead the next wave of enterprise
    - Future calls for designers with deep and broad skills
    - Design delivers core human qualities augmented by AI
    - Design education must prioritise critical thinking and enterprise
    - Structural change is needed to unlock design's potential
- ***Action:*** Members of the forum are invited to provide any additional feedback to the IDI on the findings of their research
- ***Action:*** Slides will be circulated to members of the forum
- ***Action:*** IDI will circulate published report to members of the forum

Item 4: Data

- Following exploratory work undertaken by the Regional Subgroup and led by Údarás na Gaeltachta, it was concluded that the Smart Regions Fund was not a viable option to fund the research proposed by the business case developed in 2025.
- As part of the development of the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland's (DCCI) new strategy, a tender document has been developed to procure research services to support that development. Given the similarities between the requirements of the DCCI research and the research required by the Forum, it was proposed that the requirements of the Forum would be included as part of the DCCI tender.
- ***Action:*** Officials from DCCS, DETE, DCCI and Údarás na Gaeltachta will convene within one week to develop the content to be included in the DCCI tender.

Item 5: Regional Development

- The work of the subgroup was heavily focused on reviewing the possibility of application to Smart Regions Fund before Christmas. The chair of the subgroup would like to thank representative bodies for their involvement in the review process.
- Focus on Medtech/Creative Economy – The group have identified several scenarios and are exploring how best to build on existing business competency. An importance is placed on bringing industrial design and practitioners into the conversation. (e.g. Anatomical animation and Creating a virtual clinic setting)
- A further focus on the role of non-creative professionals in the Creative Sectors (e.g. legal, accountancy) The group is currently exploring the options of a training programme for accounts with specialisation in Intellectual Property (IP). It was noted that there is industry interest in working with a trainee in this area.
- ***Action:*** The group were advised to consider how micro-credentials might support this effort (5-30 ECTS)

Item 6: Skills Development

- A new **Creative Industries Forum** has been established by Creative Futures Academy that has some crossover with the Skills Subgroup, in terms of purpose and in terms of membership. This new Forum will cover links between the creative sector and HE, future skills and workforce needs of the sector, and work towards developing a collective voice on skills for the creative sector.
- Ongoing work as part of Skills Subgroup:
    - Skills Gaps Framework research project with Counterculture & Unscrambled World.
    - Grad Start Pilot Programme (currently called Catalyst Onboarding).
    - Creative Careers/Creative Calling Pilot Project.
- DFHERIS are currently working on a piece of research on how young people choose a career.
- ***Action:*** Chair of Skills Subgroup to connect with DFHERIS on their ongoing research
- ***Action:*** Written report to be circulated to forum members

Item 7: Enterprise supports and Market Opportunities

- EI *Market Discovery Grant* has changed and is now subdivided as follows:
    - *Market Validation Grant*
    - *Market Research Grant* (attendance at trade fairs can be included as an element of this research)
- Industry representative groups notes that some members who are LEO clients have had difficulty in accessing events that are open to them. Both EI and LEO representative noted that relationship development across the system would help with this issue.
- EI are coordinating the Irish contribution to SxSW.

- EI noted that an Embassy event for the Creative Industries is being planned for the Irish Embassy in London – further details will be provided when plans have been confirmed.
- LEO representative noted that attendance at trade fairs can be included as an element in their *Market Explorer Grant*.
- It was noted that the LEO mentors would benefit from a webinar on what the Screen Ireland Talent Academies do.
- ***Action:*** Return to EI/LEO crossover at the next Forum
- ***Action:*** LEO representative to address the LEO network on mentors in each LEO that could support the Creative Industries.
- ***Action:*** Screen Ireland to liaise with LEOs on possibility of webinar on Talent Academies for LEO mentors
- ***Action:*** The IDI to present finding of their research on the Future of Design in Ireland to the LEO network.
- ***Action:*** Representative bodies will assemble the numbers of EI/LEO client members in January 2024 as compared with Q3/Q4 2026, in preparation for final Memo for Government.

Item 8: AOB

- The updates from industry representative groups will be covered at the next meeting
- Proposal for next meeting of the Forum to be in June 2026 – dates to be suggested