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## FOREWORD

Providing micro and small business supports is central to the activities of the Crafts Council of Ireland. Encouraging entrepreneurship in order to build and sustain indigenous micro-enterprises across the country will enable small businesses, including those in craft and design, to contribute significantly to the recovery of our economy.

Craft has been a key contributor to the Irish economy for centuries and is of immense importance to Irish culture and society. People working in craft and design create local, sustainable employment, representing the best of what is authentic and innovative in our country.

The nature and diversity of craft also has obvious appeal for the tourism market and the craft industry in Ireland has a key role to play in the campaign around promoting Ireland abroad. The crafts industry in Ireland, as in other countries, represents a range of diverse businesses and activities across a spectrum of craft disciplines. While the sector is predominantly made up of micro-enterprises (with less than 10 employees) which form an important part of many rural and local economies, there are also some craft enterprises of scale, with the potential and ability to expand.

Creating the environment for the development of the creative industries, including craft, is therefore of critical

importance to the success of Ireland's economic recovery. This ambitious plan sets out the path to support, sustain and grow the sector for the next three years. It builds on the success of the previous three-year strategy and the Year of Craft 2011 initiative which succeeded in raising the profile of Irish craft throughout the country and internationally.

The development of export markets is vital to ensure long term survival and growth of the crafts industry. In tandem with this, the internet represents a unique opportunity for Irish craft and design companies to sell their products in Ireland and internationally. I am pleased to note that this Strategic Plan includes actions to address both opportunities.

I am delighted to endorse and support the Crafts Council of Ireland's Strategic Plan 2013-2015. As a committed enthusiast for Irish craft I look forward to watching this sector go from strength to strength over the next three years.

**Hugh Cooney**  
*Chairman, Enterprise Ireland*

January 2013



■ Tea light holders by Craftwoods

## INTRODUCTION

Craft in Ireland has evolved throughout centuries and played an important role in expanding the Irish economy with exports of linens, sail cloth, tweed, lace and crystal to the four corners of the globe.

In addition to its importance to our culture, our heritage and our national identity, Ireland's dynamic craft sector makes a significant contribution to our economy. Those people working in craft and design generate local, sustainable employment throughout the island of Ireland. The Crafts Council of Ireland is committed to its role in championing the appropriate climate within which Irish craft can flourish and in promoting the craft and design sector on behalf of our member organisations and clients, and in doing so enabling job creation.

This strategy sets out the priority actions that the Crafts Council of Ireland will undertake between 2013 and 2015. Our mission is to promote and stimulate the creative and commercial viability of the Irish craft and design sector, through the provision of programmes targeted to support makers at all stages of their career.

The Strategic Plan outlines, at a high level, a range of actions which will take place over the next three years focusing on developing and growing craft in Ireland. These actions are based on current levels of funding and build on the previous Strategic Plan 2010-2012.

High level actions include:

- Developing the market for Irish craft and design
- Developing knowledge and skills in craft for emerging and existing craftmakers
- Raising awareness, understanding and appreciation of Irish craft and design
- Supporting membership organisations in the development of the crafts sector
- Developing the innovation, enterprise and design capability of the crafts sector

Consultation with stakeholders played an important role in the development of this plan; the opportunity to input was offered to all our registered clients and member organisations. CCoI is grateful for the suggestions and comments received which are reflected in this document.

The implementation of this plan in cooperation with key public and private partners in education, enterprise, tourism, culture, and at local and government level will ensure that the craft sector, with its inherent ability to innovate, combined with its contribution to Irish culture and tourism, can assist in growing our economy. In common with other sectors, the craft sector needs the appropriate supports to sustain and develop it further. With these in place we believe this will ultimately lead to a stronger crafts industry for future generations to enjoy.

We are extremely grateful to our colleagues in Enterprise Ireland, and in the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, who fund our work and support the role that our organisation plays in developing this important sector. We would like to thank Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Richard Bruton, TD and Minister of State for Small Business, John Perry, TD for their continued support. We look forward to working with and supporting the team in CCoI in the implementation of this ambitious plan.

Crafts Council of Ireland Board of Directors  
November 2012

### **Chairman**

Laura Magahy

### **Board Members**

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# OUR ROLE

The Crafts Council of Ireland is the national design and economic development organisation for the crafts industry in Ireland, which has an estimated output of €498m. CCol is responsible for fostering the growth and commercial strength of the crafts industry in Ireland, communicating its unique identity and stimulating quality design, innovation and competitiveness. Based in Kilkenny, the Crafts Council of Ireland has over 75 member organisations and over 2,700 registered craft enterprises. Its activities are funded by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation via Enterprise Ireland.

# OUR VISION

That Irish craft and design is recognised and valued worldwide for its excellence in craftsmanship, innovation and marketing.

# OUR MISSION

To promote and stimulate the creative and commercial potential of Irish craft and design and to work in collaboration with strategic partners in the ongoing development and growth of the sector.





## CCoI STRATEGIC THEMES 2013 - 2015

While developing the Strategic Plan for the period 2013 to 2015, the Crafts Council of Ireland consulted widely with member organisations, craft enterprises, the CCoI board members and staff, and other key stakeholders. The information gathered throughout this process, together with the continuing challenging economic times, nationally and internationally, have all informed what CCoI's key themes will be for the coming three years.

The resulting themes build on the previous Strategic Plan and are based on current levels of funding. During the term of the Strategic Plan 2010 – 2012, an independent economic evaluation of the craft industry in Ireland carried out on behalf of the Crafts Council of Ireland by Indecon International Economic Consultants in 2010 confirmed the important contribution that the craft sector makes to national and local economic development in Ireland. The resulting report - Economic Significance and Potential of the Crafts Sector in Ireland – indicates that while Irish craft businesses are characteristically small in scale and are geographically widespread, taken nationally the industry is a significant employer. Indecon provided a number of estimates on key economic indicators for the craft sector, as outlined below.

• Employment in the craft sector	5,771
• Total value of output of craft enterprises	€498m
• Value of exports	€124.5m
• Value of domestic sales	€373.5m

Indecon's report highlights that with the provision of additional financial and advisory supports, there is significant potential for growth. The craft sector provides viable, sustainable enterprises in all areas, including those isolated rural communities ignored as unsuitable by other manufacturing sectors. To this end, the Crafts Council of Ireland will continue to establish and maintain relationships with key strategic partners with whom the organisation can collaborate in order to maximise opportunities for sustaining and growing employment in the sector.

The Strategic Plan 2013 – 2015 has five main themes:

### Theme 1

Developing the market for Irish craft and design

### Theme 2

Developing knowledge and skills in craft for emerging and existing craftmakers

### Theme 3

Raising awareness, understanding and appreciation of Irish craft and design

### Theme 4

Supporting membership organisations in the development of the crafts sector

### Theme 5

Developing the innovation, enterprise and design capability of the crafts sector

The measurement of the Crafts Council of Ireland's activities and the attainment of targets will be carried out on a quarterly basis. In addition, a final review will be undertaken in 2015 to ensure the organisation's goal of fostering the commercial strength and growth of the crafts industry in Ireland is sustained. Measurement will be carried out by reference to achievement of key deliverables, targets and lessons learnt. Research conducted during the term of the Strategic Plan will be a key indicator of performance of the industry. This will also be evaluated in the context of CCoI's strategic aim of working with other organisations in Ireland in order to further the awareness of craft both in Ireland and internationally.

### Theme 1: DEVELOPING THE MARKET FOR IRISH CRAFT AND DESIGN

The CCol market development strategy is focused on growing share for Irish craft and design in the Irish market and internationally. To achieve this, CCol plays a leadership role in supporting companies to open up strategic relationships with galleries, retailers, distributors, direct-selling channels and the internet.

CCol has been working to develop both international opportunities for client companies and retailer and media relationships in key markets. CCol has also supported and encouraged clients to participate at key trade fairs as a means to successfully expand their export reach. However, CCol recognises the need for a long-term strategy for export development in key target markets and is actively engaged with Enterprise Ireland to realise this opportunity.

CCol actively promotes Irish craft using two distinct consumer brands;

1. The *Imagined Designed Made in Ireland* brand is used to promote craft products to distributors, retailers or to consumers at direct-selling consumer events
2. The *Irish Craft Portfolio* brand is used to promote limited edition contemporary craft objects that are of a world-class standard to galleries and direct to collectors

These endorser brands offer consumers, partners and clients traceability, authenticity, design and quality credentials, in turn enhancing client reputations and commercial potential. Craftspeople are selected to be part of these programmes by independent expert juries facilitated by CCol.



The Irish Craft Collection in the Jewellery Hall at Arnotts



■ Wearable ceramic neck piece by Jackie Maurer, lampshade by Klickity

High-level actions within this theme include:

**1. Grow the market share of Irish craft and design within the retail channel in Ireland**

- 1.1 Develop stronger relationships with CCol's network of Irish retail partners that are committed to promoting and selling products designed and made in Ireland
- 1.2 Utilise customer relationship management (CRM) to enhance interactions with new and potential retail partners
- 1.3 Use CCol resources and competencies to partner with important retailers in order to establish and maintain flagship locations for Irish craft products in major cities
- 1.4 Grow the consumer sell-through of Irish craft and design products through:
  - Facilitating professional merchandising and presentation instore

- Having improved products and stronger branding from makers that compete based on the unique selling proposition of Irish craft
- Working with retailers to facilitate staff training delivered by CCol
- Creating higher consumer awareness levels through CCol consumer campaign activities

**2. Grow the opportunity for Irish craft internationally**

- 2.1 Continue to develop the international reach of Showcase, Ireland's Creative Expo and the country's largest international fair
- 2.2 Develop an export strategy including presenting selected Irish craft and design annually at important international trade fairs in the product categories of jewellery, home and interiors, gift and fashion
- 2.3 Grow relationships with relevant international retail customers and work to support them with

- merchandising, point of sale and marketing
- 2.4 Work to build international awareness of selected Irish craft brands and the umbrella message of *Imagined Designed Made in Ireland*
  - 2.5 Leverage the Department of Foreign Affairs' embassy network to promote Irish craft and design to potential customers
3. **Continue to develop direct selling opportunities for Irish craft makers**
    - 3.1 Support the presentation of Irish craft and design at flagship consumer events to enable makers to sell products and also to enhance the image of Irish craft and design
    - 3.2 Support innovative and high profile pop-up shops and utilise internal expertise and experience to improve quality
    - 3.3 Communicate and share information about direct selling opportunities
  4. **Partner with Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland to leverage the potential of Irish craft studios to deliver an excellent tourism product to inbound and domestic tourists**
    - 4.1 Deliver an above the line and below the line communications plan that includes strong web presence and on the ground directional signage, in line with Fáilte Ireland's new national strategy
    - 4.2 Support selected makers in the promotion of their products in order to gain studio sales
    - 4.3 Support private tour operators with information on bespoke tours to craft studios
  5. **Develop an online channel of Irish craft and design to consumers in Ireland and internationally**
    - 5.1 Grow web sales of Irish craft to consumers in Ireland and internationally based around:
      - High quality image for craft and design
      - Strong network of merchant partners
      - Direct selling by quality makers to targeted audiences
      - Effective email, Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), Search Engine Marketing (SEM) and affiliate programmes
    - 5.2 Develop appropriate and nuanced web solutions across mainstream, contemporary fine craft and design target markets
    - 5.3 Develop effective international links to ensure strong search positioning
    - 5.4 Develop corporate sales potential through relationship management and the web
  6. **Further develop the National Craft Gallery as the flagship institution working to grow recognition that craft and design is a vehicle for economic growth, innovation and creativity, and cultural identity**
    - 6.1 Leverage the reputation of the National Craft Gallery to enhance the individual reputations of Irish makers at home and abroad
    - 6.2 Present the highest standard of craft and design across a variety of disciplines, from makers who push the boundaries of their chosen materials and techniques in their engagement with the making process, to Irish audiences and media
    - 6.3 Grow the national and international audience for the National Craft Gallery through a more effective tourism plan for Kilkenny, a strong touring programme and a National Craft Gallery presence in Dublin
    - 6.4 Broaden the education and outreach programme to ensure that the National Craft Gallery assists in the delivery of broader education objectives
    - 6.5 Provide support for selected external exhibitions as part of the CCoI and National Craft Gallery exhibitions' policy
    - 6.6 Support galleries who wish to promote Irish makers through knowledge and contributory funding of travel, shipping and marketing activity
    - 6.7 Build relationships and communications with collectors directly and through social media
    - 6.8 Relaunch Irish Craft Portfolio to enhance commercial and reputational opportunities for Irish makers
    - 6.9 Further develop relationships with partners such as Culture Ireland, the Arts Council, National Museum of Ireland and the Office of Public Works in order to promote the relevance of Irish craft and design

## Theme 2: DEVELOPING KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS IN CRAFT FOR EMERGING AND EXISTING CRAFTMAKERS

The Crafts Council of Ireland's education strategy is to develop knowledge and skills in craft for emerging and current craftmakers, and to contribute to the growth of a high-quality, design-led, sustainable craft industry.

CCoI believes that developing the appropriate knowledge and skills of Irish craft makers through a range of targeted education initiatives will help in the continued development of quality design and craftsmanship. CCoI will also work towards increasing awareness of craft and design as a strong career choice by initiating education and training programmes for children, students, teachers and craft makers that involves authentic, creative engagement.

High-level actions within this theme include:

1. **Enhance the mainstream education offering for school pupils**
  - 1.1 Broaden the range of craft related inputs in primary and secondary level schools
  - 1.2 Consolidate the CRAFTed primary level programme nationwide, supporting craft makers, learners, teachers and staff in Teacher Education Centres
  - 1.3 Deliver curriculum support training for craft makers and teachers in partnership with the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) to increase the delivery of craft in the secondary school curriculum
2. **Consolidate the range of 3rd level training opportunities**
  - 2.1 Continue to develop CCoI Ceramics and Jewellery skills accredited curriculum in order to maintain the 90% + employment record for graduates
  - 2.2 Forge strong ongoing relationships with all key 3rd level crafts/arts providers to encourage and promote a range of craft specific curriculum initiatives
  - 2.3 Develop the CCoI/National University Ireland Maynooth (NUIM) quality assurance partnership via joint 'Academic Board' processes
  - 2.4 In partnership with other relevant organisations, develop and co-ordinate craft related 'Train the Trainer' courses for craft makers who want to gain Level 6 accreditation
  - 2.5 Strategically enhance the 'Future Makers' awards and support programme, with a particular emphasis on raising the standard of craft related design across the third level college sector
3. **Extend outreach services and curriculum support materials**
  - 3.1 Revise CCoI's 'Outreach Policy' and activities, incorporating the CCoI 'Code of Practice' for safe craft training practices in school and community settings
  - 3.2 Extend the 'Outreach Programme' for primary, secondary, third level students and others attending the National Craft Gallery, with the piloting of new outreach services in other locations leading to increased exposure to crafts, and increased appreciation and understanding of craft training and career options
  - 3.3 Extend the resource base of craft related educational materials available via [www.learncraftdesign.com](http://www.learncraftdesign.com) to position it as the preferred craft based web-resource for educators and craft makers in Ireland and further afield
4. **Strengthen strategic relationships to influence craft related policy**
  - 4.1 Strengthen strategic relationships to increase the profile of craft, by influencing the craft related policies of those developing national education strategy
  - 4.2 Partner as appropriate with national education bodies and agencies, particularly with the Department of Education & Skills
  - 4.3 Initiate and consolidate 'Further Education' alliances in 16 regional areas through the new 'Education Training Boards' to embed craft as a key subject area in 'Lifelong Learning' strategy development
  - 4.4 Strengthen formal strategic alliances with third level colleges, including the National College of Art & Design (NCAD), Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) and Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT)
  - 4.5 Scope the potential development of a nationwide 'craft training strategy' in partnership with SOLAS, to explore training pathways for craft disciplines



■ Irish craft showcased at the Justus Lipsius building in Belgium for Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the EU

### Theme 3: RAISING AWARENESS, UNDERSTANDING & APPRECIATION OF IRISH CRAFT AND DESIGN

The Crafts Council of Ireland aims to raise awareness of Irish craft and design in order to encourage interest in and demand for Irish craft products. Following the significant increase in consumer interest and awareness of Irish craft during the term of the previous Strategic Plan, this theme will build on those successes in order to ensure purchasers can appreciate, find and buy Irish craft. Raising awareness, understanding and appreciation of Irish craft and design is central to all activities across the organisation and is key to ensuring an enduring legacy for the Year of Craft 2011 programme.

High-level actions within this theme include:

#### 1. Develop strategic partnerships with media and other organisations for the promotion of Irish craft and design

- 1.1 Maximise opportunities for national and international media coverage by developing new and deepening existing partnerships through

CCoI's involvement in events/activities during the term of the Strategic Plan. This will include Ireland's Presidency of the EU, The Gathering and Kilkenny Design Workshops' 50th Anniversary in 2013; International Academy of Ceramics Biennale, Dublin in 2014; and ongoing opportunities with Big Mountain Productions, World Crafts Council – Europe and Showcase, Ireland's Creative Expo

- 1.2 Maintain communications and leverage promotional opportunities with contacts from Year of Craft 2011 initiatives in order to ensure an enduring legacy
2. Promote Irish craft and design to specific audiences through targeted communications
  - 2.1 Customise messaging for specific audiences through various media
  - 2.2 Seek out new potential opportunities through existing communications vehicles
  - 2.3 Educate specific targets on craft offerings around Ireland e.g. tour guides and hotel owners with regard to craft related experiences
  - 2.4 Comply with the Official Languages Act and explore opportunities for targeting Irish language media

### 3. Empower clients and members to promote themselves and reach new audiences

- 3.1 Leverage CCol's clients and member organisations' experience with regard to sharing and expertise
- 3.2 Develop resource materials to assist clients and member organisations in promoting themselves
- 3.3 Utilise new technologies for maintaining regular two-way communications with registered clients and member organisations

### 4. Develop the organisation's online capabilities through the use of new technologies

- 4.1 Continually develop CCol's online presence and features in line with best practice standards
- 4.2 Utilise current and emerging applications for promoting opportunities, activities and events through social media
- 4.3 Continually expand CCol's offering of online information for specific audiences
  - Registered client and member organisation resources
  - Archive of images, materials and information
  - Online publications

### 5. Maintain and develop knowledge of the Irish craft and design sector through research and archiving of information and materials

- 5.1 Conduct research on the craft sector in Ireland such as an annual consumer perceptions survey in order to maintain market intelligence for use in the development of strategic policies and to promote the sector
- 5.2 Maintain current and accurate data in the organisation's customer relationship management (CRM) application on client craft enterprises
- 5.3 Create an archive of national and international studies on the creative sector by other organisations
- 5.4 Maintain CCol's library and archive on the Irish craft sector

### Theme 4:

#### SUPPORTING MEMBERSHIP ORGANISATIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CRAFT SECTOR

The member organisations of the Crafts Council of Ireland, also known as the Guilds, Associations, Networks & Societies (GANS), play an important role in enhancing the awareness of Irish craft and the skills of craftmaking. They contribute to Irish crafts and to Irish culture through their protection and nurturing of Ireland's craft heritage, the sharing of ideas and knowledge, and through the passing on of craft skills to others. The Crafts Council of Ireland is committed to working closely with the member organisations for the overall benefit of craft in Ireland.

High-level actions within this theme include:

#### 1. Develop the knowledge and skills of the membership organisations, and facilitate networking

- 1.1 Provide information and training for membership organisations in line with identified requirements
- 1.2 Facilitate member organisations' meetings to enable regular communications between the membership organisations and with CCol
- 1.3 Provide part-funding for member organisations related events and activities through the network support scheme

#### 2. Raise awareness of the membership organisations' activities

- 2.1 Profile each member organisation on CCol's website
- 2.2 Promote demonstrations of craft disciplines at key public events

#### 3. Coordinate efforts to preserve Ireland's craft heritage through the membership organisations

- 3.1 Continue to work in partnership with the member organisations and the Heritage Council to preserve Ireland's craft heritage
- 3.2 Agree a heritage craft strategy in consultation with relevant partners
- 3.3 Identify heritage crafts that are at risk of decline and develop plans to protect these disciplines

## Theme 5: DEVELOPING THE INNOVATION, ENTERPRISE & DESIGN CAPABILITY OF THE CRAFTS SECTOR

The Crafts Council of Ireland is committed to developing the innovation and design capabilities of the crafts sector. Strategic actions focus on cultivating strong national and international partnerships that facilitate the development of clusters of excellence promoting exchange, learning and access to facilities and expertise. CCoI will also focus on the continued development of craft enterprises through the provision of training and supports required for business growth, product design, increased export potential and controlling the cost of doing business in Ireland, leading to job creation and industry growth.

High-level actions within this theme include:

1. **Develop Craft Enterprise Skills**
  - 1.1 Partner with relevant organisations to deliver and develop relevant programmes
  - 1.2 Work with Enterprise Ireland and other appropriate partners to develop the export capabilities of the craft and design sector
  - 1.3 Deliver a comprehensive CCoI mentoring service with emphasis on product design, scalability in craft terms, manufacturing, production and export markets
  - 1.4 Deliver a series of high quality targeted workshops that respond to current and future sectoral needs
  - 1.5 Provide a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) fund for clients
  - 1.6 Develop an online resource with information on business support, training, national and international links, funding opportunities and export markets
2. **Develop a network of clusters with relevant partners to support growth and development of the craft and design sector**
  - 2.1 Develop strategic partnerships with partners such as County & City Enterprise Boards (CEB) / Local Enterprise Offices (LEO), Irish Leader Development Network (ILDN) and the Western Development Commission (WDC)
  - 2.2 Undertake cultural mapping on a regional basis in partnership with a committee of Leader Companies
  - 2.3 Develop an infrastructure of creative hubs that provide facilities, networks and services for existing and emerging craft collectives
3. **Develop links to industry and expertise that will foster the innovative development and potential of the crafts sector**
  - 3.1 Undertake research to identify industry expertise, equipment and facilities
  - 3.2 Engage in partnerships with industry, third level partners and organisations to develop cross-sectoral projects
  - 3.3 Develop the sector's potential to access finance for research and development (R&D) through innovation vouchers
4. **Develop a mechanism for CCoI that will assist in building the organisation's capacity to access EU funding for the benefit of clients and the craft and design sector**
  - 4.1 Develop links through existing EU programmes and the World Crafts Council (WCC) that will enable greater mobility, access to information and development of export markets for Irish craft
  - 4.2 Manage current and future EU programmes such as INNOCRAFTS and Leonardo Partnership programmes
  - 4.3 Drive policy research in the area of SME internationalisation and networking
  - 4.4 Gather EU data and links on new technology and innovation relevant to the sector



Geometric bangles by Theresa Burger



# APPENDIX



■ *Sadhbh Table by Locker13*

## UPDATE ON STRATEGIC PLAN 2010 – 2012

The Crafts Council of Ireland's Strategic Plan 2010 – 2012 set out an ambitious and challenging programme of activity, especially given the economic environment at the time of its launch. Working with existing partners and developing strategic partnerships with organisations, agencies and other bodies throughout Ireland was central to delivering on the goals contained within the plan.

The following is an outline of key outputs during the term of the Strategic Plan. All activities across the organisation were planned and implemented in line with the objectives of the Strategic Plan. Therefore all proposals and opportunities that arose were evaluated on a case-by-case basis and proceeded if a project assisted in the delivery of CCol's strategic goals and could be implemented through existing programmes.

The main focus of the Strategic Plan 2010 – 2012 was on developing and growing the craft industry in Ireland. Four main strategic objectives were identified, each with associated areas of focus. An operational plan was developed in tandem with the Strategic Plan to map out each team's activities. Central to all activities across the organisation was the Year of Craft 2011 programme.

The four main strategic objectives of the Strategic Plan 2010 – 2012 were as follows:

- Developing the Market for Irish Craft
- Building the Next Generation of Craftmakers
- Raising Awareness of Irish Craft
- Strengthening the Member Organisations

Theme 1:

### DEVELOPING THE MARKET FOR IRISH CRAFT

The Crafts Council of Ireland is committed to developing market opportunities for Irish craft, through two strands of activity: Developing Market Channels and Developing Craft Enterprises. The key aims under this theme for the period 2010 – 2012 were:

#### 1a: Developing the Market Channels

- To expand the retail channels for Irish craft
- To increase direct selling opportunities for Irish craft
- To develop the tourism market for the benefit of Irish craft
- To develop the commercial gallery and exhibition channels for Irish craft

#### 1b: Developing Craft Enterprises

- To deliver a range of supports for craft enterprises through a comprehensive CCol mentoring service
- To deliver skills training addressing specific industry needs

- To create business support information for CCol member organisations and craft enterprises
- To develop relationships with national and international partners to increase training and development in Irish craft
- To identify and influence opportunities for teacher education for craftmakers

#### OUTPUTS:

In November 2010 the new iconic *Imagined Designed Made in Ireland* consumer campaign was rolled-out. Point-of-sale materials were distributed to 56 stores in Ireland and 20 stores internationally, and window and in-store displays were planned and agreed with these retailers in order to raise the profile and position of Irish made craft in-store. This campaign has continued to grow, with over 130 stores participating by the end of 2012, and was accompanied by training for sales staff in 2012 to raise understanding of craft products being sold. During Year of Craft 2011 CCol launched and supported four strong consumer marketing campaigns to grow understanding of disciplines, awareness of individual maker brands and sales across various channels. These campaigns were supported through the expansion of the [www.giveirishcraft.com](http://www.giveirishcraft.com) website. In addition to growing ties with major retailers, CCol encouraged innovative retailing initiatives through the launch of the Curated Craft programme as part of Year of Craft 2011.

CCol put plans in place to develop export channels for Irish craft during the term of the Strategic Plan. In 2011 CCol supported Cream of Irish Design to attend TENT 2011 as part of London Design Week and in 2012 launched CCol's first exhibition at London Design Festival entitled *A Place to Gather*. This exhibition showcased the work of over 30 makers in a curated space in Shoreditch, presenting a creative glimpse of contemporary Ireland. In 2012 CCol also hosted an Irish pavilion showcasing 10 luxury contemporary Irish jewellery makers at Inhorgenta, the international tradeshow for jewellery and watches which takes place in Munich each February, and put plans in place to attend again in 2013.

Showcase Ireland was re-launched in 2010 as *Ireland's Creative Expo* with new branding, an exciting new website

and a strategic marketing plan designed to grow the number of buyers attending the show. The new strategy placed Irish craft at the heart of the show through *Creative Island*, a new exclusive hotspot located at the main entrance. This new space featured an impressive range of quality, crafted products, all under the *Imagined, Designed, Made in Ireland* brand. As part of the organisation's plans for continually developing the annual show, CCol expanded the *Creative Island* area at Showcase each year and launched a new Fashion Show at Showcase 2012, with plans in place for a focus on Home for 2013. CCol also leveraged Showcase to connect with international retailers.

In order to increase opportunities for direct sales, CCol exhibited at major direct-sales events between 2010 and 2012 including Bloom in the Park, Tall Ships Race Waterford, the Interior Design & Art Fair and the National Crafts & Design Fair, while also supporting numerous smaller direct selling shows such as pop-up shops.

CCol presented a comprehensive exhibitions programme each year between 2010 and 2012, with over 50 exhibitions showing at the National Craft Gallery and on tour nationally and internationally. Activities to raise the profile of the National Craft Gallery succeeded in increasing visitor figures to the gallery in Kilkenny; along with the touring programme the National Craft Gallery reached an audience of over 130,000 people annually. The National Craft Gallery expanded both its programme of exhibitions in Kilkenny and the touring programme in 2011 as a key component of Year of Craft 2011 activities. In 2011 CCol launched an External Exhibitions Fund and also supported numerous makers to show abroad.

Relationships were strengthened with exhibition partners and a new show was launched at the Royal Hibernian Academy (RHA) featuring work from Irish Craft Portfolio in 2011. A second capsule exhibition opened at the RHA in November 2012 featuring a new selection of work from the Irish Craft Portfolio programme which was broadened during 2012 to include almost 100 makers across the disciplines of ceramics; jewellery; glass; metals; paper, textiles and calligraphy; and furniture, woodwork and basketry.

Throughout 2010, CCol deepened its links with Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland, collaborating on a number of projects, as well as the creation of an outline plan for the development of the tourism potential of the craft and design sector. These plans progressed in 2011 with

130 craft studios visited and audited in preparation for the roll out of a national craft tourism experience in 2013 which will be presented online, in tourist offices and with directional signage around the country.

The Enterprise Development Team hosted 38 specialist workshops during the period 2010 – 2012 as part of the Building Craft Enterprise - Making it in Business programme. 107 client enterprises received mentoring and 151 successful applicants were awarded funds through CCol's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) fund. 642 enterprises attended the Continuing Professional Development workshops and a regional delivery plan was implemented to make the service available to a wider audience. Preparations commenced in 2012 for the development of web content specifically aimed at enterprise development, including guides on establishing a craft enterprise and availing of relevant supports, which will be launched in early 2013.

#### Objective 2:

##### BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CRAFTMAKERS

The Crafts Council of Ireland believes that building the next generation of craftmakers through a range of education initiatives is critical to the future of the Irish craft industry. In order to achieve this goal the key aims during 2010 and 2012 were:

- To increase national awareness of craft as a career
- To delivery a National Primary Level Initiative in support of the national curriculum
- To deliver an Education & Outreach programme targeted at second level to increase awareness of careers in craft
- To initiate targeted programmes for craftmaker and teacher development
- To ensure the future of the skills provided by the Ceramics and Jewellery Schools
- To grow relationships with national bodies to contribute to education policy in craft education

#### OUTPUTS:

Existing education programmes were enhanced and new initiatives announced between 2010 and 2012. An extensive review and evaluation of the *Craft in the Classroom* initiative (2005 – 2009) was undertaken, commencing in 2009 and continuing into 2010. This review informed the strategic development of CCol's *CRAFTed – Learning Skills for Life* Primary School Programme, which was officially launched in September 2010 by the Minister for Education and Skills, Mary Coughlan TD. *CRAFTed* was

delivered as a nationwide programme in partnership with Education Centres and a new dedicated online learning resource for teachers [www.learncraftdesign.com](http://www.learncraftdesign.com) was developed and launched as a legacy of Year of Craft 2011.

*Future Makers* replaced CCol's Third Level Awards scheme, representing a significant investment by the Crafts Council of Ireland in the future development of the next generation of makers in Ireland. Worth over €30,000 annually, the awards and supports provide assistance in a range of areas including further training, research and development, studio set-up and exhibition assistance. The Future Makers Awards & Supports programme was maintained in 2011 and 2012, and the accompanying website was redeveloped.

From work initiated at the start of the term of the Strategic Plan, CCol was delighted to offer both the Jewellery and Goldsmithing Skills & Design Course and the Ceramics Skills & Design Course accredited to a Level 7 by the National University of Ireland, Maynooth from the start of the 2011 and 2012 academic years respectively.

The Education & Outreach team coordinated visits to the National Craft Gallery on gallery tours (primary, secondary, third level and special interest groups) and developed support materials for the exhibitions and talks as part of the National Craft Gallery exhibition programme. New partnerships were established with the outreach teams of other cultural centres and festivals. In 2011 alone over 12,000 children participated in craft workshops around the country as part of the Year of Craft 2011 programme.

#### Objective 3:

##### RAISING AWARENESS OF IRISH CRAFT

The Crafts Council of Ireland aims to raise awareness of Irish craft in order to encourage interest in and demand for Irish craft products. To enable this, the key aims for 2010 – 2012 were:

- To adopt a focused approach to promoting Irish craft to various audiences
- To redevelop the CCol website and targeted communications based on the requirements of the agreed identified audiences
- To generate interest in Irish craft through the Year of Craft 2011 Programme
- To increase exposure to Irish craft through media and strategic partnerships
- To conduct research to facilitate market intelligence on all aspects of the Irish craft sector

#### OUTPUTS:

CCol programmes including the Year of Craft 2011 initiative were promoted throughout the term of the Strategic Plan, with all events, promotional campaigns and activities supported through national and local exposure across all media, as well as online and social media. Key coverage was achieved across TV, radio and both national and regional print media, including several pieces of TV and print media coverage internationally and An Post launched a series of five stamps promoting Irish craft to mark Year of Craft 2011.

Regular communication with the team at RTÉ's Nationwide continued throughout the last three years and significant, regular coverage was secured for both CCol initiatives and for CCol clients throughout the country. Features included the production of a programme dedicated to Showcase and participating makers being aired in January of each year. The media partnerships established for Year of Craft 2011 resulted in a series of printed and online advertisements throughout the year and a 32 page special supplement on Irish craft in *The Irish Times*, and the airing of a specially created TV advert through the RTÉ Supporting the Arts scheme.

Relationships were maintained and established with other key media throughout the country and internationally. CCol worked in collaboration with Big Mountain Productions on a six-part TV series entitled *Craft Master*. The series was funded by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) and was aired for the first time on RTÉ One in autumn 2011 and re-aired several times during 2012. In light of the favourable response to the first series, a second six-part series was commissioned and produced in 2012, to be aired on RTÉ One in 2013.

To support the level of activity for the Year of Craft 2011 programme and beyond, a new website [www.craftinireland.com](http://www.craftinireland.com) was launched, allowing visitors to search for activities by location, date and type. The site was supported through ongoing social media activities and was continually updated to promote the activities of CCol's clients and membership organisations. As part of CCol's ongoing web developments, the corporate website [www.ccoi.ie](http://www.ccoi.ie) introduced a new look, user friendly 'Find Craftsperson' function and a new, comprehensive Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system was implemented across the organisation in 2012.

CCol's annual Consumer Perceptions Survey was conducted by Millward Brown Lansdowne in December of each year and the outcomes were very encouraging, particularly for the immediate impact that the Year of Craft 2011 initiative had on consumer awareness of Irish craft and design. The results of the survey conducted in December 2012 revealed that 55% of people were interested in buying and owning Irish craft, a dramatic increase from 39% in December 2010 prior to the commencement of the Year of Craft 2011 programme of activities.

#### Objective 4:

##### STRENGTHENING THE MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

The member organisations of the Crafts Council of Ireland play an important role in enhancing the awareness of Irish craft and the skills of craftmaking. This strategic theme recognises their contribution and outlines the CCol's strategy of working closely with the member organisations for the overall benefit of Irish craft. Key aims for achieving this during 2010 and 2012 were:

- To enhance the links between the member organisations and the Crafts Council of Ireland
- To strengthen member organisations' ability to contribute to the craft sector by empowering them through targeted funding
- To increase the presence of all member organisations on the CCol website
- To work with the member organisations in preserving Ireland's craft heritage
- To create opportunities for craft awareness by utilising the expertise of the member organisations

#### OUTPUTS:

Meetings were held with CCol's member organisations - the Guilds, Associations, Networks and Societies (GANS) - throughout the three years providing networking opportunities, information sharing between the GANS and CCol, as well as training opportunities with workshops delivered on topics such as photography and PR.

CCol participated in Bloom in the Park each year, hosting demonstrations by the GANS. The demonstrations showcased the wealth and depth of skill amongst craftspeople in Ireland and proved extremely successful and popular with the public attracting large audiences throughout the annual 5-day event. As part of Year of Craft 2011, the GANS took part in and provided craft demonstrations at numerous other events across the country such as Showcase, Tall Ships Race Waterford, Electric Picnic and the National Crafts & Design Fair to name just a few. In 2012 demonstrations were held at Bloom and at the National Crafts & Design Fair, once again attracting an enthusiastic reaction from the public.

The CCol Network Support Scheme which part funds marketing, exhibitions and training initiatives by member organisations continued during 2010 and 2012; a total of 78 projects by 44 GANS benefited from this scheme which allocated a total of €197,271 over the 3 years.

In 2010 the Crafts Council of Ireland together with a number of textile based member organisations coordinated *Tread Softly*, the first exhibition of Irish textiles at the annual Knitting & Stitching Show in the RDS, Dublin. In light of the positive response to *Tread Softly*, further exhibitions of textiles in conjunction with CCol's GANS members were shown at the Knitting & Stitching Show with *Seascapes* in 2011 and *Nature* in 2012. A touring programme was also coordinated by CCol to showcase the exhibitions to audiences around the country.

As a result of discussions at the GANS meetings that took place in 2011, a Craft Heritage Association was set up in September 2011 in order to focus on maintaining the heritage of some traditional crafts. This group, which includes membership from the Heritage Council, succeeded in securing funds to enable an audit of lace production in Ireland that will take place in 2013.

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### Contributors

Hugh Cooney, Chairman, Enterprise Ireland  
Laura Magahy, Chairman, CCoI  
CCoI Board of Directors  
CCoI Staff  
CCoI Member Organisations and Clients

### Design

Redlemonade.ie

### Photographers

Linda Brownlee, Theresa Burger, Peter Cavanagh, Trevor Hart, Neil Hurley,  
Rob Lamb, Gus Mabelson, Paul Sherwood and Photocall Ireland (Leon Farrell).

### Contact Details

Crafts Council of Ireland  
Castle Yard, Kilkenny, Ireland

t. +353 (0)56 776 1804  
f. +353 (0)56 776 3754  
e. [info@cco.i.e](mailto:info@cco.i.e)  
w. [www.cco.i.e](http://www.cco.i.e)  
w. [www.craftinireland.com](http://www.craftinireland.com)

w. [www.cco.i.e/enterprise](http://www.cco.i.e/enterprise)  
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Crafts Council of Ireland  
Castle Yard  
Kilkenny  
Ireland

t. +353 (0)56 776 1804  
f. +353 (0)56 776 3754  
e. [info@ccoi.ie](mailto:info@ccoi.ie)  
w. [www.ccoi.ie](http://www.ccoi.ie) [www.craftinireland.com](http://www.craftinireland.com)