



A Fresh View

for the

21st Century:

Education, Community, Outreach

Policy Framework 2014

Developed by the
Education, Community, Outreach Working Group
of the
Council of National Cultural Institutions
in association with Anne Gallagher

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Drawing on the
Policy Framework for Education, Community, Outreach 2003

Compiled by the Education, Community, Outreach Working Group
of the Council of National Cultural Institutions
in association with Martin Drury and Susan Coughlan, Arts Consultants

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Introduction – 2014

This *Fresh View for the 21st Century* is a revised policy framework developed by the Education, Community, Outreach (ECO) Working Group of the Council of National Cultural Institutions (CNCI). The revised and updated policy is based on the foundational *ECO Policy Framework for Education, Community, Outreach* of 2003¹. The presentation of a ‘fresh view’ is timely, as it reflects the shared policies and perspectives across the institutions as they encounter and approach the new opportunities and contexts of the 21st century.

The *Fresh View for the 21st Century* is the first phase in the development of a programme for action for the period 2014 to 2017.

Cultural institutions remain central to society, as places of trust and safety for debate and exploration; the nature, extent and pace of social change experienced in recent times have resulted in a continuing need for such spaces. Learning, engagement, diversity and collaboration remain the key unifying concepts across the range of ECO practices supported by the cultural institutions.

ECO work is continually adapting to changing contexts. Within the last decade, developments in digital media and the opportunities emerging from those have become significant elements of our work in facilitating learning and engagement. Important developments in the legislative and policy environment have also opened up new areas of focus and engagement.

A unique context and set of opportunities for the Cultural Institutions is *The Decade of Centenaries 2012-2022* marking the centenaries of momentous events in modern Irish and international history with a government-supported Commemorative Programme of Activities for all ages.

“Education and Community Outreach (ECO) guarantees that a great diversity of people directly experience their cultural institutions as alive and replete with meaning and possibility and therefore, as essential and indispensable. ECO enriches the life and future of a cultural institution by enabling people to find within it a sense of home, a sense of belonging and a sense of deep personal involvement and growth.” (From CNCI ECO publicity for the *Whose Culture is it? Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity in Ireland’s Cultural Spaces* Seminar, Kilkenny, November 2010.)

¹ Published in 2004 as *A Policy Framework for Education, Community, Outreach (ECO)*, developed by the ECO Working Group of the CNCI in association with Arts Consultants Martin Drury and Susan Coughlan (CNCI, 2004).

Structure of this Document

This document first outlines key elements of the changed and emerging contexts for ECO work since the development of the *Policy Framework* in 2003; the original framework is then presented with short updates inserted at a number of sub-sections, specifically:

Section 1: subsections 1.1; 1.3 and 1.4

Section 2: subsections 2.3; 2.4; 2.5; 2.7; 2.8

Section 3: subsections 3.3 and 3.7

Section 4: subsections 4.6; 4.8; 4.9; 4.10; 4.12

The document concludes with an updated bibliography.

Changing Contexts - 2014

In the decade since the publication of the *Policy Framework for Education, Community, Outreach (ECO)* (2004) there have been significant developments in the legislative and policy environment within which the cultural institutions implement ECO work.

Arts in Education Charter

A recent development is the launch (in January 2013) of the *Arts in Education Charter* by the Departments of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the Department of Education and Skills. The Charter acknowledges the importance of participation in the arts and culture for children and young people and sets out a number of commitments, agreed by both Departments, for increased access to the arts and to cultural institutions within and out of school. *“The arts have a key role to play in the education system, in providing for sensory, emotional, intellectual and creative enrichment and contributing to our children’s overall development”* (Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairí Quinn TD in the National Museum of Ireland, Kildare St, Dublin, 27th November, 2013).

Members of the CNCI ECO group have participated in consultations with both government departments on the drafting of the Charter and, since its publication, have been to the forefront of responses to its provisions² and are involved in ongoing consultations with the Higher Implementation Group for the Charter.

Encountering the Arts Ireland

The members of CNCI ECO have been centrally involved in the formation of Encountering the Arts Ireland (ETAI). ETAI includes representatives from more than thirty arts, education, culture and heritage organisations and institutions catering for the more than 800,000 children and young people currently in school in Ireland.

ETAI was launched by both the Minister for the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the Minister for Education and Skills on 27th November, 2013 in the National Museum of Ireland - Archaeology, Dublin. This launch recognised the bringing together in collaborative partnership of the wealth of knowledge, skills and expertise across the arts and education sectors.

In his address, Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairí Quinn TD remarked, *“The arts have a key role to play in the education system, in providing for sensory, emotional, intellectual and creative*

² An example of their activities in response to the *Arts in Education Charter* was the *Lighting a Fire Conference* in April 2013 at The National Gallery of Ireland. The CNCI ECO group invited members of the arts-in-education community in Ireland and international speakers to discuss the relationship between arts, culture and education in Ireland’s schools. It was followed by the National Gallery’s *Schools: Access to Culture Conference* in September 2013 at which Professor Coolahan, chair of the Higher Implementation Body provided an update on the developments associated with the *Arts in Education Charter*.

enrichment and contributing to our children's overall development. This alliance ...that we are launching today will be a powerful voice for the arts in education and we will be listening to that voice as we implement the Arts in Education Charter" (Address at the National Museum of Ireland, November 2013).

In his address, Minister for the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, James Deenihan TD said: *"Being a former teacher, I can say that I have first-hand knowledge of the importance of the promotion of Arts, Music and Culture within the educational sphere. I believe that the collaboration of so many organisations under ETAI will be a landmark for a new era for the arts in education" (Address at the National Museum of Ireland, November 2013).*

Special Committee on the Arts and Education

The establishment in 2006 of the Special Committee on the Arts and Education had confirmed *"an alignment between politicians, practitioners and public around the need to address" inadequate provision for the arts and culture within education. The Report of the Special Committee in 2007³ was adopted unanimously by the Arts Council and submitted to the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism and to the Department of Education and Science. The report formed the basis of detailed discussions between both Departments and the Arts Council.⁴*

The work of the Special Committee and subsequent discussions drew on the national survey into public attitudes and behaviour in the arts, published as *The Public and the Arts* (Arts Council, 2006), in which a preference among respondents for *"Arts programmes and facilities dedicated to working for and with children and young people"* was clearly identified.

Artists~Schools Guidelines

The *Artists~Schools Guidelines*, published in 2006, resulted from a participatory process involving the arts and culture and education sectors. The guidelines are designed to facilitate artists, teachers, schools, arts organisations, *"to work in structured and respectful partnerships with young people in order to enhance their learning, enrich their experience of the arts and develop their creativity."⁵*

³ Points of Alignment: The Report of the Special Committee on the Arts and Education (Arts Council Dublin, 2008).

⁴ To complement the work of the Special Committee, the Arts Council commissioned and published a review of current research in Ireland: *Arts, Education and Other Learning Settings; a Research Digest* (2007) by Hibernian Consulting and Martin Drury.

⁵ *Artists~Schools Guidelines: Towards Best Practice in Ireland* (Department of Education and Science and the Arts Council, Dublin, 2006).

New Framework for Junior Cycle

The New Framework for Junior Cycle education⁶ emphasises “flexibility and creativity... key conditions for making schools places where young people learn risk-taking and innovation” (NCCA, 2011, p. 5-6). It seeks to place students “at the centre of the educational experience ...and to be resourceful and confident learners in all aspects and stages of their lives” (ibid. p. 9). The curriculum principles⁷ underpinning the Junior Cycle include creativity and innovation.

The Framework envisages the development of new subjects and short courses which will provide schools with “opportunities to connect with their communities, to consolidate and strengthen aspects of student learning to include new and different learning experiences ...” (ibid. p.16). Schools will be free to work in partnership with organisations and institutions in the design and delivery of these courses so as to meet the learning needs of their students and the Framework recognises that this learning can take place in out-of-school locations.

This Framework provides new opportunities for the cultural institutions to use their expertise, resources, artefacts and artforms to facilitate the kinds of learning envisaged within the new curriculum and to take a key role in innovations within the formal education structure, by developing short courses and/or by partnering with schools and other organisations.⁸

Child Protection and Welfare

Since its establishment, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs⁹ has published the revised *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2010) and is preparing legislation which will put *Children First* on a statutory footing. Under these regulations, all organisations working with children and young people, for example the Cultural Institutions, must develop and implement Child Protection and Welfare Policies.

The members of CNCI are committed to a child-centred approach to their work with children and young people and provide a safe environment and experience where the welfare of the child or young person is paramount. To this end they adhere to the *Children First* guidelines. Child Protection and Welfare Policy Statements have been developed by the institutions and

⁶ Junior Cycle refers to the first three years of post-primary education. The Framework document is: *Towards a Framework for Junior Cycle: Innovation and Identity: Schools Developing Junior Cycle* (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, Dublin, 2011).

⁷ The Junior Cycle curriculum principles are Quality; Wellbeing; Choice and Flexibility; Creativity and Innovation; Inclusive Education; Engagement, Relevance and Enjoyment; Lifelong Learning; Continuity.

⁸ The National Gallery of Ireland published two online resources in September 2013: *Impressionism* and *Irish Artists Painting in France c.1860-1910* as tailor-made short courses for the new Framework for Junior Cycle.

⁹ The Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) was established in June 2011. The new Department consolidates a range of functions which were previously responsibilities of the Minister for Health, the Minister for Education and Skills, the Minister for Justice and Law Reform and the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

recruitment and selection policies are also designed to ensure that staff are selected, trained and supervised in such a way as to ensure that young visitors experience the institutions as safe and welcoming spaces in which to learn and encounter new experiences. The policies can be accessed on the Institutions' websites and parents and guardians who accompany children and young people to the institutions are provided with information on these policies. The Institutions' Protection and Welfare policies also apply to vulnerable adults.

The Museum Standards Programme for Ireland

The Museum Standards Programme¹⁰ aims to improve all aspects of Ireland's museum practice, including museum education, and is administered by the Heritage Council. Members of the CNCI have participated in and been accredited by the programme, which includes a Standards Framework for Museum Education. A requirement of this Framework is that all applicant institutions must develop an Education Policy which is formally approved by the institution's governing body. The programme includes a range of training courses and options for post-graduate studies.

The Arts, Cultural Inclusion and Social Cohesion

The role and contribution of arts and culture in relation to cultural inclusion and social cohesion was identified and explored by the National Economic and Social Forum (2007).¹¹ The Forum developed a series of recommendations to enhance the potential of the arts and culture *"to enhance social capital and create a more inclusive and cohesive society."*¹² These recommendations, for example in relation to improved policy co-ordination, supports for children and young people, and targeted measures for specific groups have provided further policy foundations and support for the CNCI ECO work.

Digital Learning

Developments in multimedia technology provide new opportunities and challenges for the work of ECO in the cultural institutions. These new forms of engagement facilitate broader access to cultural resources for diverse audiences and new types of learning experiences. They provide scope for innovation and dissemination of learning opportunities and new ways of meeting the needs of diverse learners. The challenges lie in understanding the new potentials, devising digital strategies for learning, and designing ways of harnessing the potential for the purposes of effective, innovative ECO work.

¹⁰ <http://www.heritagecouncil.ie/museums-archive/initiatives/museums-standards-programme-for-ireland/standards/education-policy/#sthash.badzMNAw.dpuf>

¹¹ National Economic and Social Forum "The Arts, Cultural Inclusion and Social Cohesion: National Economic and Social Forum Report 35" (NESC, Dublin, 2007).

¹² National Economic and Social Forum "The Arts, Cultural Inclusion and Social Cohesion: National Economic and Social Forum Report 35" (NESC, Dublin, 2007).

Not only are these new developments changing the experience of accessing the cultural institutions, they also have implications for the range of skills needed by ECO professionals. Members of the CNCI have developed a range of options for digital learning and access for their audiences¹³ and are active in international partnerships which are researching and developing further innovations in this field.¹⁴

Cultural Diversity

Cultural institutions are recognised as environments which can facilitate intercultural dialogue; their publics are multi-cultural and the resources, artefacts and artforms they house provide a unique opportunity for engagement with and learning about diverse cultural and artistic traditions.

The increasing cultural diversity of Irish society has created new audiences, with consequent opportunities and challenges for the ECO work of the cultural institutions. *“Our cultural institutions have a unique role to play in mediating these changes as caretakers of national collections and shapers of the national discourse on identity”* (CNCI, 2010).¹⁵

As a contribution to this discourse, the CNCI ECO group organised a seminar in 2010 entitled *Whose Culture is it? Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity in Ireland’s Cultural Spaces* to *“investigate the extent to which our cultural institutions and spaces have taken on these*

¹³ CNCI institutions have developed digital collections databases, web-based learning resources, blogs, online exhibitions, online catalogues and manuscripts. See the institutions’ websites:

www.abbeytheatre.ie

www.artscouncil.ie

www.cbl.ie

www.crawfordartgallery.ie

www.heritagecouncil.ie

www.imma.ie

www.nationalarchives.ie

www.nationalgallery.ie

www.nch.ie

www.nli.ie

www.museum.ie

¹⁴ For example, DECIPHER is a three-year, €4.3 million project funded by the European Commission. The project's objective is to change the way people access digital heritage by working with museum professionals and visitors “to present digital heritage objects as part of a coherent narrative that is directly related to a user’s interests”.

DECIPHER *Storyscope* aims to facilitate museum visitors to explore and shape their own stories about the cultural objects they encounter. This has been introduced at the National Gallery of Ireland and the Irish Museum of Modern Art as part of the field trials for the project.

DECIPHER project partners include cultural institutions, academic research centres and technological development companies.

¹⁵ Conference publicity material for *Whose Culture is it? Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity in Ireland’s Cultural Spaces*.

challenges in Ireland and the U.K., and explore opportunities to shape a more inclusive dialogue that will reinvigorate our understanding of culture” (CNCI, ibid).¹⁶

CNCI members are active in policy development¹⁷, writing, research, organising opportunities for exchange of experiences and ideas, and are partners in European networks¹⁸ exploring intercultural learning and dialogue in cultural institutions.

¹⁶ See also Finlay, S. (ed.). *Whose Culture is it? Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity in Ireland’s Cultural Spaces* (CNCI, Dublin, 2011). Report on a seminar organised by the CNCI at the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.

¹⁷ See The Arts Council’s *Cultural Diversity and the Arts: Policy and Strategy* (2010). http://www.artscouncil.ie/Publications/Microsoft_Word-Final_CD_Policy_and_Strategy_Aug2010_OM.pdf

¹⁸ At an EU level, projects such as *Museums as Places for Intercultural Dialogue* (2007-9) aimed to develop the potential and practice of museums as places of intercultural dialogue, and a more active engagement by the multi-cultural publics they serve. See

<http://www.lemproject.eu/library/websites/museums-as-places-for-intercultural-dialogue>

A Policy Framework for Education, Community, Outreach (ECO)

September 2003

Preface

This document was commissioned by the CNCI Working Group on Education, Community, Outreach (ECO)¹⁹ and researched and written by external consultants.²⁰ The document represents the consensus view of the Working Group which met monthly with the consultants in the period May – September 2003, to discuss detailed terms of reference, the nature and purpose of the document, and its content and structure and to consider interim drafts of the document.

The ECO Working Group now presents to the Council of National Cultural Institutions this Policy Framework for ECO in order to:

- facilitate greater understanding of the discipline of ECO within CNCI and within its individual institutions, at board and executive level;
- provide a basis for discussion with the Minister for Arts, Sports and Tourism and the officials of that Department on this important aspect of the work of the National Cultural Institutions with a view to improving the policy and funding environment for such work;
- provide a basis for discussion with other government departments, especially those of Environment, Heritage and Local Government; Education and Science; Health and Children; Social and Family Affairs; with a view to enhancing their understanding of ECO work and its distinctive contribution to the delivery of some of their key objectives;
- establish a framework for any future actions undertaken by the CNCI Working Group on ECO. Such actions could be ‘joint’ (involving two or more members) or ‘collective’ (involving all members). All such actions might include cooperation with other appropriate bodies throughout the island of Ireland and / or internationally.

¹⁹ The ECO Working Group consists of twelve people. They are those responsible for Education / Education and Community / Education and Outreach within the ten National Cultural Institutions. Their titles, remits, and professional grades differ from institution to institution. In some cases they work on their own (sometimes with responsibilities additional to ECO); in others they lead an ECO team. The disparity between the number of Working Group members and the number of institutions in CNCI is accounted for by the fact that the National Museum has three equivalent officers in each of its constituent museums in Kildare Street, Collins Barracks and Castlebar, Co. Mayo (there is no such officer for the Natural History Museum in Merrion Street).

²⁰ Mr. Martin Drury and Ms. Susan Coughlan.

1. Background and Definitions

1.1 CNCI

CNCI is an acronym for the Council of National Cultural Institutions. Created in 1998, formally established under the Heritage Fund Act (2001), and reporting directly to the Minister for Arts, Sports and Tourism, the Council's membership consists of the Directors / Chief Executives of the following institutions:

- The Arts Council
- Chester Beatty Library
- The Heritage Council²¹
- Irish Museum of Modern Art
- National Archives
- National Concert Hall
- National Gallery of Ireland
- National Library of Ireland
- National Museum of Ireland
- National Theatre Society Ltd.

CNCI exists to facilitate professional exchange and partnerships between the directors and the member institutions to their mutual benefit and to the benefit of cultural life in Ireland generally. Its current work programme includes exploration of 'Education, Community, Outreach' (ECO) as an area of common interest and benefit to all ten institutions within CNCI.

CNCI is uniquely well-placed to speak authoritatively about cultural life in Ireland, and particularly about those aspects of cultural life supported by the State and funded through the public purse. Thus, the development of an agreed CNCI Policy Framework in the area of ECO, is a matter of importance.

Update to 1. 1

The Crawford Art Gallery became a member of the CNCI in 2006 and its Education Officer is a member of the ECO Working Group.

1.2 Culture

The term *culture*, as defined by the concerns and practices of the ten CNCI institutions, is wide in scope, embracing a broad range of art forms, heritage resources, and cultural disciplines, from pre-history to contemporary times, and including both the natural and built environment. This rich cultural landscape is tended in Ireland by the ten CNCI institutions *inter alia*, with each

²¹ Exceptionally, the Heritage Council's 'parent' department of government is that of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

member having expertise in and responsibility for particular aspects of that landscape, and some members sharing several areas of common interest. Common to all members is a commitment to the care and development of arts, culture and heritage and to facilitating rich and varied relations between (Irish) people and culture. The foregoing broad definition underpins the use of the terms *culture* and *cultural institution* in the present document.

1.3 ECO

ECO (an acronym for Education, Community, Outreach) is a professional discipline within the wider work of cultural institutions worldwide, and especially of those in receipt of public funds. ECO is dedicated to the engagement of cultural institutions with the public they serve, to the mutual enrichment of both. That engagement may be short or long term in nature and may take place within the cultural institution's own environment or, as the term 'outreach' implies, it may occur in places and contexts well beyond the more predictable 'reach' of the institution.

ECO policy and provision are informed by the nature and interests of the publics served, as well as by the nature and disciplines of the cultural institution. ECO work is wide-ranging because there are many publics and many kinds of engagement. That range increases when consideration is given to ECO within the wide variety of cultural practices represented by the ten CNCI member institutions.

All CNCI members share a commitment to public service. What is distinct about each CNCI institution is its own mission and, in respect of ECO work, its own philosophy and emphases. Some of these traditions and commitments are long-standing and some more recent, but in all cases they inform the institution's identity and they merit respect. For these reasons this Policy Framework document chooses not to offer a concise, abstract definition of ECO work, but rather to characterise it by setting out the key principles that inform it (see Section 3).

Update to 1.3

The title 'ECO' was chosen in 2003 as relevant to and descriptive of this provision by the cultural institutions; however, it is no longer fully reflective of current practice. Cultural institutions across the sector, nationally and internationally, have adopted a variety of titles to denote the work involved in facilitating learning; in general, these titles use the terms 'learning', 'access', 'community' and 'engagement' in various combinations.

In relation to the CNCI, the use of 'learning' rather than 'education' in a new title would be more reflective of theoretical, policy and practice developments in the field, including developments within the education sector itself.²² The key principles identified in 2003 as informing the work

²² For example, the emphasis at EU and member state level on developing 'learning to learn' competences within formal, non-formal and informal education sectors (the 'Lisbon Key Competences for Lifelong Learning'). (*Europa Summaries of EU Legislation* [European Commission, Brussels, 2012]).

See europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/lifelong_learning/c11090_en.htm

remain accurate and pertinent, but aspects of and emphases within the practice have developed.

‘Learning and Community Engagement’ may be an appropriate, broadly encompassing term for consideration by the cultural institutions to replace ‘Education, Community and Outreach’.

‘Outreach’ now includes physical, virtual, intellectual and social access.

1.4 Nature and Purpose of ECO Policy Framework

This document builds upon a previous review commissioned by CNCI which surveyed ECO work at the ten CNCI institutions and more generally, in Ireland and abroad.²³ CNCI commissioned this current study (under the auspices of its Working Group) to assist in the establishment of a Policy Framework for CNCI in this area.

The Policy Framework that follows is first set in context (Section 2) and then set out as Governing Principles (Section 3) and Key Guidelines (Section 4). The intention is to offer co-ordinates by which to map CNCI policy in the field of ECO by:

- developing a shared set of references for ECO work
- assisting in the articulation of a common CNCI position on ECO
- facilitating commitment to any future joint actions in this domain by CNCI members or collective actions by CNCI as a body

While the Policy Framework should help inform ECO policy and provision in the ten CNCI institutions, it is not intended to prescribe the policy and practice of individual institutions whose autonomy is acknowledged and respected.²⁴ Conversely, the CNCI Policy Framework should not be circumscribed by the policy of an individual member institution.

Update to 1.4

The Crawford Art Gallery is now a member of the CNCI, resulting in a total of eleven institutions.

²³ Review of *Education, Community Education and Outreach at Ten Cultural Heritage Institutions* by Farrell Grant Sparks (May 2001).

²⁴ The brief for the current study stated that ‘*The policy needs to take cognisance of the diversity of functions across the institutions*’. Accordingly, this Policy Framework does indeed acknowledge the varied natures and missions of the ten CNCI member institutions. Each institution will construct its own policies and actions in accordance with its given or self-determined mandate. The particular policy-making functions of the Arts Council and of the Heritage Council are further acknowledged.

2. Policy Context

A CNCI Policy Framework for ECO exists within a number of overlapping contexts.

2.1

The most immediate context is CNCI's own *raison d'être*: the principle of shared thinking and pooled resources around issues of common concern, as set out in CNCI's own founding *Terms of Reference* (1998). One such area identified by the CNCI Directors is that of Education, Community, Outreach (ECO).

2.2

A governing context for ECO policy is the matrix of legislation, statutory powers, mission statements and strategic plans within which each of the ten CNCI member institutions operates. This matrix impinges directly through statute and policy in the fields of arts, culture and heritage. It impinges indirectly through statute and policy in other areas of public life of relevance to ECO, most obviously in education.

The policy environment is also determined significantly by two of CNCI's own members: the Arts Council and the Heritage Council. These two bodies have specific responsibility for policy, planning and provision in, respectively, the contemporary arts and in the field of heritage, widely defined.²⁵

2.3

ECO work has its own context of existing tradition and practice. ECO has been a characteristic – in some cases a key feature – of the policies, provision and programmes of all CNCI members. Education, understood broadly, underpins all of their mandates, even if the more explicit provision of an ECO service is a relatively recent phenomenon, reflecting worldwide trends in the policies and public programmes of most cultural providers. Some Irish practice in this domain has been excellent, sometimes innovative and, in a small number of cases, there has been formal evaluation that confirms significant social gains. However, despite progress - in the past decade especially - the truth is that Irish provision in this field is uneven. All exceptions duly acknowledged, ECO in Ireland still tends to be poorly understood outside of its own sector, under-resourced, over-reliant on key individuals, dominated by a culture of 'activity'²⁶ and,

²⁵ The Arts Act (2003) defines the arts 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 and architecture, and includes any medium when used for those purposes."

The Heritage Act (1995) defines national heritage as "Monuments; Archaeological Objects; Heritage Objects; Architectural Heritage; Flora; Fauna; Wildlife Habitats; Landscapes; Seascapes; Wrecks; Geology; Heritage Gardens and Parks; Inland Waterways."

²⁶ Activity of all sorts, partly because it is the most visible manifestation of ECO work, is sometimes confused with being its objective. In particular where the ECO staff complement is small, almost all resources can end by being devoted to programmes of activity, with little cumulative or long-term gain for those participating or for the

above all, lacking the kind of underpinning mandate that CNCI could help to provide through this document and otherwise.

Update to 2.3

In the decade since the original Framework document a ‘maturation in provision’ has been taking place across the entire sector, with programmes and provision of high quality, designed, delivered and evaluated by teams of skilled and experienced professionals. The practice continues to evolve - research, professional development, new partnerships and collaborations have enriched the work and the experiences of participants. Programmes have been designed to reflect a wider demographic and the changing nature of Irish society.

Some problems persist in terms of more fully developing the sector and practice. In an era of decreased funding, the sector remains under-resourced and staff numbers have been reduced. There is also an ongoing desire to enhance the understanding within the cultural institutions of the nature, purpose and practice of learning and community engagement.

2.4

A critical component of any policy framework is a well-argued rationale. In this regard, ECO can draw strength from much contemporary learning, and from current cultural theory and policy. These provide strong evidence of new and significant emphasis on *public service* arts policy, the *social function* of cultural institutions and the role of the public (a diversity of publics) in *determining meaning* in works of art and in cultural experience generally.²⁷ Certainly, while *access* to arts, culture and heritage has remained for several decades an unimpeachable goal of public policy, that commitment was more slowly followed by an understanding that meaningful ‘access’ is not a matter of ‘making available’ cultural experiences to a supposedly uninitiated public. A deeper reading of the issue of public access lays significant responsibilities for creating contexts of genuine public engagement at the doors of cultural institutions.²⁸

institution. Managing the demand for ‘activities’ that comes from the public and from senior management is often critical to a maturation in provision from demand-led activity to strategic actions.

²⁷ At the 1991 CECA (International Committee of Museum Educators) Conference in Jerusalem (1991), Professor George Hein delivered a paper on Constructivist Learning Theory, explaining that: “*Constructing meaning is learning; there is no other kind. The dramatic consequences of this view are two-fold: (i) we have to focus on the learner in thinking about learning (not on the subject / lesson to be taught) and (ii) there is no knowledge independent of the meaning attributed to experience (constructed) by the learner, or community of learners.*” See www.exploratorium.edu/IFI/resources/constructivistlearning

²⁸ The addition of the word ‘opportunity’ to the title of the first ever White Paper on the arts “Access and Opportunity” (1987) was emblematic of the sense of inadequacy surrounding the simple term ‘access’. This was well captured a few years later in the seminal ACE Report “Art and the Ordinary” (1989) which stated that there was value in “*re-constituting the answer of access into a series of questions such as ‘access to what?’, ‘access for whom?’, ‘access granted by whom?’ ...*”

Update to 2.4

As part of the *European Council Agenda for Culture Work Plan (2011-4)*, the EU has acknowledged and reported on the continuing complexity of ‘access’ to cultural participation and the multiple agendas which are often involved. The CNCI/ECO Policy Framework is identified as a case study in relation to good practice and the development of policy and strategy in this area.²⁹

2.5

Recent developments in the fields of both psychology and sociology provide another supportive context. There has been significant growth in our understanding of the nature of learning, the diversity of human intelligence, and of how cultural participation is significantly *socially determined*.³⁰ In particular the theory of *multiple intelligence*³¹ has affected the nature of both formal school curricula (especially at primary level) and learning in non-formal settings within a lifelong context.³² ‘Multiple Intelligences’ has important implications for cultural policy and provision as well as for education, and has been a cornerstone of the rationale behind some of the recent collaborations between the Department of Education and Science and cultural institutions and organisations, especially in contexts of social disadvantage.

Update to 2.5

The *Theory of Multiple Intelligences* continues to provide a bedrock of theory and practice in relation to learning and the individual learner.³³ In addition, the work of the cultural institutions in facilitating varied forms of engagement with cultural resources is always mindful of the continually evolving understandings of learning.

²⁹ “A Report on Policies and Good Practices in the Public Arts and in Cultural Institutions to Promote Better Access to and Wider Participation in Culture: Open Method of Coordination Working Group of Member States’ Experts” (European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, 2012)

http://issuu.com/iservice-europa/docs/eac_omc_report_access_to_culture?mode=window&viewMode=doublePage

³⁰ The alignment of the twin notions of cultural poverty and educational disadvantage has explicit official recognition for at least a decade. See, for example, the 1995 Government White Paper on Education *Charting Our Education Future*.

³¹ Howard Gardner's *Theory of Multiple Intelligences* challenges the traditional view of intelligence as a unitary capacity that can be adequately measured by IQ tests. Instead, this theory defines intelligence as an ability to solve problems or create products that are valued in at least one culture. See www.pz.harvard.edu/sumit

³² “Adults too (and perhaps more so) can be seen to use multiple intelligences.” – Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, “Why do we have Museums and what is their Educational Role?” in *The Role of Education in Museums, Arts and Heritage Venues: Proceedings of the Symposium held on 6 November 1998 at the National Gallery of Ireland* (National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, 1999).

³³ In acknowledgement of Howard Gardner's *Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, a number of ECO members have adopted the use of Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs) in the design and delivery of projects and programmes for learners. GLOs were developed by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council in the UK. See <http://www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk/toolstemplates/genericlearning/>

ECO work is designed around a model of learning (including both formal and informal learning) which understands learning as participation, as active engagement rather than a relatively passive experience of 'expert' transmission to audience. Each learner brings to all the varied forms of engagement with the cultural resources an active imagination and an internal network of individual experiences, ideas, perceptions, connections, and significance. ECO work therefore is learner centred; it enables participants to question, reflect and internalise their learning and to use a variety of learning modes in engaging with the cultural resources.

Research findings relating to processes, design and impacts of learning experiences provide insights to inform programme planning and design.³⁴

2.6

The public context within which cultural institutions, particularly *national* ones, operate has altered significantly in recent decades, reflecting changes in wider civil society to do with education, social equality, and cultural diversity. The notion of 'lifelong learning'³⁵ closely allied to that of 'the learning society'³⁶ forms one such frame of reference.³⁷ Another such frame, related to different age cohorts within the public, takes account of initiatives that range from the National Children's Strategy to the movement represented by the organisation 'Age and Opportunity'. A third and important frame is that which explores the complex matrix of culture and poverty.³⁸ Multi-culturalism, a phrase with little resonance in Ireland a decade ago, provides a fourth example of perhaps the most recent frame of reference for the work of National Cultural Institutions, inclusive of their ECO provision.

³⁴ See for example:

- *Learning in the Gallery: Context, Process, Outcomes*. Pringle, E. (Engage Publications, London, 2006). <http://www.engage.org/seebook.aspx?id=1282>
- *Art for Art's Sake?: The Impact of Arts Education*. Winner, E., Goldstein, T. and Vincent-Lancrin, S. (Educational Research and Innovation, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2013). <http://www.oecd.org/edu/ceri/arts.htm>
- *Opening the Cases: Researching Visual Arts Education in Museums and Galleries*. Xanthoudaki, M., Tickle, L., and Sekules, V. (eds). (Kluwer Academic Publishers, London, 2003).

³⁵ It is worth noting that in February 2002, the Ministers in charge of education and training in EU countries and at the European Commission set out a work programme to be achieved by 2010, which declared itself as "*having particular regard to the principle of lifelong learning.*"

³⁶ '*By a learning society is meant the adoption and promotion of a holistic approach to education and training for change and for learning how to live with such change in all its many forms. A learning society will see education and training increasingly becoming vehicles for self-awareness, belonging, advancement and self-fulfilment, and increasingly providing a key to controlling one's future and one's personal development*' – *Adult Education and the Museum: Final Report on the Socrates Project TM-AE-1-1995-DE-1* (IIZ / DVV, Bonn, 1999) - p.15.

³⁷ The Conference Declaration of CONFITEA – The 5th UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education (Hamburg, 1997) – had a special chapter on cultural education for adults and made a commitment to recognising cultural institutions as resources for adult education and to supporting cultural heritage as a source of lifelong learning.

³⁸ A cornerstone document in this regard is the 1997 Combat Poverty / Arts Council report *Poverty: Access and Participation in the Arts* researched and written by Jeanne Moore.

2.7

An enduring context for ECO policy is that, though ECO is wider than 'education' and though education is wider than 'school', there is a widespread and absolute conviction that publicly-funded cultural resources have a particular responsibility in respect of children and young people (in school, community, and family settings). The developmental nature of childhood is at the heart of that responsibility, while the growth of children's rights as a political issue further underlines it. The National Children's Strategy (2000) gives official expression to those rights in Ireland and makes more explicit the expectation that all national institutions must take more account of the rights of children and young people.³⁹ It is noteworthy, in this context, that in two recent lengthy interviews the current Minister for Arts, Sports and Tourism has underlined his determination to establish a sub-committee of the Arts Council to address the matter of arts education and arts-in-education.⁴⁰

Update to 2.7

Developments within the Irish education sector, the increasing recognition of the importance of the arts in education, new and consolidated partnerships have been significant in providing newly energised policy contexts for the learning provision of the cultural institutions. These new contexts are outlined in some detail in the 'Changing Contexts' section of this document.

2.8

Increased capital and current spending by central government in the cultural sector has brought an expectation of greater alignment with the broad national social agenda, most especially that of *social inclusion*. Allied to that are expectations that cultural institutions (*national* ones especially), though almost all based in the capital city, will share their resources with like-minded partners throughout Ireland and develop an organisational culture and a programme practice where outreach is a norm.

Update to 2.8

In contrast to the situation of increased spending described in the original framework document, for several years the cultural institutions have been under increasing pressure in a time of significantly reduced government funding. They are expected and strive to deliver on their responsibilities in terms of national remit with decreased resources. In this regard, the role and 'culture' of partnerships is ever-increasing, although partnerships with other arts and culture organisations are also impacted on by the lack of adequate resources across the entire sector. For many ECO members fundraising is an additional responsibility they carry in order to deliver projects within their institutions.

³⁹ The National Children's Strategy *Our Children – Their Lives* (2000) articulates six basic needs of all children. The fourth: 'Children will have access to play, sport, recreation and cultural activities to enrich their experience of childhood' is expanded upon on pp 57-58 of the Strategy.

⁴⁰ Firstly in an interview with Irish Times Arts Editor Deirdre Falvey (15 July 2003) and secondly in an interview with Theo Dorgan on RTE Radio One's 'Rattlebag' programme (broadcast 24 July 2003).

3. Key Governing Principles of ECO in the National Cultural Institutions

3.1

The National Cultural Institutions are repositories and guardians of much of the accumulated cultural wealth of Ireland (and beyond). They have stewardship of resources (natural and man-made) that are both outcomes and sources of important human ideas, values, knowledge and experience. Those resources are held by the National Cultural Institutions on behalf of, and to the benefit of, Irish people and of civilization generally.

3.2

Education, broadly defined, is central to the mission of all National Cultural Institutions, a fact enshrined in legislation and / or individual mission statements as well as being evidenced by custom and practice. This broad educational commitment in the service of 'the general public' is complemented by a more recent, discrete and specialised service called Education, Community, Outreach. ECO conceives of the 'general public' as consisting of a range of discrete 'publics'. In a parallel fashion, ECO conceives of the cultural institution as both *learning site* and *social space*. Thus, ECO has a primary commitment to facilitate public participation and engagement with the resources of the institution.

3.3

The work of most of the national cultural institutions⁴¹ may be characterised as triangular, i.e. constructed around the inter-relationship of:

- (i) the cultural resource (art form / heritage resource / cultural object or event) inclusive of its makers
- (ii) the service action (create / collect / conserve / document / show)
- (iii) the public (general public - residents and tourists / children and young people / older people / communities defined by place, interest, identity or need / researchers and academics)

Conventionally, primacy is given to the institution's core discipline, very often expressed as its *collection* or *repertoire*. ECO, while operating within the same triangle, tends to give primacy to the public's relationship with the institution and its resources. Additionally, because it conceives of many publics, ECO determines its service actions in response to the diversity of publics and their requirements.

Update to 3.3

Number (ii) above should now include 'research': the service action (create / collect / conserve / research/document / show)

⁴¹ The policy-making role of both the Arts Council and the Heritage Council are again duly acknowledged.

3.4

Because ECO seeks to attune the cultural institution to the needs of the public(s), it is both a specialist service within each cultural institution and also an institution-wide value. Whereas sometimes the needs of the public might be represented as being in conflict with the needs of the collection or core discipline, it is a governing principle of ECO to seek to reconcile those needs, and to influence the institution's programming to address those needs as complementary.

3.5

ECO practice is premised on the notion that the meaning of the work resides not solely in the cultural resource itself, but rather emerges fully in the interaction between that resource and the person engaging with it. Accordingly, meaning - while never open-ended - is significantly determined by the public's engagement. And because there are many publics, there are many meanings. A key role of the cultural institution is to facilitate meaningful engagement between the work(s) and the public(s); in brief to facilitate *learning*.⁴²

3.6

Learning ranges from playful exploration to academic scholarship. At times the learning context of the cultural institution will be deliberate and its means visible; at other times both will be inconspicuous.

3.7

Learning is a life-long experience from early childhood to old age.

Update to 3.7

In recognition of developments in understandings of life stages and related terminologies, this should now read 'Learning is a life-long experience from early years to older age'.

3.8

'Learning Needs' and 'Learning Styles' are diverse and determined by a range of factors. Some factors have to do with the nature of the public(s) engaging with the work (e.g. age; educational attainment; cultural background; personal preference). Other factors have to do with the core discipline (e.g. wildlife; industrial architecture; contemporary music; state papers). The learning

⁴² As the following clauses 3.6 – 3.9 make clear, the word 'learning' is used advisedly. The CNCI Working Group on ECO felt a reluctance to employ 'education' because it is a word with so many connotations of formal schooling. Yet it is important to suggest that, even in the most casual of encounters in a cultural institution, learning occurs. As both a noun and a verb 'learning' captures the process of engagement and allows also that the engagement (and the learning) is 'two-way'. Finally, 'learning' as understood above, is a process and a value that informs all three strands of ECO: Education, Community, Outreach as well as the totality of the institution's work. See also: "LEARNING is both a verb and a noun, a process and a product. The reason for using 'learning' instead of 'education' is to emphasize action" – J. H. Falk and L. D. Dierking (eds.) in *Museums, Places of Public Institutions for Personal Learning: Establishing A Research Agenda* (American Association of Museums, 1995).

models may range from formal presentations where the work is a kind of *text* mediated by experts, to more interactive encounters where the work is a *pretext* for an open-ended engagement between the institution and the public group.

3.9

ECO, especially when it entails committed, developmental relationships with particular publics, may include that work becoming integral to the institution. This is not a 'badge of honour' principle; rather it is an acknowledgment that the premise of initial engagement can evolve so that the public(s) and the institution intersect in such a fashion as to push the initial proposition to its logical and integral conclusion: that the institution engages with and is enriched by the public rather than the reverse being always or exclusively the case.

3.10

Learning and ECO work generally can happen on-site and off-site, through direct encounters with primary sources or through indirect engagement with secondary resources, inclusive of the virtual presence of the institution on the internet.

4. Key Guidelines for ECO within National Cultural Institutions

These Guidelines presume a broad acceptance of the principles set out in Section 3. They may be seen as offering a kind of ‘translation’ of those defining principles of ECO into more specific management actions within the national cultural institutions. Always understood are the distinctive nature, purpose and tradition of each institution. There is not – nor could there be – any prescriptive template. Nonetheless, without being exhaustive, the Guidelines seek to define the kind of commitments and actions that would represent a common ECO Policy Framework for CNCI.

4.1

As with all aspects of the work of the National Cultural Institutions, it is appropriate that their ECO provision and practice be distinctive, informed by the living traditions of the institution and the needs and wishes of its public(s). As *national* cultural institutions, the CNCI members are uniquely placed to represent what is distinctive about Irish practice and to engage with, and be informed by, international practice. Thus, it is desirable that the nature and quality of their ECO work represents a benchmark of excellence nationally and is at least comparable with the best of such work in equivalent institutions abroad.

4.2

ECO provision should be policy-led and strategically driven. In the conventional policy sequence from *Mission Statement* to *Aims* to *Objectives* to *Action Plans* to *Implementation* to *Evaluation*, there should be a symbiotic relationship between the ECO Policy and the wider policy and planning of the institution. That ‘macro-policy’ should reflect a conception of ECO as a valued and distinctive core discipline with its own criteria, which contributes to both internal and external measures of the institution’s success in discharging its core mission.⁴³ There should be clear and consistent endorsement of the primacy of ECO from the institution’s board and senior management. ECO should find significant expression in the institution’s annual reports, key policy documents and its overall strategic plans, both macro and micro, inclusive of areas like HR, capital development and fundraising.

4.3

The ECO policy and practice of the institution needs to clarify the *primary value*, the *distinctive role* and the *integrated function* of the ECO service by:

- (a) differentiating between ECO practice and practice in other domains such as Visitor Services; Marketing and Public Relations; Audience Development;

⁴³ Just as ECO seeks a place at the programming table on the basis that it sees ECO as a core discipline rather than a satellite service, it is important that it invites other services and disciplines to its table. If no particular department should have a monopoly on defining the core ‘work’ of the institution, it is also the case that ECO should not have a monopoly on the education / community service agenda.

- (b) establishing areas of common interest and responsibility as between ECO and other domains, including those mentioned at (a) above, but also other programming departments;
- (c) differentiating within ECO policy and practice between the different focuses of 'education', 'community' and 'outreach' and identifying priorities for attention in any agreed planning period;
- (d) integrating ECO values and opportunities within the institution's annual programme of work so that ECO enriches and is enriched by that programme and, as appropriate, is given a primary focus within that annual programme;
- (e) ensuring the senior status of the ECO service within the organisational structures of the institution, inclusive of appropriate professional grades for the ECO staff within the executive structure.

4.4

ECO often needs to be protected from inappropriate expectations, within and without the institution. While public activities may be the most visible manifestations of ECO work, excessive attention to such activity 'outputs' may distract from more significant 'outcomes'. Ideally, ECO provision should operate on a continuum from once-off activity through to a few medium/long-term developmental projects. The nature and duration of ECO projects and programmes should be determined ultimately by the specialist staff's expert judgment. Appropriate provision will emerge from measuring the many competing demands upon ECO against the capacity of the institution's ECO service (most critically its staff), and in the context of priorities identified in a strategic plan (see 4.2. above).

4.5

ECO provision should be based upon a policy that balances the three points in the triangle described at 3.3 above i.e. (i) the cultural resource; (ii) the service action; and (iii) the public. ECO tends to enter that triangle at the third apex, marked 'publics'.

4.6

ECO operates on the basis that there are many publics. It follows that there is need for strategically-driven choices to be made, if a coherent and effective programme (proportionate to the institution's available resources) is to be implemented. The desire to offer a breadth of service needs to be balanced against the need to focus in some depth on addressing particular needs as priorities. It is likely therefore that in the lifetime of any one strategic plan, only a small number of 'target publics' can be identified if an ECO service of quality and detail is to be delivered.

Researching and knowing its publics is a cornerstone of ECO policy. In demographic terms this is relatively easy to establish using categories of age; gender; location; ethnicity; and further sub-categories based upon socio-economic measures; educational attainment; professional /

working classification; physical / mental (dis)ability etc. Precise, respectful work must start from a detailed profile of the 'target' group and grow, through consultation and shared experience, into a detailed understanding of their attributes and needs.

A second way of considering actual or potential publics for ECO programmes is through generic classification as sectors within the cultural and/or educational 'market'. Thus formal education, as a large sector, offers obvious target groups like primary school teachers and second-level students with further sub-classification into 'Infant Teachers'; 'Leaving Cert Students'; 'Transition Year Students' etc. Such classification applies also to ECO's work in 'Community' where a criterion like distance, interpreted in one fashion offers as a priority the local neighbourhood and, from another perspective, offers remoteness as a policy imperative, suggesting engagement with far-flung towns, perhaps through a partnership with the Library Service or with Local Authority Arts Officer(s) or Heritage Officer(s).

Indeed partnership (see 4.9 below for more detailed treatment) offers another means of defining actual or potential publics, as is evident when partnership with sectoral organisations like Age and Opportunity, the Irish Pre-school Playgroups' Association or the National Youth Council of Ireland, is considered.

A third useful way of thinking about the 'many publics', complementary to orthodox demographics or to sectoral classification, is to characterise them by their relationship with the institution. Here are six such overlapping categories of public:

- existing self-directed visitors / users (individuals or groups) of the cultural institution, including those accessing services *via* the internet ('*attenders*')
- potential visitors who, for no obvious reason, seldom if ever attend ('*intenders*')
- those who don't attend, experiencing an invisible threshold, related to one or more factors like distance, disability, social circumstance ('*thresholders*')
- those who attend as members of a group and whose private reluctance or uncertainty is usefully masked by the group dynamic ('*coat-tailers*')
- those whose initial reluctance melts and for whom the institution becomes an important part of their lives ('*be-frienders*')
- those who, by virtue of their personal or professional circumstance, 'own', 'control access to', or 'have specialist expertise in' key elements of Ireland's cultural heritage ('*owners*')

Update to 4.6

A fourth critical way is 'virtual publics', which expands the concept of audience and participant into online visitors and contributors.

4.7

Provision for discrete publics is best developed in consultation with those publics. Just as it is fair that each national cultural institution presumes to possess appropriate knowledge and experience in terms of its core discipline(s), it must acknowledge the complementary knowledge and experience of the publics with which it engages and of those who work on their behalf. Consultation might range from surveys of and focus group meetings with *attenders*, so as to further enrich their experience of visiting the institution, to more extensive and intensive means of establishing a basis for joint projects between the institution and, for example, neighbourhood community groups or a cohort of pre-school teachers. Especially when deeper or more long-term programmes of work are being contemplated, it is vital that consultation occurs between all potential stakeholders in order to clarify expectations and establish an agreed *modus operandi* for the programme or project being planned.

4.8

Consultation with public(s) – if it is not to lead to disappointed expectations and consequent frustration – must take account of the capacity of the institution as regards the kinds of service actions it can deliver (the second apex in the triangle).

A range of possible service actions is listed below. The list does not pretend to be exhaustive, but to capture generically the kinds of actions that might fall under ECO. The relevance and appropriateness of any action will depend upon the nature of the cultural institution and of its own ECO ethos and policy, always assuming that the policy is informed by capacity. The order of the list that follows is not intended to indicate any priority. The exact ‘pitch’ of these actions - including their nature, purpose, level and frequency - will be determined, in particular, by reference to the intended public. The policy emphasis on Outreach will have a significant bearing upon the location of these actions.

- (1) General Mediation (print / audio / ‘live’);
- (2) Particular support for non-English speakers / readers or for those with a sense impairment / disability;
- (3) Guided Tours (on- and off-site), Field Trips, Site Visits and Open Days;
- (4) Research / Talks / Lectures / Presentations / Seminars / Study Days / Debates / Q+As / Conferences;
- (5) Complementary Events in institution’s core discipline or allied disciplines (on- and off-site);
- (6) Publications (print / audio / video) including commissioned research / commentary / documentation;
- (7) Worksheets / Activity Books / Resource Packs;
- (8) Special Learning or Support Resources e.g. archive facsimiles; handling collections;
- (9) Hands-on / Interactive Sessions / Performance-based explorations and (re)enactments;
- (10) Classes, Workshops, [Summer] Schools; Clubs;
- (11) Family Days and Family-oriented programming generally;
- (12) Residencies by Artists, Curators, Scholars;
- (13) Professional Exchanges, Internships and Work Experience Programmes;
- (14) Professional Development Courses;
- (15) Medium- to Long-term Action Research and/or Pilot Projects, designed for one or more of the institutions many publics;
- (16) ICT services providing virtual access and/or distance learning opportunities related to any of the previous 15 indicative actions.

This menu of actions, effectively balancing the expertise and the capacity of the institution against the needs of its many publics, becomes the *policy-in-action*. As regards the issue of *capacity*, the important matter of ECO staff expertise is treated at 4.11 below.

Critical to the choice of ECO service actions is the balance to be struck between responsibility to the particular features of the institution's current programme of work and responsibility to the wider cultural discipline of the institution. It may be that, in pursuit of a balanced programme, it is possible to offer a more immediate service, directly connected to the focus of the institution's current programme, while the more developmental programme may take actions that have primarily to do with the wider cultural discipline rather than its current manifestation within the institution. There is evidence of this being the practice already for some CNCI members, most especially in the domain of the performing arts where the commitment to the forms of music or drama sometimes supersedes that to the detail of the programme being presented at a particular period.

Update to 4.8

Number (6) above should now include 'film': '*Publications (print / audio / video/film) including commissioned research / commentary / documentation*'.

Number (13) above should now include 'graduate internships': '*Professional Exchanges, Internships and Work Experience Programme*'.

4.9

The development of an ethos of consultation in shaping ECO service actions is a primary signal of a wider commitment to the code of partnership. Both are expressions of the principle of reciprocity that underpins all good ECO work.

The culture of partnership needs to be three-pronged:

- (i) *intra-institutional* (as addressed at 4.3 (b) and (d) above);
- (ii) *inter-institutional* (i.e. with other cultural institutions, especially other CNCI members);
- (iii) *extra-institutional* (i.e. with institutions, agencies and organisations that are not, or not primarily, cultural).

This last is especially important because the discipline of ECO is so often about making connections between the cultural field and cognate fields like education, health, or community development. Such partnerships are most likely to occur in the context of developmental ECO work and to result in important mutual benefits. The benefits for the cultural institution include access to a range of understandings, methodologies and technical skills beyond its own competence. In their turn, and critically for some of the underpinning aims of ECO, the partners of CNCI will bring understanding about arts, culture and heritage into their field of work and, if

their experience has been positive, they will become advocates for the distinctive contribution cultural work can make to the broad social agenda.

It is appropriate under (ii) and (iii) above to underline the importance, for a range of reasons, of partnerships on a North/South basis, on a European basis, and on a wider international basis. Such partnerships can be made directly by institutions, through professional networks such as ICOM (International Council of Museums), or under the auspices of EU programmes designed to facilitate trans-national actions in the fields of culture and education.

Update to 4.9

The final paragraph above is updated as follows:

‘It is appropriate under (ii) and (iii) above to underline the importance, for a range of reasons, of partnerships on a North/South basis, on a European basis, and on a wider international basis. Such partnerships can be made directly by institutions, through professional national networks such as the Irish Museums Association (IMA) and international networks such as the International Council of Museums (ICOM), or under the auspices of EU programmes designed to facilitate trans-national actions in the fields of culture and education’.

4.10

Consideration of ‘the publics’ and ‘the service actions’ must occur in tandem with consideration of ‘the cultural resource’. It is self-evident that the detail of any institution’s ECO policy will be determined to a great degree by the core resource of the institution: the cultural assets it holds or hosts, expressed as its collection, its repertoire or, more generally, its programme of work, inclusive of that which is permanent and temporary, local and visiting.

From an ECO perspective, this core resource (even if object-centred) is always inclusive of the institution’s staff and the contracted or visiting artists / makers / interpreters / cultural workers across a range of disciplines. The core resource includes also the ECO service itself: the staff; the wider team of internal or contracted workers; the space, facilities, equipment and materials. Furthermore there may be other resources (human or physical) in the institution that could enrich the ECO programme.

Any policy must be grounded in detailed and current information about all of the above resources.

Update to 4.10

The final paragraph above should now include ‘creative practitioners’:

‘From an ECO perspective, this core resource (even if object-centred) is always inclusive of the institution’s staff and the contracted or visiting artists / makers / interpreters / cultural workers /creative practitioners across a range of disciplines...’

4.11

The matter of staff expertise is critical. ECO staff, by the nature of their work, operate in the interstices. This is compounded by that fact that, because ECO is not a recognised formal discipline within museology and cultural studies in Ireland, the danger exists that the professional expertise of ECO staff is undervalued. It is also the case that, outside the sector, there is poor understanding of the range of different personal attributes and professional skills required to engage with, for example, pre-school children in contrast to a local community group. Yet these broadly pedagogical skills are pre-requisites for quality work and must be accompanied also by a knowledge and love of the cultural discipline practised by the institution.⁴⁴ Those resources must be available 'on-site' or be capable of being contracted. Otherwise the institution might be better not to offer provision in that particular area of ECO work.

ECO programming worthy of the excellence that should distinguish national cultural institutions has, like any other discipline, HR implications. Indeed the nature of ECO work is such that it is often labour-intensive. Staffing policy and structures are required to ensure sufficient and appropriate expertise to plan and oversee ECO provision. ECO policy must be informed by - but not constrained by - existing capacity. Indeed priority should be given to building capacity within the ECO staff, within the staff of the institution generally, and within the cohort of associated, contracted ECO workers.

The weight of administration and fundraising often associated with ECO services can be significant. Senior management should have regard for the inefficiencies of engaging a specialist ECO team which, through lack of administrative and other executive support, spends a disproportionate amount of time *not* contributing their distinctive expertise to the benefit of the institution, by force of other duties.

It follows that the cultural institution needs to make provision for training and professional development programmes for its ECO staff, based upon sound training needs analysis. The curriculum for such training needs to include:

- (aspects of) the core discipline of the institution
- pedagogical skills (broadly interpreted) appropriate to ECO work
- care and welfare skills particular to ECO work with key publics
- personnel management appropriate to overseeing a team of core staff, contract staff, interns and volunteers
- project management

⁴⁴ Laurence Tardy (Assistant Director, Louvre School, Paris) describes well the two-tier knowledge and skill-base required: "Content" – *namely knowledge linked to the subject matter itself... "know-how" and "situation analysis", including the psychology and sociology of audiences.*

The ECO service, for its part, should see that provision is made for ECO-related training for other core staff members with an indirect contact with the target publics of the ECO programmes.

The range of publics (see 4.6) and of service actions (see 4.8) makes clear the impossibility of retaining on the permanent ECO staff the range of skills and attributes required to deliver even a modest ECO service in a national cultural institution. It is important that the ECO programme managers have the capacity to engage outside expertise appropriate to the needs and styles of the agreed ECO programme.

4.12

Explicit reference is made earlier (see 3.3 and 4.10) to those who are designated 'makers' of all disciplines and whose work includes the creation of the resources, objects, performances and events that are central to the life of cultural institutions. Their work is shown by the institutions and usually mediated in a variety of ways from the simple labelling of work through to extensive interactive programmes with particular publics.

Sometimes 'makers' and often 'interpreters' engage directly with the public(s). Those engagements range widely from introducing the work at a public talk to leading medium-term projects with particular communities, sometimes off-site. In some cases these engagements are organised by sections or departments other than ECO, but the majority (and nearly all the extensive, interactive projects) form part of the ECO programme of the cultural institutions.

In this work, most especially in extensive, long-term projects, the 'maker' or 'interpreter' has often several roles: teacher / facilitator / curator / producer / social activist / researcher / reporter. The dispositions and attributes required depend on the nature of the engagement, inclusive of its intended public. It is a critical responsibility of the ECO section to ensure that there is a good 'fit' between the 'maker' / 'interpreter' and the engagement (s)he is being contracted for and to facilitate any advance briefing and on-going monitoring required.

A remarkable and positive feature of Irish cultural practice for over twenty years has been the development of a tradition of artist / maker practice which involves engaging with public(s) in a variety of education, community, health, library, prison and other social settings. Much of this work has been initiated by the National Cultural Institutions (or, in the case of the Arts Council, under its auspices).

There is a need for action-based research on this aspect of ECO so as to survey existing practice; examine and analyse 'best practice' at home and abroad; establish terms of reference that are helpful for both the cultural sector and for the variety of stakeholders in the settings where such work occurs; determine guidelines of good practice; scope and analyse training needs (pre-service and in-career); set up training programmes, in partnership with appropriate agencies or colleges.

Update to 4.12

The members of CNCI ECO are active in and committed to developing research capacity, engaging in collaborative research at both national and international levels⁴⁵ and incorporating research findings into their ECO practice - all with a view to the ongoing provision of opportunities for public engagement with cultural resources which exemplify best practice and innovation and which provide accessible learning experiences of impact and resonance.

Professional development opportunities for ECO staff have expanded.⁴⁶ Programmes incorporate evaluation research as key elements of provision and a range of seminars and fora bring together practitioners, educators, curators, academics and audiences to present research, new perspectives and practices.

The nature of practice is continually evolving, with the cultural institutions taking part in/hosting explorations of new forms of collaboration between artists, learning institutions, communities and cultural institutions.

4.13

Worthwhile, effective and developmental ECO work is most likely to occur when it is located within a cycle of *research - planning – implementation – evaluation – dissemination*. This is a demanding process and there are few examples of it in Irish ECO work, partly because the governing values seem to support activity over action. Even where there has been quality, long-term and well-evaluated developmental work, the difficulty of translating the learning from pilot project stage to core provision often remains. This is particularly so when it comes to 'mainstreaming' within some of the host cultural institutions and within the domain of formal education. Though often receptive to ECO programmes, 'hosts' and 'partners' can also seem impervious to its implications for their wider system.⁴⁷

Within the narrower sphere of influence of the cultural institutions themselves, there is evidence of some very mixed practice as regards evaluation. The importance of evaluation *ab*

⁴⁵ An example of international collaboration in research and programme development is 'The Learning Museum Network Project', funded by the EU Lifelong Learning Programme 'Grundtvig' for the period 2010-2013, with the aim of creating a permanent network of museums and cultural heritage organisations, focussing in particular on developing their potential as sites for lifelong learning. The Project produced eight key reports in relation to learning in cultural institutions; these are listed in the Bibliography and are available at the LEM website: <http://www.lemproject.eu/>

⁴⁶ See for example, the Museums Standards Programme outlined in the Changing Contexts section of this document.

⁴⁷ Two recent evaluation studies bear out this point: "Red Lines between the Fingers" an unpublished evaluation of the 'IMMA / Breaking The Cycle Project' (1997-2001) and 'Interactions: The National Theatre's Education Initiative' (1998-2000). The latter asks at one point: 'how can this kind of project be more closely related to the work of the National Theatre?' (p.38) and elsewhere stresses the need 'to create effective channels of communication and dissemination, through which models of good practice in schools can be formulated, evaluated and shared' (p.68).

initio, to the extent of its being an instrument of policy development and a key *planning tool* is not widely appreciated and this represents a value and understanding that some CNCI members could clearly promulgate among others.

The value of evaluation is not restricted to particular projects or programmes.

Evaluation of the whole ECO service might occasionally be appropriate, particularly as part of any significant whole-institution review, as a means of informing future policy directions and programme provision⁴⁸, and the identification of priorities for future resource allocation.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ “The culture of the art museum has changed. It has become audience-facing...providing improved access...to a wide range of programmes; it has a better idea of who visits and why. What is lacking, however, is research on the topic of what do visitors come to know or experience when they visit and how do they come to know it? How effective are the programmes we currently invest in?” –Toby Jackson at the National Gallery of Ireland’s 2001 Education Conference ‘The Museum Visit: Virtual Reality and the Gallery.’

⁴⁹There is a growing body of work in the matter of the formal development of policy / provision in education (especially in the context of ‘learning’) among museums and galleries in the UK, based upon principles and criteria developed by a number of agencies, most particularly Resource (formed by the amalgamation of the former Museums and Galleries Commission and the Libraries and Information Commission). Since 2001, Resource has been developing and piloting the ‘Inspiring Learning for All Framework’ which sets out a vision of best practice in the areas of access, inclusion and learning. A number of consultative meetings (including one in Belfast) fed that process. Evaluation (including Self-study, Peer Review and External Review) is an important part of the process of policy development and this is evident too in the Museum Assessment Program of the American Association of Museums (www.aam-us.org). Those influences are evident from the draft documentation of the current Heritage Council Museum Standards and Accreditation Pilot Study. The principles of this work are very instructive, particularly where there are cultural institutions with permanent collections and / or where art objects are the key resource. The detail of their application is less certain when the performing arts are considered. (See: *A Policy Framework for the Irish Museum Sector* (Heritage Council, 2003).

5. Conclusion

This Policy Framework represents a key stage in the development of the CNCI's Working Group on ECO. The process of establishing consensus on matters of depth and detail has done much to build shared understandings and connections within the Working Group. That ethos is an important outcome to set alongside the development of the Policy Framework itself. Together both outcomes underline the value of the existence of the Working Group and its central purpose of meeting to share ideas and experiences and to allow for joint or collective actions to be undertaken in matters of mutual interest and benefit.

The range of potential actions is wide: from advocacy of ECO in a range of contexts, through ethical issues like welfare, or professional issues like training or accreditation, to collective service actions involving, for example, linked ECO provision on the internet. These examples are indicative only; it is the will and expertise of the Working Group that will determine how it might best advance its common agenda.

A pre-requisite for such professional exchange, to the benefit of the institutions and of the public(s) in Ireland, is the CNCI Working Group on ECO functioning as a cornerstone of the wider CNCI project.

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