

SHARING, THRIVING, RE-IMAGINING **TOGETHER**

CURRENTS OF CULTURE



**THREE
SISTERS
2020**

Waterford for the
Three Sisters

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Acknowledgements

Buíochas

The people of the Three Sisters

Pobal na dTriúr Deirféar

WELCOME TO THE THREE SISTERS BETTER TOGETHER

Welcome to the Three Sisters – the rivers of the Nore, Suir and Barrow – carrying memories of Viking and Norman arrival, energising centuries of glass and brewing, agriculture and fishing, writing and music, language and craft, and connecting the communities of South East Ireland to Europe and beyond with a shared history and future. Welcome to Waterford, Wexford and Kilkenny; the cities, counties and communities connected by these rivers which have collaborated to become European Capital of Culture, 2020.

Fáilte go dtí An Triúr Deirfiúr – An Fheoir, An tSiúir agus An Bhearú – aibhneacha a iompraíonn leo cuimhní faoi theacht na Lochlannach agus na Normánnach, ag tabhairt fuinnimh dos na céadta blianta de ghloine agus de ghrúdaireacht, de thalmháiocht agus d'iascaireacht, de scríbhneoireacht agus de cheol, de theanga agus den gceardaíocht.

Aibhneacha a cheanglaíonn pobal Oir-dheiscirt na hÉireann leis an Eoraip agus níos faide i gcéin, fiú amháin, le stair agus todhchaí chomóna. Fáilte go dtí Port Láirge, Loch Garman agus Cill Chainnigh; na cathracha, na contaetha agus na pobail atá snaidhmthe le chéile ag na haibhneacha seo, agus atá tar éis teacht le chéile anois chun a bheith mar Phríomhchathair Chultúir na hEorpa, 2020.

"This is a wonderful project, Anna Livia Plurabelle would have been delighted at the notion of her Three Sisters riverrunning together into the European Capital of Culture."

John Banville

Q: Why does your city wish to take part in the competition for the title of European Capital of Culture? Does your city plan to involve its surrounding area?

WHY AND HOW WE ARE PRESENTING OUR BID

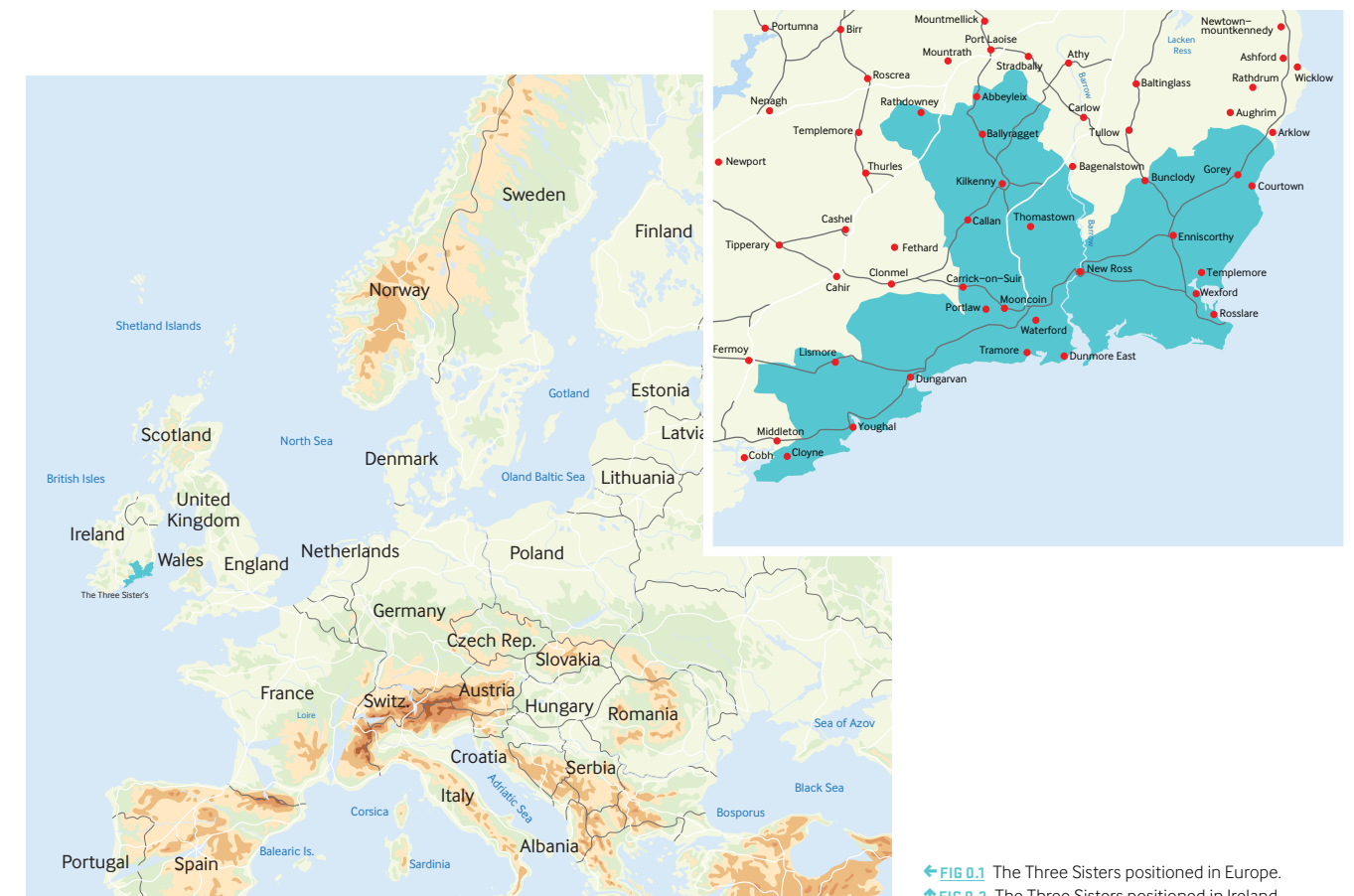
Our Three Sisters Bid is, while led by the city of Waterford as candidate city, built on the recognition and understanding that we are **Better Together** (Ní neart go cur le chéile). This bid is driven by a unique and unprecedented partnership of three cities and counties (Waterford, Wexford and Kilkenny) which historically worked independently but are increasingly coming together: as a non-metropolitan, peripheral region of small cities and rural/semi-rural communities which share a common culture and face a set of challenges and opportunities that require a collaborative approach.

Through an imaginative and radical approach to cultural strategy development, investment and partnership, we will show that we want to be European Capital of Culture, that our region and regions like us need it, and that we are ready to deliver it. Our bid informs and is informed by our regional Cultural Strategy, which integrates existing plans and policies for each of the separate partner counties.

Our approach is a new, ambitious model of public policy and partnership which connects rural and urban areas; puts cross-boundary sharing and cross-sectoral development to the heart of planning, and positions culture as a driver of social and economic change. Together we are cooperating to develop a future of sharing over competition, partnership over fragmentation and collaboration across boundaries, between sectors and through the lives of our urban and rural communities who collectively are creating new ways to survive and thrive.

Our Three Sisters Model:

- Puts the cultural sector at the heart of the conversation for economic development and social planning, ensuring issues of health, wealth, education, inclusion and identity are understood and invested in as issues of culture.
- Reduces perceived limitations of smaller cities and rural regions and intensifies their core qualities and potential to enhance the quality of life for their citizens.
- Prioritises resource sharing to build audiences and provide access, scale and reach to cultural programming across the region.
- Explores the ways in which technological, social and economic change is opening up new possibilities for international collaboration and shared learning.
- Pro actively engages with citizens to ensure their voices are heard, listened to, understood and their needs met in the design, development and delivery of the European Capital of Culture 2020.



← FIG 0.1 The Three Sisters positioned in Europe.
↑ FIG 0.2 The Three Sisters positioned in Ireland.

OUR VISION

Three Sisters European Capital of Culture 2020 will enable us to focus our collective creative ambition to deliver an informed and sustainable culture-led development for our region. Harnessing the cooperative, collaborative and creative potential of our urban and rural areas, we will foster new ways of working that connect, support and transform the lives of our citizens and embrace our shared European heritage and future.



↑ Waterford Estuary

Our Aspirations

The Three Sisters, European Capital of Culture 2020 will enable us to:

- Pioneer new models of regional partnership and investment that connect the urban and rural, establish shared approaches between small cities and assist other regions across Europe who share the same challenges.
- Generate a regional cultural economy built on sharing, caring, co-creating and making. Reinvigorate our collective sense of place, reanimate citizen engagement and enable new types of cultural activity to prosper at the heart of our rejuvenated economy.
- Facilitate a Europe-wide participation-led agenda which, through culture, critically re-imagines what we mean by 'growth', 'competitiveness' and 'productivity' in regions outside a metropolitan core.

We will work together as a region to deliver a cohesive and sustainable culture-led regional development process

- Involving our communities in everything we do
- Widening our reach and make the local and regional European
- Mobilising audience engagement, active participation and ownership
- Building long-term capacity in the cultural sector through a shared regional approach
- Pioneering cultural innovation – in how we create, produce, connect and reach

Q: Explain the concept of the programme which would be launched if the city is designated as European Capital of Culture.

OUR PROGRAMME CONCEPT

The Three Sisters seeks to be a European pioneer for peripheral and relatively rural regions as they explore new and radical ways of working after the global economic crisis of the early 21st Century. We understand that approaches to policy, partnership and investment need to change. As the Three Sisters, we want to emphasise and share three things with Europe:

1. Rural and non-metropolitan regions can be places of cultural excellence

With collaboration, strategy, passion and commitment; smaller cities can be pioneering, daring and transformational

2. We need to improve caring and sharing

To generate a culture of place, endowing our communities with a hope and purpose. We need to exchange technical skills and tacit knowledge that are too often held close and mobilise a productive and innovative creative economy

3. We must connect and collaborate as a core discipline

Through a spirit of cumar (cooperation) – make and commission new work, embed culture and creativity across the economy, encourage mass participation and ensure small cities and semi-rural regions are active hubs of co-creation where new work is made and shared across Europe and beyond.

To amplify the above, we have developed three inter-dependent and overlapping themes, each of which is detailed in our programme in **Section 3 – Cultural and Artistic Content**.

Primary Theme

Reimagining the possibility of the rural, non-metropolitan region
Through civic, cultural and community collaboration

Connecting Theme 1

Cumar
(the Irish word for cooperation)

Connecting Theme 2

Arrivals
(as a region past, present and future)

The Three Sisters will explore these themes and demonstrate how we can use the opportunity of the European Capital of Culture programme to change and develop as a region through our values of **sharing, caring, co-creating and making**:

Sharing

Our entire approach is predicated on the value of sharing, going beyond the usual strategic language of partnership to a holistic culture of doing things with each other and for each other. The South of Ireland is the birthplace of the cooperative movement in Ireland – it's in our DNA. Our farmers worked together successfully to develop a shared model for production and in turn the capital this generated. Sharing is particularly gendered, with women playing an important role in shaping community and place and mobilising much of the voluntary activity in the region. Sharing remains pervasive across the Three Sisters – evidenced through the community activities of the Gaelic Athletic Association and in volunteer activities that embrace our cultural organisations. The particular method of sharing to which we aspire has the potential to impact social, cultural and economic life for our prosperity, wellbeing and identity – in the region and across Europe.

Caring

The Three Sisters region is one where care, hospitality and generosity are hard-wired into our collective memory and sense of place. This is all the more pronounced by the scale of the cities and the close ties associated with rural communities. However, our region, like others across Europe, has lost elements of its ability to care.

Rapid industrial decline followed swiftly by the 'Celtic Tiger' economic boom of the late 1990s and early 2000s, followed immediately by a global economic crisis, has left the region traumatised by increased inequality, issues of high unemployment and investment and an over arching lack of confidence. Visibility of the region as a place which offers an excellent quality of life for its citizens has impacted heavily on health and well-being. To recover, we need a new era of caring, understanding care as a holistic embrace of culture in enhancing the quality of place, delivering vitality to our communities, and in shaping a more compassionate economy informed by notions of tolerance and sanctuary.

Culture in health and wellbeing is a relative strength across the Three Sisters, and has the potential to be developed as a centre of excellence at European level. Through the European Capital of Culture 2020 we want to actively embrace intercultural and intergenerational dialogue. Crossing boundaries to engage the hardest to reach and ensuring cultural participation is a critical part of any care package for the sick and central to programmes of prevention and wellbeing.

Co-Creating and Making

We see European Capital of Culture as an opportunity to re-imagine the future prosperity of non-metropolitan regions in Europe through a focus on creating and making. We will commission new work and broker collaborations between our creative communities and those across Europe to demonstrate new types of sharing, caring, innovation and growth.

The small industrial cities of the region each hold a distinctive history of creating and making. Waterford – its crystal glass, Kilkenny – its ceramics and jewellery, and Wexford – its music and micro enterprises linked to its ancient port. Our future as a region will be determined by the re-interpretation of these activities as high value, creative and cultural industries alongside new industries where creativity, knowledge and cultural literacy are each core characteristics. Yet like many relatively rural, peripheral European regions we are not yet a place where creating and making brings productive and sustainable economic activity to enough people. With improved digital technology, a rich natural and cultural landscape, and new generations of creative entrepreneurs graduating from our education institutions, we have the potential to transform our economy through the energy and creativity of artisans, freelancers and micro-businesses.

Q: Explain briefly the overall cultural profile of your city.

OUR REGIONAL CULTURAL PROFILE

The Three Sisters has a combined population of 354,000 people. Waterford is the largest city with a population of over 60,000 in its urban area. Wexford and Kilkenny are the main cities in the counties of the same name. Together, the counties cover an area of 10,131 km² with almost 400 km of coastline, numerous villages and several smaller towns housing a dispersed population.

A rich cultural landscape is evident and includes mass participation in the indigenous sports of hurling and Gaelic football, high quality large-scale international festivals alongside multiple smaller scale and community-run festivals in towns and villages across the region. Heritage trails, cycle-ways and river banks generate their own lattice of cultural pathways throughout the region.

Like any siblings the Three Sisters also have their differences and each city has its own distinct hue – Kilkenny has its Medieval Mile, Waterford its celebrated Viking Triangle and Wexford a strong Norman heritage. But all three share a similar history of arrival, cultural change, innovation and tradition and all are committed to working together in a spirit of partnership and *cumar*.

Evocative, artistic voices which are recognisably of Ireland's South East include internationally renowned writers John Banville, Colm Tóibín, Claire Keegan and Eoin Colfer; artists Michael Warren and Paddy Lennon, ceramicist Nicholas Mosse, digital pioneers Cartoon Saloon, glass sculptor Fred Curtis, designers Rudolf Heltzel and Bláithín Ennis and live music promoter Vince Power – examples of the creative talent in the region.

We are a region of boutique cultural organisations and micro creative businesses, an outcome of small and distributed populations and people trying to marry quality of life with economic sustainability. Our emergent digital creative sector is found in both town centres and across rural villages and enhanced by creative interventions in public spaces. It is particularly visible in the cluster of micro creative enterprises in the Fumbally Exchange co-working space in Waterford and craft cluster in Thomastown, Kilkenny. The students and faculty of Waterford Institute of Technology provide a diverse, engaged audience for arts practice; the college, through its courses, encourages and helps sustain such practice across the region.

Design and crafts are particularly strong across the Three Sisters notably in glass, jewellery and ceramics. Kilkenny is the national hub for craft and design, home to the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland and the National Craft Gallery. The city still enjoys the legacy of the 1960s Design Workshops¹ and the Design & Craft Council of Ireland has built an international reputation for its two skills schools; Jewellery & Goldsmithing Skills & Design Course and Ceramics Skills & Design Course.

Waterford is a city long associated with glass dating as far back as 1783, to the Waterford Crystal brand and current micro-enterprises in glass design and production. A national inter-agency approach to reposition the city as an International Centre for Glass Design and Making is being led by the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland in association with the Waterford Institute of Technology and local authority partners. Waterford is also a pioneer for arts, health and wellbeing, with a track record of long-term partnership and programming in hospitals, care settings, community spaces and in the home, specifically through the Waterford Healing Arts Trust.

The Three Sisters is a region of festivals. Each city has at least one event of national and international significance. By their nature festivals bring people together. They are engines for expression and connectivity. They animate and express seasonal change and ritual and shape the rhythm of our lives. They are gathering places, platforms for connecting people and ideas. Our festivals are inspired by the arts, food, rural life, craft, community, sport and culture and heritage. They create a destination focus for national and international visitors. The three flagship festivals in the region are Waterford Spraoi International Street Arts Festival, Wexford Festival Opera and Kilkenny Arts Festival.

The National Opera House in Wexford is the major cultural draw in Wexford and home to the annual and internationally renowned Wexford Festival Opera - Ireland's leading opera event by a distance. The festival attracts international and domestic audiences annually.

Visual arts are well-represented with the Butler Gallery and Lismore Castle of particular significance. A recent innovative cross-art form collaboration; The "Song of the Sea" exhibition features the Oscar-nominated Cartoon Saloon in partnership with the Butler Gallery. Wexford Arts Centre is a hub for a blend of voluntary and professional activity and along with Blackstack Print Studio and the ArtLinks programme, embraces the region's tradition of *cumar*.

Theatre and performing arts are features of Waterford's culture underpinned by The Theatre Royal, Garter Lane Arts Centre and Spraoi Festival, which brings some of the best international street art to the city every August. All are borne out of communities of practice, where amateur activities in rural and urban areas have spawned international excellence and the type of cultural cooperation organisations in larger cities struggle to sustain.

Sport is an important element of our cultural heritage. A wide variety of sports are played in the region, from indigenous sports of Hurling, Gaelic Football, Handball and Road Bowling (akin to Boules in France) to international sports including Soccer, Rugby and Horse Racing. The Three Sisters is the cradle of hurling – Ireland's oldest field sport and both it and Gaelic Football are organised by the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) which promotes Irish sports and culture. Both have a hugely passionate fan base and an unparalleled network of voluntary and community activity, which prove a major cultural asset for the Three Sisters.

Our language is part of our cultural heartbeat. The South East Region has much to offer in terms of linguistic diversity and cultural richness. The Three Sisters are a microcosm of all that is best in Irish and European cultural diversity and integration, with an increasingly intercultural community of recent arrivals. 'Gaeltacht na nDéise' in Waterford is one of seven Irish-speaking (Gaeltacht) areas in Ireland. It consists of two small coastal parishes, An Rinn and An Sean Phobal. The native Irish language is still spoken as a living, community language as are its associated cultural elements (Irish music, song, dance and storytelling). In this region our linguistic heritage and its importance are proudly and passionately promoted. Language and culture is celebrated publicly through festivals, events and activities with other Celtic minority language speakers in Wales and Scotland in particular through exchanges, cultural visits and a number of artistic collaborations. Our linguistic diversity extends beyond the Irish language to the Yola language – a medieval English dialect only spoken in County Wexford. While Yola has died out as a spoken language, its memory lives on in Wexford today through carols and songs.

De réir an seanfhocail is 'Tír gan teanga tír gan anam', agus tá éagsúlacht teangeolaíoch agus saibhreas chultúrtha fite fuaite i saol Réigiún an Oir-dheiscirt. Micreacasma is ea An Tríúr Deirfiúr den gcuid is fearr d'éagsúlacht chultúrtha agus chomhtháthaithe na hÉireann agus na hEorpa. Tá Gaeltacht na nDéise i gCo. Phort Láirge ar cheann de sheacht limistéir Gaeltachta sa tír. Dhá pharóiste cois cósta atá i gceist léi – An Rinn agus An Sean Phobal. Labharta an Ghaolainn fós mar theanga laethúil cumarsáide an phobail, agus tá an cultúr a ghabhann léi – an ceol, amhránaíocht, rince agus scéalaíocht Ghaelach – fós beo, bríomhar sa cheantar chomh maith. Tá ár n-oidhreacht teangeolaíoch agus an tábhacht a bhaineann léi mar ábhar mórtais sa réigiún seo. Déantar ceiliúradh poiblí ar ár dteanga agus ár gcultúr trí fhéilte, imeachtaí agus ghníomhaíochtaí le lucht labhartha mionteangacha Cheilteacha eile sa Bhreatain Bheag agus in Albain, ach go háirithe, trí mhalartuithe, trí chuarairteanna cultúrtha agus trí chomhoibríú ealaíne. Tá níos mó ná an Ghaolainn i gceist lenár n-éagsúlacht teangeolaíoch, sa mhéid is go bhfuil an teanga Yola (canúint mheánaoiseach den mBéarla a labhraíodh i gCo. Loch Garman amháin) fós mar chuid d'oidhreacht an chontae sin, agus í in úsáid i gcarúil agus in amhráintí áitiúla, cé nach gcloistear mar theanga labhartha í níos mó.



◀ 'Spinnaker Large Trumpet' designed by Bláithín Ennis, Jewellery and Accessory Designer



↑ Wexford and Kilkenny hurling

→ Cartoon Saloon; 2015 Academy Award nominated "Song of the Sea"



¹ A Government-funded research and development centre of excellence for design (1965 - 1980) to advance the standard of design in Ireland.

TABLE 01

Our Region – Key Facts	
<p>Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The region is still recovering from the financial crisis of 2008. Our economic performance is poor with GVA per person at €23,588 or 68.8% of the Irish average. – We have pockets of some of the worst deprivation in Western Europe while some areas are relatively prosperous. – There are 37,000 unemployed people in the region – well over the 19% national average. – Unemployment in urban Waterford is 23.5%, with 40% of the working age population not in the workforce. – Wexford is the 3rd most disadvantaged County in Ireland. – In Kilkenny, the total number of businesses fell by over 700 (17%) during the recession. – The numbers employed in each business sector also declined during the recession by an average of 23%. <p>We are a micro-business economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In Waterford alone 90% of all businesses are micro-enterprises and account for 23% of employees. – In the region there are 15 companies with 150+ employees which account for 32% of employment. <p>We are a rural and agricultural economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 19.9% of Ireland's GVA from agriculture is earned in the South East with nearly 4,000 farmers in Waterford alone. – Agri-food and processing firms play an important part of the economy. Larger firms are complemented by an emerging artisan food producer base, with approximately 40 micro and small food producers in Kilkenny alone. – Creative and Cultural Industries are of growing significance. The first ever regional mapping study was commissioned for the Three Sisters 2020 bid as part of a long-term creative economy programme. Led by our partners Waterford Institute of Technology it identified over 1,700 creative businesses in the sector. Micro in scale with development challenges including accessing talent, markets and knowledge. 	<p>Health and Well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Most health indicators are slightly below the national average with marked disparities across the region. – Health and deprivation indicators are poor in urban Waterford and some smaller settlements in rural areas. – Over 15,600 people in Waterford have a disability: 14% of Waterford's population. – In Kilkenny 33% of people with a disability of working age are employed, compared to 63% of those without a disability. – Homelessness is increasing – tripling in Kilkenny in less than 3 years, with close to 200 people in this position. <p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Waterford Institute of Technology is a university-level institution with a population of approximately 9,000 staff and students and a significant presence in Waterford city, with an outreach centre in Kilkenny. Institute of Technology Carlow offers courses in its centre in Wexford. Both institutions strongly support regional development through their programmes of study and their research activities and represent an important engine for regional growth. WIT and ITC are currently engaged in discussions with the purpose of forming a multi-campus Technological University in the South-east. – In Waterford, achievement and attainment is lower than the national average. – 19% of people have a third level qualification or higher, compared to an average of 25% for Ireland. – 16% have no formal or only primary level education – The school dropout rate is 11% compared to 9% nationally. – Talent retention in the region is also cited as a key development concern, with the lack of jobs and low levels of entrepreneurship common issues.
<p>Tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – While growing, tourism in the region is under-leveraged and in some places in decline. – There were 870,000 overseas visitors to the region in 2014, bringing €205.6m to the local economy. – 990,000 domestic tourism trips to the region brought in €200.8m to the local economy in the same year. – Kilkenny City is Ireland's second most popular domestic short break destination and has seen a rise of close to 10% in the last 3 years. The region as a whole has seen a decline of 10% in visitor numbers in the same period. – A priority across the region is to increase the number of overnight stays. Rosslare Europort is a major gateway for international tourism to Ireland, with 450,000 passenger arrivals per year and substantive room for growth. 	<p>Population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Three Sisters region has a total population of 354,000. Waterford; 113,400. Kilkenny; 95,000 and Wexford City and County; 145,600 people respectively. – We are an increasingly intercultural region, with 34,000 non-Irish nationals. – Non-Irish nationals make up over 10% of Waterford's population (12% in Kilkenny) and nearly 10,000 people speak a foreign language as a first language. – The main minority groups arrived from the UK, Poland Lithuania, Latvia, Nigeria and India to settle in the region. – There are over 1,700 people living in the Gaeltacht region in Waterford County (Irish language speakers where Irish is their first language).

“There is a diverse mix of culture and artistic people in the region, many very established and well known. I am very proud to have my business here”

Bláithín Ennis, Jewellery and Accessory Designer





01 **OUR LONG-TERM STRATEGY**

“It is the fastest field sport in the world.
We are born into the game. GAA is as
natural to you as being an Irish person.”

Mark Fanning, Wexford Hurler - Goalkeeper

OUR LONG-TERM STRATEGY IS BASED ON THREE CORE PRINCIPLES: WE NEED IT, WE WANT IT, WE CAN DELIVER IT.

Q: Describe the cultural strategy that is in place in your city at the time of the application, as well as the city's plans to strengthen the capacity of the cultural and creative sectors, including through the development of long term links between these sectors and the economic and social sectors in your city. What are the plans for sustaining the cultural activities beyond the year of the title?

OUR CULTURAL STRATEGY AGENDA

The Three Sisters 2020 is central to our long term mission of regional cooperation where culture will play a leading and integrated role in social and economic development and change. Our needs and priorities are similar to other non-metropolitan regions in Europe where the absence of a large city, a distributed rural population and the pressures on limited resources, makes new approaches to partnership and investment a strategic necessity.

Our Three Sisters bid is more than a pragmatic solution; it is a proactive exploration of societal change. Local administrative and county boundaries are regularly crisscrossed unnoticed by citizens, commuters and tourists alike. Local amenities within these boundaries are replicated from town to town, with little alignment of services or sharing of resources evident at present. Cultural provision is underdeveloped and partnership between cultural organisations regarding audience development and programming is in its infancy. Our culture-led partnership of three local authorities will transform our approach to regional development, investment and governance.

Our long-term strategy in bidding to win the title of European Capital of Culture 2020 is based on three core principles: **'WE NEED IT, WE WANT IT, WE CAN DELIVER IT'.**

WE NEED IT

The Three Sisters like many other semi-rural regions across Europe is currently under-performing in areas of educational attainment, disposable income, health and well-being and inward investment (See Table 01, pg 8). This is in part due to historic competition between the county partners and also as a result of competition for visibility and relevance against larger metropolitan regions with bigger budgets and greater infrastructure in Ireland.

We already know that we are better when working together and the European Capital of Culture is our catalyst for change. It provides us with a culture-led framework which will enable the region to reach its full potential, focussing on its collective capability towards a more sustainable future for the people of our region. In the Three Sisters we have already commenced this process but the prize of being European Capital of Culture 2020 will ignite confidence in our people, shine a light on our region and deliver a substantive social, cultural and economic change.

A joint and complementary approach to growing and securing inward investment, enterprise opportunities and support, vibrant urban centres, growing the tourism sector, and building a creative and knowledge economy is required. This includes a focus on tackling unemployment and under-employment, creating and attracting higher value jobs in knowledge-intensive sectors (e.g. digital, design, life sciences), enhancing the visitor experience, and improving transport infrastructure.

We also face issues of scale in developing audiences for culture including maximising infrastructural assets. We need to create pathways for progression in terms of design, development and delivery of new ways of working which respond to the needs of our citizens. We must re-imagine and redevelop our cultural and creative assets to engage and maximise the value of our rural and urban communities, share learning and develop competencies within the cultural sector and create a destination focus for the region and which drives inward investment and increased tourism.

WE WANT IT

Our want is based on a hunger and desire for our region to be seen as a place where culture is valued, where it is at the heart of what we do and how we plan; where those who work within the cultural and creative industries can make a sustainable living from their chosen career and enhance both the rural and urban areas within the region as vibrant places to live and work. The long-term cultural, social and economic outcomes for the region, European Capital of Culture, will be:

- A culture-led regeneration of our region
- Increased access to culture for our citizens both in our region and across Europe
- The development of new and sustainable audiences for culture
- Improved connectivity and collaboration with European cultural partners and enhanced understanding of the EU citizen agenda
- Strengthened capacity of our cultural and creative sectors
 - through enhanced knowledge exchange, skills development and partnerships within and across sectors
- Increased tourism numbers and new visitor profiles
- Increased innovation and competitiveness including the development of new and reinvigorated industries and industry clusters
- Aligned social, economic, health and well-being agendas
 - resulting in improved rural economic development and social cohesion

It is not enough for our politicians and civil servants to want to embark on a large-scale and long-term process of regional development; without a shared appetite across the Three Sisters, this Bid would not have been developed.

Historically within our region separate strategic plans for the development of arts, culture, heritage, economic, social and county development and regeneration agendas existed. The European Capital of Culture Bid has focussed us towards the development of a new shared cultural strategy (2016 –2025) for the region and this process has already commenced with a Feasibility Study² for culture-led regeneration and redevelopment of the region carried out in 2014, and our bid being developed as an output of this work.

This process and the completion of our new regional cultural strategy is a key element of the early stage in our realisation of the European Capital of Culture in 2020. It will incorporate our existing strategies in the partner counties and engage with our communities to ensure sustainability of the plan to 2025.

² A feasibility paper for the proposed development of a Bid to win the title of European Capital of Culture 2020 for the South East Region by Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy.

WE CAN DELIVER IT

The Three Sisters has committed to this new era of cooperation – which we refer to as Cumar – (the Irish word for cooperation/ confluence). Strong leadership has been shown from the very top level of our local Government; politicians, executives and agencies. In addition our cultural heavyweights and organisations have worked alongside us in delivering a bid which we are confident we can deliver.

Our commitment is also evident in the provision of a substantive budget to support the development and delivery of a seminal European Capital of Culture year in 2020 and includes significant development work required to bring us to this year (some of which has already commenced). This shows our determination not only to win the title but also to spend the next four years transforming how we work together to create a sustainable legacy for the region beyond 2020.

We have designed a robust framework for the delivery of the programme which will ensure that all elements of planning, development delivery and legacy are carefully managed throughout the process and meet and surpass the goals we have set for ourselves in bidding for the title.

We, through our shared Cultural Strategy, are working on the development of a new regional model for cultural partnership, culture-led economic and social change. By working together in new ways, with European Capital of Culture enabling us to collaborate across Europe, we can transform the way culture is produced, enjoyed and shared in our region. It will give the South East of Ireland an active, engaged and high-quality cultural future through the delivery of new tools, approaches, programming content and experiences which will in turn be shared with other European regions struggling to make the most of their cultural potential.

- Kilkenny Arts Festival
- Waterford 1100 celebrations 2014
- ↓ Wexford Festival Opera



Waterford Spraoi Festival is a street arts and spectacle event. Based in a purpose-built creation centre the team produces work for festivals and events throughout Ireland. Spraoi designed and delivered the official opening ceremony of Cork 2005 European Capital of Culture and is at the forefront of developments in international street arts.

Wexford Festival Opera housed in Ireland's National Opera House in Wexford Town. This festival is unique in having developed a world-class reputation for presenting forgotten masterpieces of opera.

Kilkenny Arts Festival is an international highlight of the Three Sisters cultural calendar. It presents national and international artists specialising in music, visual arts, literature, theatre and dance and connectivity to multiple international festivals and networks.



Q: If your city is awarded the title of European Capital of Culture, what do you think would be the long-term cultural, social and economic impact on the city?

In developing our long term strategy for the region we have outlined core areas on which we will focus our attention to achieve significant and sustainable impact and legacy beyond 2020. Our strategic pillar programmes for culture-led development as part of our cultural strategy are:

PILLAR 1	Festival Development and Innovation Programme
PILLAR 2	Creative and Cultural Economy Programme
PILLAR 3	Regional Social Contract for Health and Wellbeing
PILLAR 4	Urban and Rural Regeneration Programme

PILLAR 1: FESTIVAL DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION PROGRAMME

The Three Sisters 2020 presents the opportunity to develop greater access for communities in the region to cross county boundaries to experience the range and depth of cultural festivals on offer and in addition to drive new international audiences to our region. Our Festival Development and Innovation Programme will be established in 2016, growing incrementally and cohering festival activities to bridge gaps in the calendar, connect places, resources and sectors improving access to culture and audience participation across our region. The Cultural Board set up for the bid (see Chapter 6; Our Organisational and Delivery Structure) has already identified several strategic and creative opportunities for festival collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Our key festivals (Kilkenny Arts Festival, Spraoi Festival and Wexford Festival Opera) will head up this programme presenting cultural highlights, driving collaboration, connecting programming across the year and into future years in conjunction with artists and cultural programmers from across Europe and beyond to create and actively participate in our commissions.

Their track record and development paths show commonality in key competencies and delivery capabilities including:

Common roots	All are founded by local people
Sustainability	All are proven models of sustainable cultural development
Capacity	They each have the capacity to provide leadership, growth and diversification and to play a transformational role in regional development
Community	All are managed by professional teams and present work by professionals
Collaboration	These festivals already co- produce work, develop programmes with cultural partners across Europe and illustrate versatility and capacity for cooperation and artistic vision

It is our intention through this programme to leverage these competencies for greater innovation and development in our festival product up to and beyond 2020. The outputs from this programme will include:

Area for development	Outputs beyond 2020
Partnership and Network Development	Further develop and diversify the existing cultural sector with European counterparts and develop a framework for sustainable partnership development
Tourism Development	Make stronger links to tourism and creative industries agendas and enrich the lives of local communities
Awareness Building of Our Cultural Offer	Enable festivals to further develop their international profile and deliver sustainable audiences for culture over time
Capacity Building	Improved confidence in our region with increased collaborative practice and embedded innovation and excellence
Cooperation & Collaboration	Increased programming across the region including shared resourcing for artistic programming and production

The programme will coordinate our overall festival product with a focus on increasing access, developing audiences, creating sustainable cultural programming, increasing use of existing facilities and reducing overheads through shared approaches to resource management, greater collaboration and coordination.

PILLAR 2: CREATIVE AND CULTURAL ECONOMY PROGRAMME

Following the global crisis, our economy has altered dramatically. We have seen a contraction in larger-scale industrial activities, a reduction of agricultural employment and an increase in financial and leisure services, advanced manufacturing and knowledge intensive industries. The creative and cultural industries are a key element of our strategic economic plan and critical for the development of a diverse, balanced, distinctive and competitive economy, adding productivity, innovation and vibrancy to our economy. Although this is a growing sector and major employer at a European level, growth indicators and the 'big numbers' are generally the preserve of larger cities rather than rural regions with small urban centres. For the Three Sisters 2020 we want to remodel the creative and cultural industries narrative, to one viewed through the lens of the non-metropolitan region.

To ensure our success we have designed our Creative and Cultural Economy Programme with our partner Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT). The programme commenced in 2015 – with the first baseline mapping research on the Creative and Cultural Industries completed summer 2015. It has provided us with a knowledge base of the current profile and dynamics of the creative and cultural industries across the Three Sisters; identifying the development needs of the sector and setting priorities for how the sector can play a more active role in driving innovation and creative practice in the wider economy. The research included a survey of close to 350 creative and cultural businesses employing approx. 2,000 people across our region.

This programme also enables us to benchmark our progress as part of our evaluation process for European Capital of Culture 2020 (see Section Our Creative and Cultural Knowledge Programme (Inclusive of Evaluation) Pg 19). By 2020 we will have piloted and tested a range of interventions to mobilise creativity across our economy. The next phase of this programme includes;

- **Transformation of traditional creative sectors to high value innovators.** Different parts of the region have had economic success as a result of creative and cultural industry activity – including jewellery, ceramics, crystal and contemporary craft and design. These industries are in constant transition, struggling to balance cost and excellence in a global marketplace. The future of these industries lies not only in reforming existing business models, but in generating totally new ones and is central to our long-term economic prosperity.

- An example of this transformation is the re-imagination and reorientation of the glass industry in Waterford from one of decoration, to one of high value design-driven products; of technology-driven convergence where glass expertise is translated into new markets linked to healthcare, ICT and advanced manufacturing with our partner Waterford Institute of Technology. We have recently undergone a major strategic review of the glass industry in Waterford – led by the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland and learning from best practice models in La Lique and Meisenthal in France, Corning in New York and Bornholm in Denmark. This review sets out a vision to:

“Position Waterford as a centre of excellence in glass design and production; a leader in research and innovation for new glass technologies; a hub for clusters of glass practitioners and businesses; and a location where the world’s glass community meet.”

- **Understanding the rise of the freelance economy** – exploring models of rural regeneration through creative hubs, rural networks of creative businesses, home-working, slow growth and portfolio careers and what this means in terms of developing new business models and supporting the needs of the sector.
- **Developing new centres of excellence for the smart, creative rural economy** - developing clusters of creative excellence in glass, ceramics and digital which provide high value jobs, add value to other sectors and enable greater connectivity both within the sector itself and the global creative economy.
- **Enhance the role of our arts centres and cultural infrastructure** – to see how they can play a stronger and more innovative role in commissioning new work, brokering connections between creatives, developing skills and investing in cross-sectoral activities.



→ The Irish Handmade Glass Company;
Horizon Vase; Image by Trevor Hart

PILLAR 3: REGIONAL SOCIAL CONTRACT FOR CULTURE-LED DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Three Sisters 2020 gives us the strategic platform to culture-proof our approach to social development, to be bold and experiment, and to work out ways our communities can take ownership of the process of social change which will last for a generation and beyond. The delivery of arts and health and arts and disability practice in Ireland is ad hoc, piecemeal and under-resourced. Yet in the Three Sisters, we have the track record, the expertise and the energy; we just lack the capacity and resources to deliver at present.

On the whole we are a healthy and happy region, benefiting like elsewhere in Europe from improved diet, healthcare, technology, housing and education. But we also face major challenges – whether this be pockets of extreme deprivation, isolation and immobility in some of our some smaller towns and villages; in the decline of rural villages, in the growing elderly population we need to care for or for significant numbers of our young people who share fear and frustration as to what the future may hold for them in terms of remaining in the region.

Culture, the arts and creativity can play a critical role in improving health, wellbeing and happiness. In the Three Sisters we have some of the most innovative and extensive programmes, experienced and skilful practitioners and institutions leading progressive and radical social innovation and social technology solutions in Ireland, yet we are not making the most of these assets in terms of improving our region's health and well-being.

As we build toward 2020, we will establish our Regional Social Contract for culture-led development, health and wellbeing programme which will set out our ambition to have the most integrated, innovative and radical offer for a non-metropolitan, rural region in Ireland (by 2019) and Europe (by 2021). This programme will be led by the Waterford Healing Arts Trust (WHAT) - Ireland's leading arts and health programme which explores new ways of engaging people in arts experiences in healthcare contexts and in the wider community - and Kilkenny Collective for Arts Talent (K-Cat) an inclusive visual and performing arts collective supporting actors and artists with special needs and firmly established connections with a network of international organisations.

Based on the recommendations of the Contract – which will be co-created via a panel of experts and practitioners based in the Three Sisters, with European critical friends, we will:

- **Build capacity:** developing a new Masters degree programme for existing arts and health professionals to deliver a new generation of professionals capable of 'cultural prescribing' and a tailored initiative to build knowledge and skills for partners in the health, housing, planning and education sectors.
- **Coordinate Connect:** a coherent programme of activities which integrate arts, culture and creativity into every health setting, every vulnerable community and every major arts and cultural event; leveraging the excellent practice we already have in the Three Sisters including Arts Ability, Wexford, Butler Gallery's Azure programme and the Arts Mission in St. Luke's General Hospital, Kilkenny and Wexford General Hospital.
- **Illuminate:** an arts-based investigation of health and happiness of the Three Sisters. Exploring our health and happiness through a reflective arts experience to stimulate an engaged debate and open up opportunities for new types of practice.

- **Culturally Prescribe:** a large-scale demonstration project for Ireland and Europe to reach the most isolated and vulnerable people of the Three Sisters through a holistic approach to healthcare that integrates culture and care. This is where culture is prescribed as part of treatment, preventative and recovery programmes, fostering a cultural approach to healthcare and building a market for artists in delivering social value to the region.
- **Disruptively Innovate:** the Three Sisters as a sandbox for arts and health in non-metropolitan and non-healthcare settings. Facilitating a long-term collaborative environment for arts and health that include testing new models of arts and health practice and designing solutions to improve our public buildings and spaces.

PILLAR 4: URBAN AND RURAL REGENERATION PROGRAMME

We have several major regeneration projects underway – which will be catalysed by the Three Sisters 2020, each involving a strong cultural and creative element. They include:

- Redevelopment of the North Quays in Waterford, which, inspired by Ile de Nantes (one of our collaborating cities), is set to undergo a €15m transformation to create an urban quarter with creative production space with flexible indoor and outdoor cultural facilities at its heart.
- The 16-acre former Smithwick's Brewery site in Kilkenny is a large-scale €33m cultural regeneration proposition that offers an enormous opportunity to add capacity, diversity and quality to the region's creative and cultural industries, to integrate creative thinking into design and use, as well as to develop a hub of knowledge-intensive businesses alongside the route/against the backdrop of the city's Medieval Mile.
- Significant redevelopment of Wexford Quays. The project is expected to cost in the region of €5m and will consist of:
 - Physical Regeneration of the quayside, which is a working harbour and important recreation area and tourist amenity in the town. The work will include a redesign and refurbishment of existing infrastructure and the installation of buildings and other amenities to enhance the recreational utility of the site.
 - A reworking of Traffic Management in the area to reprioritise between road, rail and pedestrian traffic to enhance the safety and amenity of pedestrians. In particular the council are looking at the Crescent Quay area with a view to developing it's full potential as a civic space.
 - Building vibrant and attractive Linkage between the Quays and the commercial district; in particular the pedestrian areas on Main Street.
 - Integrated Town Planning policies to redevelop and revitalise a number of Void Sites along the Quay and to reorient the buildings on the quay to the river.
- Further examples of regeneration can be found in Cultural, Urban and Infrastructural Projects, pg 52.

TABLE 02

<p>WHERE WE ARE TODAY</p> <p>Our shared strategic priorities for the region</p>	<p>CURRENT EXAMPLES</p> <p>What we are already doing about it</p>	<p>THREE SISTERS 2020 – DRIVING OUR STRATEGY FORWARD</p> <p>What it will enable, catalyse and add</p>
<p>To improve the quality of life for citizens and develop a more socially inclusive society</p>	<p>Local Economic & Community Plan prepared with communities and agencies – to become a Regional Economic and Community Plan that prioritises access, inclusion, mobility, skills, employability and entrepreneurship.</p> <p>Support and embrace our ‘new Irish’ communities through the celebration of cultural difference – e.g. via the City of Sanctuary in Waterford and through adapted and innovative service delivery.</p> <p>New Shared Cultural Strategy for the Region – to coordinate cultural investment and encourage inter-agency partnership and delivery over the next 10 years. When complete, this will provide the key terms of reference for Three Sisters 2020.</p>	<p>Mobilise citizen engagement, intercultural dialogue and European collaboration to re-imagine the possibility of the non-metropolitan region.</p> <p>Give voice, visibility and confidence to different communities through active participation in culture.</p> <p>Accelerate regional partnership in economic, social and cultural activities, with shared solutions normalised.</p> <p>Build capacity and embed excellence and innovation in cultural provision – through shared approaches to audience development, production, promotion and distribution.</p> <p>Champion health, wellbeing and happiness through cultural prescribing and the integration of cultural solutions for human challenges.</p> <p>Pioneer and demonstrate how culture can deliver social change in ways that transform the lives of many.</p>
<p>Develop a high-quality, fairer and more sustainable economy</p>	<p>A shared approach to regional infrastructure – new roads, cycle-ways and trails; an expanded Waterford Airport.</p> <p>A Shared Regional Tourism Strategy – in partnership with Fáilte Ireland.</p> <p>A Shared Creative Economy Strategy and Mapping Study – underway, led by Waterford Institute of Technology.</p> <p>A Shared Strategy for clusters of design-led craft – as priority sectors for a transformed economy.</p> <p>Culture-led regeneration activities, including ‘urban acupuncture’ via public realm improvements, support for community planting and pilot projects for a ‘sharing economy’. Plus significant new developments such as North Quay in Waterford and the Brewery Site in Kilkenny.</p> <p>Uplift in European collaboration projects – toward a coordinated European Collaboration Strategy.</p>	<p>A large-scale culture-led approach to explore social and economic change in a non-metropolitan region.</p> <p>Crystallising regional collaboration and connectivity – through shared programming, touring cultural activities, and the reinvention of our industrial and agricultural landscape for active cultural use.</p> <p>Culture is thrust centre stage in regeneration and development programmes – with culture-led solutions to public realm improvements, housing and major developments. They become de facto cultural interventions.</p> <p>A European test-bed and sandbox for new types of collaborative creative practice – from new types of theatre to a transformed craft and design sector.</p> <p>A transformed regional identity with culture at the helm. A radically improved ‘bottom line’ – in visitor numbers and spend, creative employment, GDP, GVA, skills and confidence.</p>
<p>Improve, protect and enhance the environment in the interests of present and future generations</p>	<p>A shared approach to sustainable planning and development across the region, including support the protection, conservation and reanimation of the natural and built heritage – which will form part of our cultural strategy and our tourism development strategy</p> <p>Investment in cultural trails – walks, cycleways, waterways – to reconnect with our rural landscape and bring the rural into our urban lives – as in our Greenway and Blueway projects.</p> <p>Public engagement to encourage participation in environmental activities – such as conservation of the natural environment, sustainable growing, ecological diversity (e.g. permaculture), and ‘slow food’ festivals, markets and skills development – as in Waterford Food Trails and our GIY – Grow it Yourself.</p> <p>Research and development in smart region activities, agricultural diversification and sustainable farming – led by Waterford Institute of Technology and in collaboration with organisations across Europe.</p>	<p>A large-scale celebration of our landscape – as a working, living, changing, ancient, modern and cultural endeavour</p> <p>Mobilisation of civic participation to embrace our environment – cherishing the seasons, staging new cultural work, connecting with best practice in environmental sustainability.</p> <p>Championing the smart and sustainable – with new commissions that enhance audience mobility in a carbon neutral way, new infrastructure which pioneers smart design, and new urban and rural planting, growing and harvesting activities to generate a culture of sustainable food production.</p> <p>A living lab for creative solutions to sustainable regional development – with a focus on sharing, cooperation and collaboration.</p>

Q: Describe your plans for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the title on your city and for disseminating the results of the evaluation.

OUR CREATIVE AND CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE PROGRAMME (INCLUSIVE OF EVALUATION)

Commissioned by the Three Sisters 2020, and led by Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT)³, our Creative and Cultural Knowledge Programme will provide the mechanism through which we mobilise our core programme aspiration – to share knowledge and generate collaboration for non-metropolitan regions across Europe committed to culture as a tool for development. This programme will have at its heart our evaluation. We are committed to developing the most coherent, engaged and thorough evaluation programme of any European Capital of Culture. It will consist of a meta evaluation (for the whole of Three Sisters 2020 from 2016 to 2023), which will be underpinned by an Evaluation Framework and several evaluation strands. Our evaluation is also at the heart of the Three Sisters Regional Cultural Strategy. The Evaluation is featured after our introduction to the overarching Creative and Knowledge Programme.



↑ ArcLabs Research and Innovation Centre at WIT provides entrepreneurs and early stage ventures with support needed to achieve success in national and international markets.

Programme strands include the commissioning of baseline research (completed) and an ongoing process of qualitative engagement, review, reform and evaluation; thus ensuring evaluation is integral to our wider development process. The Creative and Cultural Knowledge programme will include partnerships with:

- **National bodies:** including the Arts Council Ireland, Design & Crafts Council of Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, IDA and Enterprise Ireland. Working with these organisations will ensure our research and evaluation connects with national research agendas and it enables us to draw on national statistics, reviews and evaluations to enhance the context for our work.
- **Our three local authority partners:** guiding them toward shared approaches to data collection, monitoring and evaluation, sector mapping and strategic development. A key outcome of this Creative and Cultural Knowledge Programme will be the delivery of a range of shared regional approaches to data and intelligence, underpinned by shared regional priorities.
- **Community engagement organisations:** building on and scaling up our existing communication and engagement programme we will continue to hold consultation events, utilise social media as a pervasive tool and hold meetings with key partners as an ongoing process of reflexive review. Our evaluation team will lead this activity – operating as independent intermediaries to pose questions on delivery outcomes, strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for improvement.
- **European knowledge partners:** we will set up an international advisory group of cultural policy experts to operate as critical friends to the evaluation. This will be convened by Bid Adviser Dr Tom Fleming to guarantee we benefit from the best strategic thinkers in the field and that we are plugged into European policy networks where we can present our work and learn from other models of best practice. This engagement will include connectivity with the ECoC office in Brussels ensuring we connect with the best practice from their perspective.
- **European demonstrators:** we are in active discussions with several other rural and non-metropolitan regions across Europe to set up a culture in development think and do tank. Through this model we will undertake and commission research to explore best and next practice in culture-led development and change in non-metropolitan regions

³ WIT’s involvement with the Three Sisters process, and specifically its leadership of the evaluation, is consistent with and an expression of the Institute’s particular expertise in and strategic prioritisation of region-related innovation, growth and change.

Our Approach to Evaluation: Meta with Micro

We are aware of the limitations of some previous evaluations for European Capitals of Culture, with, for example, real issues measuring causality, intentionality and long-term outcomes. We are also conversant with the guidance offered by the European Commission on good practice evaluation and monitoring methodologies, and we have a close understanding of the most robust and compelling evaluations undertaken for large-scale culture-led programmes. This is provided through our Bid Advisers, who have led major evaluation programmes internationally.

One of the primary reasons for inadequate evaluation is the lack of an overarching evaluation framework at the outset. Without a clear meta evaluation question, a set of outcomes and sub-outcomes with a sharp and adaptive methodology for their measurement, the evaluation is doomed. Additional evaluation problems for large scale culture-led programmes include starting too late/finishing too soon, poor baseline data (making benchmarking perilous) and the tension between revealing actual outcomes versus desired outcomes, with considerable political pressure often applied. To ensure we learn from these issues and from best practice models we have adopted the following design principles for our evaluation:

- **It is wholly independent** – led by WIT with other independent organisations sub-contracted to deliver specific pieces of evaluation research.
- **It is underpinned by a clear evaluation framework from the outset** – ensuring a structured and consistent methodology throughout.
- **It adapts a proven approach** – used for large and distributed cultural programmes (such as the Cultural Olympiad for the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games). This approach will include meta and micro evaluations for Programme strands and cross-cutting areas. The meta evaluation will draw together evidence from each of the micro evaluations carried out to provide the 'meta narrative' for the programme. It will also include additional primary research and will coordinate the programming of each micro evaluation, milestones and points for review. Each micro evaluation will have its own evaluation framework and will most likely be undertaken by a different (relevant) organisation
- **It is interdisciplinary and methodologically pragmatic** – we will utilise a blend of quantitative and qualitative approaches to ensure we capture a holistic view of outcomes and outputs. This will include online and offline tools. We will also carry out detailed analysis of a set of measurable indicators including visitor numbers, spend, employment (e.g. in culture), private sponsorship, public sector leverage, and macro-economic and social data. We are keen to measure the spill over effects of ECoC investment – often incidental and accidental. We will commission a dedicated research project to this end, linking best practice approaches to measuring the spill over effects of public investment in arts and culture⁴.

- **It is long-term** – we are proposing a 7 year programme of evaluation to 2023. We are already in the start-up phase with the Creative and Cultural Industries baseline in development completed - one data source we will seek to measure over time in terms of the impact Three Sisters 2020 has on the health of the sector.
- **It is collegiate and collaborative** – we know that knowledge is stronger when predicated on exchange. We will bring some of the best European experts to advise on our approach to evaluation, to be critical friends to the evaluation process, and play a role as advocates for its results.
- **It demonstrates, not just describes** – we will commission a series of European demonstrator projects with our partners to focus intensively on some development themes and ideas of relevance to the evaluation.



↑ Kilkenny Design Centre
➤ Dunbrody Famine Ship, New Ross



↑ The Hole in the Wall, Kilkenny
➤ Hook Lighthouse, Wexford
↓ Waterford Quays



⁴ A major EU-wide study on methodologies for measuring and evaluating creative and cultural spillovers has recently been completed: <https://ccspillovers.wikispaces.com/>



02 **OUR EUROPEAN DIMENSION**

“Surrounded by rivers, mountains, and sea,
and in the heart of it, people that nurture
and cultivate a feeling of more and better
without boundaries”

Jandira Delgado Monteiro, *Graphic Designer*

WE KNOW OUR FUTURE LIES IN GREATER CONNECTIVITY, SHARING AND COLLABORATION, NOT JUST ACROSS OUR REGION BUT ACROSS EUROPE.

Three Sisters 2020 is a commentary, living lab, performance and demonstration of the contemporary European experience in a non-metropolitan region and as such the European element is pervasive and tangible.

Q: In accordance with the question; Elaborate on the scope and quality of the activities...;

Our Arrivals Manifesto (see pg 32/33) will ensure a strong European element across all areas of programming, with a core tenet to commission European artist(s) or organisation(s) to participate with local artist(s) and organisation(s) in every part of our Programme. We are also co-designing vital elements of our management, evaluation and delivery with European partners – such as through the European knowledge partners and European demonstrator activities in our Creative and Cultural Knowledge Programme. But our main European offer comes through the ways we tell our stories, how we engage and our approach to co-creating a shared future for the region. How we view ourselves as European citizens and how we engage from the perspective of an island nation to wider Europe is firmly integrated into our programme and this Bid book. As we build toward 2020 it will continue to be implicit in our thinking and explicit in our messaging.

The ways where wider European agendas will be most palpable in the Three Sisters 2020 bid are:

Sustaining the Non-metropolitan European Region:

Our primary theme is one that announces our European sensibility. We want to co-create, share and learn with other non-metropolitan regions across Europe. We believe that our learning in terms of transformation of our region through culture-led development, working in partnership and through collaboration will benefit other regions of similar scale and where the issues, challenges and opportunities such a region presents, are replicated.

We will be a platform for exploring these issues and others which are central to the experiences of cities and regions across Europe. The mechanisms for this include targeted commissions (each of which has European collaboration at its heart), new research and development activities, and our communications and outreach work which will highlight the common aspects of European culture, asking our citizens to critically engage with notions of shared heritage, identity and futures.

The influence on seasonal change – on the land, our life and identity – will also be explored, connecting across Europe to journey through the process of seasonal change and how that affects who we are. We will also take a leadership role in communicating the outcomes of these processes and in staging European agendas. We will invite the European Cultural Foundation and A Soul for Europe to work with us to mobilise a European-centred conversation and broker collaboration. We will curate a section of the European Cultural Forum and we will bring Forum D'Avignon to Waterford.

Cumar and Arrivals: Our two sub-themes are positioned to maximise our reach, profile and impact in Europe and to connect our citizens to fellow European citizens and to a broader European sensibility.

We will build on, connect and amplify our existing European connections, of which there are many. These are manifested in European Union-funded network projects, academic and student exchange programmes within WIT and elsewhere, town-twinning programmes, and multiple cultural and creative collaborations. We will also stage a learning and sharing event for the Eurocities-led Culture in Cities and Regions Programme – to amplify opportunities for exchange across the European Union.

Table 3 provides a sample of our intended collaborations with European artists, cooperation with operators in different countries along with current and emerging relationships.

Q: Can you explain your strategy to attract the interest of a broad European and international public?

We are a region which already embraces transnational partnerships with European and global partners. From now until 2021 we will continue to nurture and develop our existing relationships and build many new ones: via new cooperation projects, commissions and bespoke interventions to engage specific and niche audiences for culture from across Europe.

Our strategy is focused on developing new audiences, providing greater access to culture in our region, enhancing connectivity with Europe and sharing learning with other non-metropolitan regions. Our programme elements will be designed and developed in alignment with strategic development plans in the cultural, artistic, educational and tourism sectors in Ireland and policy agendas for cultural development in Europe.

Our strategy is integrated - communications, cultural programming, tourism planning, infrastructural developments and community participation – cohering to ensure maximum connectivity with intended audiences. We will also maximise the opportunity presented via the communications channels of our existing and future European partners in this regard.

Best and future practice underpins our cultural policy and development agenda. Our collaborative efforts and international partnership development will support this agenda over time. The active brokerage of cultural partnerships, community participation in intercultural exchange between Three Sisters, other European regions and our increasingly diverse local communities (where arrival from other parts of Europe has reinvigorated the region and shaped an Ireland of new Irish) forms the basis for our culture-led partnership development.

Table 3 (pg 26) provides a sample of our many existing European and transnational collaborations and some of the 1,000 new ones we are going to create.



➤ Liminal, Milan 14th-19th April 2015
Image by Fabio Diana

TABLE 03

Types of Relationship Programme / Organisation Name	Sample	How We Will Nurture Them	Current and Emerging Relationships	Our Ambition
Sample of Artist Collaborations				
Wexford Arts Centre	Artist residency exchange.	Assistance in development of the programme to meet current and emerging need.	Studiefmanjandet, Sweden; Write4Word Wales and Fundacion Maniel, Spain.	Develop and deliver a sustainable annual artist residency programme.
Regional Collaborations				
Irish Street Arts, Circus & Spectacle Network - ISACS and Circostrada Network	Focus on the Irish & International Context for Street Arts, Circus & Spectacle Art forms through development of an international symposium on Street Art and Spectacle led by Sprai.	Provision of executive resourcing for developmental model of shared learning for street arts and spectacle.	Development of international collaboration potential has been initiated as an outcome of the international partner meeting of Circostrada in Waterford, August 2015.	Transfer of learning to international audience from capability model of Sprai.
Health and Wellbeing				
Butler Gallery - Waterford Healing Arts Trust & EU Partners	Arts and Health sectoral competency development via Creative Europe and Erasmus+ applications – both at initial stages of development.	Potential to bring programmes to places and spaces not currently associated with this type of practice. Developing knowledge transfer from programme design, development and delivery.	Butler Gallery - Waterford Healing Arts Trust & EU partners. Working with Germany, Lithuania, Italy, Netherlands, USA .	To develop a regional approach to arts and health practice, quality learning opportunities and innovative delivery methods - specifically in relation to dementia and Alzheimer's.
Education and Research				
SAMOA Nantes - Innovation Spill Over	Cross-sectoral innovation and spill over: international research and implementation of best and future practice in innovation in design and technology.	Through WIT research and innovation capabilities, resources and infrastructure.	SAMOA Nantes, ECBN , WIT research partner.	To develop a model of research and innovation - focussing in the first instance on the development of emerging glass technologies.
Creative & Cultural Industries				
European Exchange of Good Practice Programme at Jewellery & Ceramics School	Facilitating access to professional networks and training centres. Fostering mobility for young people and professionals and promoting the exchange of skills in Europe.	Managing relationships and opportunities offered as part of the Leonardo Da Vinci programme.	Continuity and development of existing relationship with graduate programmes in France, Spain, Ireland and Slovakia.	Promote access to professional networks for those operating in the design-led craft sector and exchange of skills within the sector and across Europe.

Q: To what extent do you plan to develop links between your cultural programme and the cultural programme of other cities holding the European Capital of Culture title?

Collaborating with Other European Capitals of Culture

In addition to this richly hewn European dimension, we are actively engaging with other European Capitals of Culture: cities which have had, currently hold, or will soon have the title. We are also engaging Croatian candidate cities to initiate a shared approach well in advance of 2020. To date we have:

- Explored programming ideas and are actively co-designing artist exchange and creative industries network activities with Košice 2013 and Guimarães 2012 to build on agendas they set on sustainable cultural development in smaller cities and semi-rural regions.
- Visited and engaged the team at Mons 2015 to share perspectives on effective cultural planning and identify programming strands which we can develop further with their support, including digital innovation (e.g. Café Europa), visual art (e.g. Art in the City) and outreach (Mons 2015 on Tour).
- Agreed to participate in an intern exchange programme with San Sebastian Donostia 2016 and we are brokering connections with community associations in Wrocław 2016.
- Engaged Matera 2017 to explore creative business exchange opportunities including a hub to hub collaboration project that connects emergent creative talent on shared briefs.
- Developed a working relationship with the currently short-listed Pula, Croatia 2020. Our collaborative approach with Pula involves a number of strands where there is confluence in our cultural ambition. The first programme involves the renewal of industrial past – a project in Uljanik where the contemporisation of glass design and making in Waterford fuses with Uljanik's new shipbuilding facilities (through research and innovation, material management and fabrication) and provision of a museum. The second programme element incorporates the rich Gaeltacht tradition and language heritage in our region. We will participate in the Languagescape exchange residencies with specific reference to the living Gaelic language, cultural traditions and new modes of communication.

It is our intention to continue to further develop our international partnerships to ensure connectivity with the chosen city for Croatia 2020 and with other candidate cities in Ireland as part of our programme phase in early 2016.

Our Overarching European Narrative

We are linking to key European themes, policy priorities and events across all our programming – ensuring that our regional interventions are part of a wider EU policy and cultural landscape. This includes a focus on core programming activities and promotion of EU events and activities as additional programming elements. We are also publishing commentary on wider EU activities in our written communication – e.g. via our website and social media platforms.

We are also working avidly to connect, engage and translate European agendas in a local context. Our community outreach work, our schools activities, and our partnerships with organisations and businesses across the region, give us an opportunity to explore pan-European themes – from rural diversification to interculturalism; creative entrepreneurship to mobility. They also enable us to describe the role of the EU and make clear that Three Sisters 2020 is supported by the EU. Inclusion of an intercultural dimension, with involvement from our diverse communities in shared activities, will enable dialogue on notions of 'being European' and the role of the EU.

We are driving new types of strategic partnerships, research and advocacy with a European sensibility. Our Creative and Cultural Knowledge programme will measure, evaluate and commentate on the full breadth of activities linked to Three Sisters 2020. This will include a focus on Europe. Learning generated through this Programme will be communicated in part as a reflection on Europeanness and the role of the EU. As part of our partnership work – with politicians, organisations and creatives from across the region and nationally - we are creating clarity in understanding as to how the Three Sisters 2020 is an action supported by the European Union. Through our work to build a successful 2020 programme we will continue to articulate and incorporate the wider strategic opportunities enabled through the EU – e.g. via structural funds, Creative Europe, and the range of cultural and social agendas it champions and coordinates.



↑ Andrew Ludick and Denis Kenny Ceadogán Rugs
Image by Peter Rowen



03 **CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC CONTENT**

“Our dance group has taught me a great deal about team work and about myself – together we are better.”

Libby Seward, *Animated State Dance Theatre Dance Company*
Brian McSweeney, *Traces Dance Ensemble*

FOR THE THREE SISTERS 2020 OUR VISION IS TO RE-IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITY OF OUR REGION...

Through collaboration we will mobilise audiences and inspire other non-metropolitan regions across Europe to take a similar approach.

Our Outline Programme has been developed through a year of engagement with our people – a year of collaboration, of understanding, of dreaming. By harnessing the creative forces already at work in the region, we are shaping an emergent programme which is of the people and with the people.

Q: What is the artistic vision and strategy for the cultural programme of the year?

Describe the structure of the cultural programme, including the range and diversity of the activities/main events that will mark the year.

PROGRAMME STRATEGY AND STRUCTURE

Primary Theme	Reimagining the possibility of the rural, non-metropolitan region Through civic, cultural and community collaboration
Connecting Theme 1	Cumar (the Irish word for cooperation)
Connecting Theme 2	Arrivals (as a region past, present and future)

Our ambition is for European Capital of Culture 2020, led by Waterford for the Three Sisters, to be a crescendo of cultural programming born of several years of cross-boundary, inter-city, urban-rural collaborative practice.

Primary Theme - Reimagining the possibility of the rural, non-metropolitan region

Driven by an increase in our cultural investment, with each local authority adding significantly to their core cultural budgets and unlocking investment in regeneration, education, tourism and economic development, we will move towards integrated culture-led policy and practice. Our new Shared Cultural Strategy will be ready in early 2016 and will provide key terms of reference for our long-term cultural development agenda.

Our strategy will set a new agenda for collaborative working – with our Arts Officers coordinating a shared portfolio of activities; our main cultural organisations delivering shared services and converging approaches to audience and skills development and joint programming. Our networks of artists, voluntary organisations and partners in other sectors will be mobilised to build on their regional, national and international connections through improved mobility and new types of commissioning.

Ours is not a programme of grand gestures and spectacular crowd events, although we will have our moments; nor is it a European Capital of Culture where legacy means new buildings (aside from aforementioned regeneration projects which will live and breathe culture). The Three Sisters is a programme where many interconnected small acts combine to generate a cultural region which is integrated, sustainable and vital to our economic prosperity, social vitality, health and wellbeing.

Together, as the seasons pass, we will re-imagine the possibility of a dispersed non-metropolitan and rural region through:

Civic Collaboration

Joint working between the Three Sisters local authorities at every level to coordinate a development programme for culture leading to 2020 and beyond: This will be underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding, shared cultural strategy, creative economy strategy, regional tourism strategy and co-investment in a regional Culture Board⁵. A set of smart demonstration projects enabling collaboration across and between the cultural sector and partners in commerce, education, health and wellbeing will facilitate civic collaboration.

Cultural Collaboration

Joint working between key cultural organisations across the Three Sisters, facilitated by our new Culture Board, involving the largest cultural organisations in the region with intermediaries working in areas including arts and health and the creative industries: The Culture Board will shape our cumar agenda for cultural provision, with dedicated activities to include:

- Shared box office facilities
- Regional touring programmes
- Coordinated approaches to apprenticeships and skills for young people
- Shared intelligence on audience development
- A set of radical demonstrator projects which test the boundaries of collaborative practice across the region (joint commissions, job swaps, digital R&D activities, and co-hosted international residencies).

Community Collaboration

Encompassing citizen engagement and active participation in culture and wider community activity, centred on sharing, caring, co-creating and making. This is where our voluntary programme comes to the fore – a regional taskforce of hosts, activists and enablers led by the existing Partnerships in the three counties, working to engage their communities and connect them to our programme of new commissions, rural and urban touring work, and cultural pioneers (in libraries, cultural hubs and health and education settings). This is where we champion the creators and makers – providing bespoke support and guidance, commissioning across boundaries to bring different types of creative practice together, and reimagining a region of small independent creative producers who offer a different kind of growth: one born of provenance, sharing, caring, excellence, innovation, deeply embedded in the locale, yet profoundly international in spirit and connections.

Connecting Theme 1 – Cumar

We want our European Capital of Culture to be one of fairness, equality and recognition built through Cumar – cooperation, a key theme for us due to the history of South East Ireland which has been shaped by the cooperative movement. Shared approaches have been developed over time from how we produce and distribute our dairy produce to how we participate in sport and culture. Yet there are missing links or untold stories. In recent decades our collective sense of purpose and place has been eroded, with the financial crisis bringing us to question how we got to a position where cooperation is no longer such a binding feature of our communities.

⁵ The Culture Board is a formalised extension of the Culture Steering Group established for this Bid.

One such untold story is of the role of women in nurturing a cooperative culture. Our history has been told predominantly through a male voice – with our writers, sea-farers, industrialists, sports clubs, and the Catholic Church owning the narrative. Yet the real story of the Three Sisters, as the name of our bid evokes, is one of feminine struggle and role holding families and communities together in the face of economic decline and social dislocation. Women in the region have been at the forefront, in welcoming new communities, of creative brilliance in the arts, creative industries and education, and of sorority – an unspoken collective determination to uphold the things that make us special – our language, our landscape and our cultural lives.

We will feature other types of cultural cooperation, amplifying the distinct identities, aspirations and stories that make up a contemporary region. We will explore the role of farming in shaping our cooperative identities and how the seasons create moments of togetherness – from seeding to harvest. We will commission work that links our everyday cultural sensibility to those of our peers in non-metropolitan regions of Europe, our families in Newfoundland and the UK, our twinned towns and cities, exploring shared identities and how cooperation transcends notions of place and nation. We will explore emergent forms of cooperation in the cultural sector and champion cooperation as a vital element in welcoming people to our region – as visitors, collaborators and the new Irish.

This will be achieved through our core programme – our events, festivals and commissions. Furthermore by reaching out to cities and regions across Europe and internationally, where for 2020 everyday will be International Women’s Day, Day of Sanctuary or Day of European Cooperation - with residencies, symposia, collaborative commissions, and cross-art-form interventions embracing wider Europe as a place where culture is mobilised through cooperation rather than the instruments of state, big business and the old patriarchal order.

Connecting Theme 2 – Arrivals

Too often, the story of Ireland is one of departure: particularly of talent and culture. This certainly bears some truth – we are an island nation, our history is shaped almost as much by what the Irish Diaspora has achieved abroad as what is achieved at home. But this is only half of the story. It is also much more central to identities on the west coast than on the east. In the Three Sisters, our story is one of arrivals:

- It was on our coast and up our rivers that the first immigrants to Ireland arrived 9,000 years ago. These hunter-gatherers, followed several centuries later by metal-workers enticed by the deposits on our ‘Copper Coast’, were the original settlers and it was through the Three Sisters they discovered the rest of the country.
- It was on the same coast that the Celts, Vikings and Normans arrived. Each arrival re-shaping our culture and landscape. It was these arrivals which urbanised the population, adapting mainland European models of urban markets and garrisons. They also introduced religion and the types of social order and legal structure this requires.
- For century after century, the Three Sisters have welcomed or attempted to rebuff arrivals from across Europe – with Celts from Iberia, Brittany and Wales; British colonialists; and in the last fifty years significant numbers of tourists, economic migrants, gentrifying ‘down-from-Dubliners’ and British, and refugees. Our population is growing year on year – in part through arrivals of the new Irish (of economic and cultural migrants, refugees and returnees) and in part through a relatively young population (the average age in Waterford is 36 years old).

- We are a region where the arrival and passing of the seasons plays a huge role in how we live and who we are, just as it does in relatively rural regions across Europe where agriculture remains a major industry and where many of our ancestors made their livelihood from the land. This influences everything from the sporting and cultural calendar to the renaissance of the artisan brewing industry in Wexford. It also gives us a ready-made structure for our cultural programme which will resonate locally and across Europe.

We want to diversify and disrupt this notion of arrivals for European Capital of Culture 2020, to tell more than the story of immigration by what the Irish fondly refer to as ‘blow-ins’. Arrivals is a state of mind, a way of seeing and doing and a metaphor for openness, relevance, innovation and creativity. We want to demonstrate how in Europe the non-metropolitan, polycentric, relatively rural region, has arrived.

As a region of arrivals, the Three Sisters will become a hub and conduit for new ideas based on new relationships that connect the local to the global: a place where the best ideas internationally coalesce with the best ideas locally to achieve great cultural programming, boundary-crossing creative businesses and an enlightened political class. It is a place where imagination thrives and where creative talent can be fulfilled. It is a place to come to (to live, work, create) rather than leave.

To achieve this, our programme for this theme is structured through an Arrivals Manifesto – so that everything we do is geared toward connecting the best of Europe to the best of the Three Sisters. The four tenets of the Arrivals Manifesto are to:

1. Commission new work
2. Collaborate – with each large commission of Three Sisters 2020 based on collaboration between South East artists/organisations/communities, European contributors and multiple art forms
3. Invest in the ‘spaces between’ and make artistic space a public space – the open, informal, ad hoc, meanwhile, flexible and experimental
4. Let young people be our pioneers – with creative education that has creating and making at its core, with creative work encouraged from day one, with exposure to international practice fast-tracked.

This theme is about enabling creative talent to arrive as much as it is about the arrival of creative talent. It is about reimagining notions of arrival in a digitalised world of confluence, flows, feedback loops and tacit influences. It is about believing in and supporting artists – the curious and brave – to evolve, grow and ensure the region is a place of arrivals once more.



↑ Copper Coast, Waterford

We are currently in year 1 of a 7 year programming cycle.

2015	LAUNCH, INSPIRE, ENGAGE, define principles, themes and strategic priorities.
2016	REFORM: Set up Culture Board, recruit full time development team and Bid Director. Cement main structural opportunities – e.g. infrastructure, regional partnerships, large-scale cultural programme elements (with long development lead-ins), national and international collaboration. Launch new Shared Regional Cultural Strategy. Start evaluation process.
2017-18	TEST AND GROW: Commissioned pieces to amplify and disrupt the cultural offer; commencement of European network projects. Programming in other ECoCs.
2019	SCALE-UP & DELIVER: A set of micro interventions which bridge to 2020; intensive development and rehearsal programmes; all international collaborations underway.
2020	THREE SISTERS EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE PROGRAMME.
2021-22	CONSOLIDATION AND LEGACY GROWTH: A restructured regional cultural programme based on co-investment, a holistic approach to cultural planning and a revitalised economy of creating and making. Informed by the results of our evaluation.

Figure 3.1 sets out our themes, our values and our priorities to illustrate our artistic strategy.



↑ FIG 3.1 Artistic Strategy

Q: [How will the cultural programme combine local cultural heritage and traditional art forms with new, innovative and experimental cultural expressions?](#)

[How has the city involved, or how does it plan to involve, local artists and cultural organisations in the conception and implementation of the cultural programme.](#)

As a relatively rural region, the seasons matter. Farming and sport conduct the rhythm and tone of our lives. Winter is when we huddle, rest and write, when we bed down in pubs and bars, reflecting on the year past and ahead, saving ourselves for the weekends of hurling and the music and dance they demand. Spring is when get to work – on the land, rivers and sea, preparing for the summer of festivals, creating and making for our essence, happiness and livelihood. Summer is when we perform, when our festivals launch into the brilliant light of our ancient streets. Autumn is when we sing, with Wexford Festival Opera an aria for our collective identities, our Fleadh Cheoil – the voices of communities and a harmony of warmth and creative brilliance.

Our Programme is structured broadly in line with the seasons and shaped by our primary theme and two sub-themes. To herald each season we will commission a major international collaboration. We will invite our major festivals to co-create new work with artists and organisations across Europe.

We are committed to crossing boundaries of time and space – extending the programming reach of festivals, disrupting expectations, and widening the shoulders of our summer tourism season to maximise visitor engagement across the four seasons. Below we outline a taster programme for the Three Sisters 2020:

Winter

CUMAR NA TRI UISCE – OPENING PROGRAMME TO WELCOME THE WINTER

When: January 2020
Theme: Re-imagining the Region

The first of our grand commissions will centre on the quay of the Capital of Culture host city of Waterford. It will tell our regional story, fusing light and sound to reach across the River Suir to Kilkenny and Wexford, projecting on to the grain silos in the North Quay development, glittering across the water through a flotilla of small boats carrying our new regional children's choir and dance and technology ensemble (see below). The event will redraw the boundaries of our imagined region to where the three rivers confluence (referred to in the Irish Language as Cumar na Tri Uisce) and the Three Sisters embrace. It is our intention to collaborate with the Croatian European Capital of Culture for this opening programme – we are already in advanced discussions with Pula 2020 to collaborate with Visualia Festival of Light to co-create with Sprai and Bui Bolg delivering exhilarating and poignant interventions at evocative points on our river banks.

THREE SISTERS INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN

When: February – April 2020
Theme: Cumar – Cooperation - We are all sisters

A collective programme for the library services of Kilkenny, Wexford and Waterford, in partnership with the Women's Library, London, coinciding with International Women's Day, anchored by inspirational local women in history merged with current inspirational women from the region. Inter-linked cross art form commissions will to explore the lives of these inspirational figures. This programme will be developed in collaboration with the International Women's Library and schools across the region.

CITY OF SANCTUARY; CITY OF EXILE

When: February – March 2020
Theme: Arrivals – Here is now!

A new play and regional touring project commissioning Dave Duggan (dramatist and novelist from Waterford) drawing on voices from across Europe to explore the concept of migration in the 21st century; issues that arise, friendships that are shaped, and ways cities can be more open, tolerant and cooperative to arrivals and immigration. The programme will explore stories including: voices of the 'New Irish' in the Three Sisters, subjugated migrants of the summer of 2015 and the nascent communities of arrivals across Europe. Led by Waterford Theatre Royal and Wexford Arts Centre, in collaboration with the German art collective 'Centre for Political Beauty', which is pioneering the creative response to Europe's migrant crisis and the existential crisis that foregrounds it.

THE THREE SISTERS – OPENING PROGRAMME TO WELCOME SPRING

When: March 2020
Theme: Cumar – Cooperation

The second of our Grand Commissions. Theatre Royal Waterford will stage Chekov's The Three Sisters with a new translation of the play by Booker prize-winning writer John Banville, working with a regional creative and performing team, a musical score from a contemporary European artist, and a digital canvas and animation by the brilliant Kilkenny animation company Cartoon Saloon and staged in a site-specific riverside location. Symbolically, the three sisters of the play will arrive separately by boat, converging where the three rivers meet.

SOUTH-BY-SOUTH-EAST

When: March 2020
Theme: Arrivals – Here is now!

The music industry in the region is under-developed – with few labels, distributors and promoters. Indigenous talent leaves the region to source expertise, contacts and markets. A leading destination for this talent migration is South-by-South-West, Austin, Texas, the world's premier festival for emergent contemporary music talent. Part trade-event and part music extravaganza with multiple stages, it is a showcase for emergent talent from all disciplines and genres. There is no counterpart event in Europe and with the music industry increasingly disaggregated (with a small number of Major Labels nurturing fewer artists); its hubs and gatherings are of growing significance. Waterford will bridge this 'industry gap' to become a place of arrivals for contemporary music talent, promoters, agents and labels from across Europe incorporating learning from South by South West's development path.

A boutique event will be held in 2019 followed by a larger event in 2020. The event will be curated across small venues in the city, including unusual spaces in heritage and industrial sites and with the backing, contacts, influence and commitment of Vince Power: one of Waterford's most successful cultural alumni and founder of Mean Fiddler in London.

MUSIC CITIES CONVENTION

When: March 2020
Theme: Arrivals – Here is now!

As part of the South-by-South-East programme, the Three Sisters region will host the annual Music Cities Convention. This is the world's premier convention on music policy for cities. Led by Sound Diplomacy, who have agreed to collaborate with Three Sisters 2020, the event moves to a different city each year. Previous cities include Brighton (UK) and Washington (USA). For the Three Sisters, the Convention will be staged to shape a music industry policy for smaller cities across Europe, drawing on best and next practice from places which have made live music a core part of their cultural life.

THE CAT LAUGHS DOES COOPERATION

When: May-June 2020
Theme: Cumar – Cooperation

The Cat Laughs in Kilkenny is an internationally acclaimed festival showcasing the best in Irish and international comedy. For 2020 we will stage a specially commissioned programme to explore notions of cooperation nationally and internationally. How comedy itself is a particularly cooperative movement – in the way performers connect with their audiences, provide support to one another, and through the power of laughter, engender happiness. The programme will incorporate a range of specially commissioned comedic interventions in other festivals and events across the year – in the spirit of cumar.

Spring

CONNECTING COLOURS: GREENWAYS AND BLUEWAYS

When: May – June 2020
Theme: Arrivals – Here is now!

Our Three Sisters rivers and railways were vital elements of the country's communication & transport networks. Over the next 5 years co-investment will be provided for development of the Greenways and Blueways, which entails the upgrading of the existing tow-paths and former railways tracks to allow multi-use shared leisure routes connecting towns and villages along the way. The initiative will open up new routes enabling journeys on foot, bicycle or by boat. The Local Authority partners working with LEADER and Fáilte Ireland (the national tourism development agency) are keen to link these cultural and leisure assets to local economic development, inward investment and tourism both along the routes and for the wider region.

Our programme will re-imagine the rivers and tracks as they are today via a new Connecting Colours festival – bringing together stories of the river and the rails, of arrival and adventure, of making a place a home. In collaboration with our partners in Nantes and co-commissioning work across our major festivals, Greenways and Blueways become trails of story-telling and mystical acts. We will also collaborate with river goddess cities of Europe – such as Divona (Bordeaux), Bolbe (Thessalonika), and Vellamo (Turku).

DANCE IMMERSION

When: May – June 2020
Theme: Arrivals – Here is now!

Dance Immersion Weekends will be delivered across spring, featuring intercultural dance workshops from the region's increasingly intercultural population. Working in conjunction with Wexford Arts Centre and Garter Lane Arts Centre in Waterford, this programme will culminate in a performance piece which reflects a fusion of dance as a form of cultural integration. The process will be filmed as an action-research project, with blogs, interviews and complementary written and spoken word commissions – exploring the different travel story narratives of the Three Sisters.

FLUENCY: LANGUAGE, TRADITION AND IDENTITY

When: June 2020
Theme: Re-imagining the Region

A series of commissions, symposia and workshops to explore the role of language in shaping our contemporary identities. Set in the Gaeltacht villages of Waterford, it will focus on the ways language is changing, conceptualise notions of a minority or fragile language (including Gaelige) and reflect on what this means for community, confidence and way of life. But it will go beyond this narrow focus on minority languages to explore the different types of languages - or fluencies – we need to prosper in contemporary society – whether in rural or urban areas. It will explore the role of coding as a critical language of the 21st century and work with local Gaeltacht communities to stage hack events which develop new linguistic forms. It will also commission artists who have developed their own linguistic framework – including those with a disability - deaf artists, blind artists, and those who work in a pan-linguistic, intercultural environment. To deliver this, we will work closely with the Gaeltacht officers of Waterford Council, the Library Service, and European partners (specifically ECoC candidate city Pula, Croatia 2020) with a commitment to inter-culturalism and linguistic diversity.

Summer

THREE SISTERS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OPENING EVENT TO WELCOME THE SUMMER

When: July – August 2020
Theme: Arrivals – Here is now!

Our major cultural event for the summer season will call on the creative vision and partnership commitments of our Culture Board to co-create a contemporary festival for the Three Sisters anchored by our two large summer festivals: Kilkenny Arts Festival and Sprai - Festival of International Street Arts. These festivals will retain their brand and identity but operate for 2020 and beyond as part of a larger, more diverse and region-wide programme of events that coincide with the summer tourism season.

This is our statement piece for our Arrivals theme, demonstrating that the Three Sisters has arrived – as a region, as a capital of culture, and as a platform for the best artists in Europe to develop their skills and experiment with new work. It will deliver on the Arrivals Manifesto. Elements of programming under development include:

- Partnership with Leeuwarden 2018, Matera 2019, and Croatian Candidate Cities for ECoC 2020 to co-commission new work.
- A programme of site-specific street art events at key symbolic sites across the Three Sisters through internationally sourced collaborations from across the Irish Street Arts, Circus & Spectacle Network (ISACS) and the Europe-wide Circostrada Network, positioned as a disruptive, mobile Spraoi fringe.
- Large-scale artists’ residency and exchange programme in partnership with Nantes, France, focusing on ‘arrival and invasion’ – where networks of artists are resourced to programme large-scale industrial or heritage space as a creative lab for the summer season: events, talks, shows, installations, anything mobilised by collaboration, re-imagining new uses for spaces in low density urban and rural environments.
- The outsider on the outside: An exhibition of regional and international outsider artists working in rural or non-metropolitan settings: incorporating a series of special commissions, talks and residencies. This would be led by the Kilkenny Collective for Arts Talent (KCAT) with an ‘outsider’ international curator.

RE-IMAGINING OUR COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES – TRAVELS WITH ART

When: July-August 2020

Theme: Re-imagining the Region

Led by our main visual arts organisations: Butler Gallery, Lismore Castle Arts, Wexford Arts Centre, the National Craft Gallery and our associate Visual this will be a rural touring programme, developed in collaboration with three other rural regions – Falmouth College of Arts Cornwall (UK), San Sebastian Donostia in the Basque Region of northern Spain and Minho (Portugal), linking to Guimarães ECoC 2012 and the legacy of their Art and Architecture Programme. It will bring existing collections and specially commissioned works to distinctive contexts – e.g. a street of cottages in a Gaeltacht village becomes a pop-up gallery; a digital and sound piece is commissioned in a hurling stadium; and our network of coastal paths becomes a walk-through world where the built and natural heritage gels with contemporary artistic practice.

THE FAT OF THE LAND: THREE SISTERS CHILDREN’S FOOD FESTIVAL

When: September 2020

Theme: Cumar – Cooperation

In partnership with our existing food festivals (Savour Kilkenny, Waterford Food Festival, Dungarvan Food Festival and Harvest) and fronted by local celebrated chef Kevin Dundon and other leading chefs and producers from across Europe, we will explore food provenance, sustainability and the slow food movement, through the perspective of children. Working with our cooperative culture of farmer’s markets to bring local and artisan produce to local people, we will set up a bespoke ‘cooking theatre’ with hands-on demos for children inviting them to chop, stir, smell and taste.

The Children’s Food Festival will encourage children of all ages to become adventurers in the world of real food, to understand what is grown on their doorstep in the Three Sisters and in collaborating regions across Europe. In addition this festival can be housed across multiple locations and within our smaller towns and villages and their twinning partners in Europe. It will also shape the contents for our first children’s cook book and digital programme – to mobilise food literacy and cooperation across Europe.

CAMOGIE VS HURLING: GENDER, COOPERATION, CULTURE AND SPORT

When: September 2020

Theme: Cumar – Cooperation - We are all sisters

Hurling is by far the most popular sport in the Three Sisters. Indeed, for many it defines society and community. In other words, hurling is central to our culture: the ritual of playing and watching, the large and small scale community events, and of course the rivalries between teams, cities, communities. We will commission a large-scale mass participation piece which engages the Gaelic Athletic Association (which manages the national sport of hurling), the Camogie Association (Women’s hurling) and the European Women in Sport organisation (which works with 41 countries across Europe) to explore the role of women in Irish and European Sport and thus the role of women in the rituals and practices of cooperation that define contemporary society. A cross art-form and cross-platform event involving our Three Sisters Children’s Choir; our major festivals; a commissioned documentary film; and a set of commissioned pieces where Three Sisters women participate in music, theatre and dance.

We will also bring the European Women in Sport conference to the Three Sisters and support this with our own cooperative programme which brings together hurling and camogie fans from rival teams in the region plus from the mini Diaspora of hurling and camogie teams across Europe, to participate in a fortnight of cultural and sporting participation.

NEW ROSS INTERNATIONAL PIANO FESTIVAL #DISRUPTED

When: September 2020

Theme: Re-imagining the Region

The New Ross Piano Festival in County Wexford began life in 2006 as a collaboration between the local voluntary music organisation, Music for New Ross and the internationally acclaimed concert pianist Finghin Collins. This event has grown into a high quality international piano festival which draws international artists to the region on an annual basis. For Three Sisters 2020, we want to introduce an additional collaborative opportunity to the festival by:

- Commissioning new work with international designers, choreographers, technologists and artists with the task: to re-design, relocate and re-interpret the piano. The core concept is to re-imagine the possibility of the object of study.
- A re-interpretation of the Ros Tapestry Suite - an ongoing project to be realised by 2016 incorporating 15 new Irish works for solo piano commissioned from fifteen living Irish composers, each inspired by one of the panels of the Ros Tapestry, which is exhibited in New Ross town. We will commission the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra to deliver a gala concert in the region featuring multiple local and international pianists to deliver this vision.

Autumn

ARROGANT TRESPASS: OPENING PROGRAMME TO WELCOME THE AUTUMN

When: October 2020

Theme: Re-imagining the Region

Arrogant Trespass is a new opera which will be developed under the Creative Europe 2014-2020 programme. The project will be led by the Theatre Royal, Waterford in partnership with the National Opera House and the Kilkenny Arts Festival. International partners will include the Festival Aix en Provence (and their European partners), Teatro Romea in Barcelona and the Edinburgh International Festival. The opera is based on the largely forgotten figure of William Marshall, Lord of Leinster. Marshall was responsible for the building of some of the regions important heritage buildings including; The Hook Lighthouse, the town of New Ross, Tintern Abbey and Kilkenny Castle. His influence in the Three Sisters region was pervasive and transformative.

Much of what we know of Marshall is through an existing medieval biography discovered in 1861. It is our intention to involve a French dramatist to write the libretto which will be set to music by a local composer. The wider creative team and performers will be drawn from specialists across the Three Sisters and from France. The making of the opera and the history underpinning the story will be the subject of a commissioned documentary series.

REGION OF SANCTUARY

When: November 2020

Theme: Re-imagining the Region

Waterford City’s Integration Strategy aims for the creation of a caring, sharing, intercultural society. It highlights the diversity of Waterford, where minorities represent 26% of the City’s overall population. A central cultural theme for the city is the notion of ‘sanctuary’: a place that embraces rather than ignores or stigmatises; a place that is tolerant of a diversity of cultural expressions and becomes an embodiment of such diversity. Historically Waterford was Viking but absorbed the Norman invaders and has traditionally been a sanctuary for people seeking a better life.

For 2020 and building on annual diversity festivals in the region, we will reach out with a programme of new commissions that explore notions of ethnicity, identity, home and belonging. To do this we will partner the library services with Wexford Arts Centre, Visual, Garter Lane Arts Centre, Design & Crafts Council of Ireland and Blackstack Studios to co-commission four local and four European artists from regions with diverse populations to explore the changing identities of the Three Sisters.

PERFORMING WOMEN

When: November 2020

Theme: Cumar – Cooperation - We are all sisters

A film project and poetry slam base on a new study developed by Waterford Institute of Technology. The study considers how women playwrights, including those from the Three Sisters, address questions of personal and collective identity, social integration and cultural dynamics. The research prioritises the work of women playwrights and seeks to critically interrogate the ways in which these women’s work was presented on the stage of the National Theatre in Dublin during the 20th century. It will reconsider

women’s writing in the 20th century, offering insights into the way that major cultural institutions engage with, present and promote the work of women. The film project will be co-programmed with a radical poetry slam which links some of the strongest European voices on gender, place and culture and will be presented in Waterford and nationwide.

KILKENOMICS ON CULTURE

When: November 2020

Theme: Arrivals – Here is now!

Kilkennomics is the world’s first festival of economics and comedy. Staged in Kilkenny every November, it brings together leading economists, satirists and comedians to explore the issues that concern everybody: global finance, inequality, sustainability and the whole idea of ‘growth’. So for 2020, we will explore the economics of culture. Incorporating and examining notions of cultural value, ideas on the role of culture in the sharing economy, and different concepts of ‘cultural capital’. With its timing in the autumn of 2020, it is also a great moment to reflect on the Three Sisters experience and to bring comedians and economists from other regions across Europe which have been going through a cultural renaissance. We will also engage with Waterford Whispers – the incredibly successful satirical blog – to be our satirist in residence throughout 2020.

Programme elements delivered across the ECoC Year

THREE SISTERS REGIONAL CHILDREN’S CHOIR AND DANCE TECHNOLOGY ENSEMBLE

When: 2016 - 2020 and beyond

Theme: Re-imagining the Region

For Three Sisters 2020, we will establish Ireland’s first Regional Children’s Choir at the heart of a wider music development programme. There will be two distinct elements to this programme. The first being the development of a regional children’s choir with shared repertoire and large-scale multi-location performances and touring within the region and beyond. The second element will be the development of the choir extending beyond the parameters of normal choral practice development into cross-art-form practice. Over time it will deliver an integrated programme of contemporary dance and digitally enabled animation and art. It will mobilise mass participation by scaling up an existing and proven approach to choral development and performance, dance and technology.

The Three Sisters Choir will continue as a regional choir beyond 2020 developing new audiences for culture and mobilising these audiences throughout the region to perform in our numerous quality cultural spaces. This collaborative project will develop a new performance programme to be staged in site-specific contexts across the Three Sisters in 2020. The programme will be developed in association with the expertise of Aspiro Choir (Carlow) Random Dance in London and Myriad Dance (Wexford). It will include agency partnerships with Waterford, and Carlow Institutes of Technology and Music Generation.

RE-IMAGINING OUR SMALLER CITIES – THE CREATIVE AND CULTURAL ECONOMY PROGRAMME

When: 2015 Onwards

Theme: Re-imagining the Region

This Programme has already commenced, with Waterford Institute of Technology leading an extensive research programme establishing the baseline for our Creative and Cultural Industries. This programme will involve a set of shared development activities to support the growth and sustainability of the sector. Development activities up to and including 2020 are likely to include:

- Development of a new creative city network for the Three Sisters offering business advice, digital and face-to-face networking, specialist workshops, professional development and showcasing opportunities - identified as priorities in our recent creative industries survey.
- A distributed hub programme for micro businesses across the Three Sisters. Each city will open up a 'meanwhile space' as part of a wider approach to championing creating and making. In addition new dedicated creative workspaces will be prioritised as part of the planning mix for the North Quays (Waterford) and the former Smithwick's brewery site (Kilkenny). In Wexford, a programme of rural creative workspace will be piloted – in farms, stately homes and other unexpected locations. Existing hubs – Fumbally Exchange (Waterford) and Kilkenny Design Studios – will also be consolidated, with scope for off-site extension and prototyping models of co-working. We will seek to realise the potential of Ferrybank Shopping Centre - a monument to the skewed values and failures of the Celtic Tiger era and located pivotally at the confluence of the three counties, to be co-opted for major art installations, theatre and dance events and exhibitions throughout 2020.
- Active participation in European creative business networks – joining the European Creative Business Network as an associate member; participating in the new Eurocities-led programme – Culture for Cities and Regions; and setting up a new smaller creative cities network and exchange programme for cities sub-100,000.

Digital cultural connectivity - Waterford, through the TSSG programme at WIT and other initiatives, is fast developing as a hotspot for digital innovation. We will leverage this cutting-edge technology and the embedded human capital to promote and develop culture and the arts in the region through a digital connections programme for 2020. The centerpiece of the programme will be a broadcast of the highlights of the European Capital of Culture year on a massive building-size screen on the North Quays in Waterford and on smaller screens in the regional cities to coincide with major public outdoor events. This digital connectivity will bring the region together culturally, increasing access to culture and reducing notions of perceived exclusivity.
- A programme of test beds and pathfinders on micro creative businesses in smaller cities. Here we can maximise the role of the Technology Gateway at Waterford Institute of Technology. We will commission creative businesses from different disciplines to prototype new types of practice, service and product through the Technology Gateway. We will also work with the ArcLabs Innovation Centre, which currently supports 23 knowledge intensive enterprises in Waterford and Kilkenny employing in excess of 130 staff. The Centre helps entrepreneurs to harness amazing ideas, creativity and innovation and to convert concepts into thriving, commercial businesses. We will host a programme of creative residencies in ArcLabs for local and international creative practitioners.
- Development of set of micro clusters and centres of excellence across the Three Sisters – for Glass, Goldsmithing, Jewellery.

Ceramics, Design and Making to rural locations where there is a backdrop of current activity and best practice and positioned as a 'living lab' for new directions in practice development and creative enterprise. As part of this, we will establish a Fab Lab (fabrication laboratory, small-scale workshop and enterprise space www.fablabfoundation.org) for the Three Sisters by 2017 – to be an open house creative technology resource for the Programme.

- A Smaller City Creative Campus for October 2020: our moment for reflection, boundary-crossing discussion and future-planning. A major platform to explore what we mean by 'legacy' and the role of culture and creativity in smaller city-making. With two cross-cutting themes - on 'open cities' and 'sharing cities' – we will invite speakers and practitioners from across Europe and beyond.

WATERFORD – INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR GLASS MAKING AND DESIGN

When: 2015 Onwards

Theme: Arrivals – Here is now!

Crafts and Design are real strengths across the Three Sisters and will feature prominently across many areas of programming. One major example is the role of glass in Waterford. For many across the world, Waterford means glass. Waterford Crystal was once a major employer in the city, but in the last 20 years much of the production has relocated to the Far East and Waterford is left with the brand, a visitor attraction in the form of a factory tour and shop, and the skills and memories of the workforce.

Building from the outputs of the recent Glass Symposium held in WIT (September 2015), the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland in association with partners WIT and the City Council is backing Waterford to re-imagine its potential in glass by developing a new set of creative and innovative approaches. Four strands of work have been identified which collectively will mean Waterford has once again arrived as a leading creative centre for glass making and design in Europe

- An innovation programme with Waterford Institute of Technology which focuses on new and smart technologies and applications for the material
- A market development programme to stimulate and grow existing glass enterprises, capitalising on existing skills and the legacy of Waterford Crystal in the studio and tableware glass sectors for export into new markets – specifically China.
- A new glass tourism proposition – focusing on the story of Waterford's long association with glass, the history of glass in Europe. This proposition will incorporate a glass museum, immersive and interactive experiences with participatory learning models, live glass production displays, workshops, international residencies, and experimentation.
- International collaboration with leading glass centres – to co-create new types of product and experience, share best practice and explore shared platforms to showcase work. Connections are already well-developed with other 'glass cities' such as Bornholm, in Denmark and LaLique and Meisenthal in France.
- Working with the DCCOI we will bring the Corning GlassLab™ glass-blowing mobile laboratory to The Three Sisters and establish an ongoing working relationship with Corning Inc (Europe and USA).

To build from this intensive sector transformation and development programme, we will co-establish a Glass Biennial. This will major on radical innovation in glassware, glass as art and glass as science and connect Waterford with the international glass community. It will connect to the social history of glass in Waterford and our partner city, and position it as a knowledge centre and creative leader in the future of glass.

A CREATIVE LIVING LAB FOR A SMART REGION

When: 2016 to 2020 and beyond

Theme: Re-imagining the Region

This is a large-scale demonstration programme exploring how we can maximise the creative potential of the Three Sisters through local and international collaboration. Our research and technology partner Waterford Institute of Technology, plus an agreed European Partnership with the Crea-Lab network of creative living labs in Southern Europe INTELI (Portugal), CLAND (Spain), FUNDITEC (Spain), Fundacion Mimona (Spain), Penela (Portugal), and Angouleme (France). It will focus on three themes:

- Smart regional development: on mobility, creative technology, cross-sector convergence and creative-led innovation.
- Health and happiness
- The built, agricultural and natural environment.

Demonstrator Projects Will Include:

- The re-imagination of the library: exploring how the cultural and knowledge needs of rural populations could be better served through alternative models and approaches in collaboration with RWF in the Netherlands and the Public Libraries 2020 project. This initiative uses augmented reality technology to spark a movement which recognises the importance of public libraries, focusing on social inclusion, digital inclusion and life-long learning.
- Urban acupuncture: a programme of community-driven public spaces where we commission citizens, working in an agreed partnership with Iles de Nantes and their large-scale green island project, to take over and reanimate brown-field sites, public spaces, parks and gardens across the Three Sisters. These will be used to explore the notion that 'little transformations lead to big changes'. We will also seek to connect these spaces – via new cycle ways and through a digital architecture that explores the role of residents, businesses and cultural practitioners in reimagining our cities.
- An Open Data programme for the Three Sisters – pooling existing data and introducing platforms for aggregating data on how we live, move, connect, while also working with Transparency International to examine ways to improve access to information for citizens and to create a more transparent local government across the South East region. Pilot projects will be developed as a result of these explorations and will be developed as a learning model for local authorities across Europe.
- Civic Epistemologies – scaling up an existing project on citizens participating in research on cultural heritage and humanities. This will develop ideas on the use of e-Infrastructures to support the engagement of European citizens in research on cultural heritage and digital humanities. We have commenced conversations with Pula, Croatia for the development of this programme area.
- Science with & for Society – Responsible Research & Innovation. WIT recently hosted the third annual Digital Enlightenment Forum in Kilkenny, which looked at how to better help citizens negotiate life in the digital world. It is the multidisciplinary aspect of social science and the arts, mixing with computer science that offers much potential for the Three Sisters to become a leader in this growing field and make the region a hub for new ideas and relationships.

HOW DO WE CARE?

When: 2016 – 2020

Theme: Cumar - Cooperation

In the Three Sisters, we have been a pathfinder region for positioning culture as a critical element in our care system. We are fortunate to have some of the most experienced and innovative practitioners in the country, with Waterford Healing Arts Trust (WHAT) and Kilkenny Collective for Arts Talent (K-Cat) real assets, plus our leading cultural organisations such as the Butler Gallery in Kilkenny have been active partners in exploring arts, health and happiness as a core area of work. However, we can and must do much more to coordinate, embed and innovate. As we build toward 2020, we will establish a Regional Social Contract for culture-led development, health, wellbeing and happiness, which will set out our ambition to have the most integrated, gender balanced, innovative and radical offer for a non-metropolitan, rural region in Ireland (by 2019) and Europe (by 2021).

This will be led by the WHAT and K-Cat, with additional expertise from WIT. Based on the recommendations of the Contract – which will be co-created via a panel of experts and practitioners based in the Three Sisters, with European critical friends, we will (as introduced in Chapter 1, Pillar 3):

- Build capacity, coordinate and connect: to generate a coherent programme of activities which integrates arts, culture and creativity into every health setting, every vulnerable community, and every major arts and cultural event.
- Illuminate: an arts-based investigation of health and happiness of the Three Sisters - with all the inventiveness, curiosity, open-endedness, ambiguity, complexity and nuances that the arts bring. This would be a strategic commission of artists selected from across the Three Sisters and Europe.
- Culturally Prescribe: a large-scale demonstration project for Ireland and Europe to reach the most isolated and vulnerable people of the Three Sisters through a holistic approach to healthcare that integrates culture and care.
- Disruptively Innovate: the Three Sisters as a sandbox for arts and health in a non-metropolitan setting, with a focus on disrupting gender stereotypes to the care workforce and voluntary sector.

BUILDING BRIDGES

When: Seasonal 2020

Theme: Re-imagining the region; Cumar; Arrivals

Building Bridges is our core visual arts programme which explores how bridges connect people and place. The programme will focus on both heritage and contemporary bridges in the region exploring place and space through a series of commissioned visual art installations (with world-class international and indigenous artists across multiple genres), presented in line with the seasons and cross-cutting bid themes of Cumar, Arrivals and Re-imagining the Region, delivering a truly exciting and world-class experience for our EcoC Year.

STORYFOLDS

When: 2015 – 2020
Theme: Arrivals – Here is now!

Waterford Institute of Technology is currently leading an EU-funded Horizon 2020 bid to explore and deploy state-of-the-art technology for the global access, reuse, collaborative engagement, and exploitation of Europe’s cultural heritage. With the Three Sisters a key part of this project with its rich mix of heritage landscapes, Storyfolds envisions the greater exploitation of cultural heritage for the enhancement of life-quality for Europe’s citizens through releasing the innovation capacity within the cultural sphere and harnessing that capacity for the greater good. Storyfolds will widen and improve seamless access to Europe’s heritage and will provide open services that greatly extend and integrate Europe’s cultural digital resources. For Three Sisters 2020, Storyfolds will partner heritage and cultural organisations across the region to develop new digitally enabled interpretative content on our heritage, identities and ways of life.

IDEATE 2020

When: 2020
Theme: Re-imagining the Region

IDEATE 2020 - a year-long programme of events in association with the World Crafts IDEATE 2020 - a year-long programme of events in association with the World Crafts Council, Europe to raise the profile of Irish craft and design, at home and abroad and increasing awareness of the value of crafts & design in all aspects of life. A multi-disciplinary festival about making which explores and celebrates craft, design and creativity through experimentation and collaboration and aims to build a community of practice actively engaged with innovation, technology and design. Established in 2013 the festival builds on our international reputation of Irish craft and design and our legacy of high-quality craft and making in the region. It will leverage and develop links between local and global Irish designers and showcase the importance of design to success in business and as a driver of economic growth.



↑ Pula, Croatia

THRINNING

When: Ongoing throughout 2020
Theme: Re-imagining the Region

The concept of 'Thrinning' involves the twinning of smaller parishes and towns across the region with a European thrinning partner. It is a collaborative process to initiate community relationship building across the Three Sisters and help build social capital. Each 'thrinning triangle' will have an artist(s) in residence from a different European region – to enable an independent perspective. Schools will play vital role, plus care settings and cultural organisations. Thrinning will explore notions of place and identity, generate connections across the Three Sisters, and open up notions of 'the region' at a European level.

NEW CULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS

When: Ongoing throughout 2020
Theme: Cumar – Cooperation

We will work with partners in Pula, Croatia through their LanguageScape programme to investigate how people communicate culture in modern society and how we can use new communications within the cultural sector – breaking boundaries between communities of practice and communities of place, for publication and awareness. Questioning the similarities between ways in which this exists in Istria and the Three Sisters. Partners for this programme would include: Waterford Whispers / Kilkenny Poetry Broadsheet / Voice Box. The programme includes a residency, studies and research, artistic interface and installations, exchange programme for artists and cultural operators. Building installations around the language theme.

TRADITIONS IN SONG

When: 2019 – 2020
Theme: Re-imagining the Region

An oral history project to explore the changing history of song in the Three Sisters across generations of families. Critically engaging with the work of Bunting in his Ancient Music of Ireland, this will seek to discover musical continuity and discontinuity across the region (including the Kilmore Carols and survival of Irish and ancient dialects). It will operate as a cross-media project involving podcasting (of interviews and performances), new musical commissions based on historic findings, and a musical exchange project with Brittany in France to explore the roots and routes of musical styles and influences across the Celtic Diaspora.

YOUR THREE SISTERS

When: 2020
Theme: Cumar - Cooperation

Your Three Sisters – is a community engagement programme, developed from the learning of the hugely successful Gathering 2013 programme which created connectivity between and within communities and the Irish Diaspora across the globe. We will recreate this spirit of collaboration and connection for our European Capital of Culture year and engage our communities to call their friends, families and networks home to experience the European Capital of Culture Year with them.

TABLE 04

RE-IMAGINING THE REGION

COOPERATION

ARRIVALS

Winter	Spring	Summer	Autumn
Opening Programme to welcome winter – Cumar na Tri Uisce			Opening Programme to Welcome autumn – Arrogant Trespass
Traditions in Song	Traditions in Song	Traditions in Song	Traditions in Song
Creative Living Lab for a Smart Region	Creative Living Lab for a Smart Region	Creative Living Lab for a Smart Region	Creative Living Lab for a Smart Region
Re-imagining our smaller cities - Creative and Cultural Economy Programme	Re-imagining our smaller cities - Creative and Cultural Economy Programme	Re-imagining our smaller cities - Creative and Cultural Economy Programme	Re-imagining our smaller cities – Creative and Cultural Economy Programme
Thrinning	Thrinning	Thrinning	Thrinning
Building Bridges	Building Bridges	Building Bridges	Building Bridges
Three Sisters Children's Choir, Dance & Technology Ensemble	Three Sisters Children's Choir, Dance & Technology Ensemble	Three Sisters Children's Choir, Dance & Technology Ensemble	Three Sisters Children's Choir, Dance & Technology Ensemble
		Our Collective Identities – Travels with Art	Wexford Festival Opera
		New Ross Piano Festival # Disrupted	Region of Sanctuary
		Fluency: Language, Tradition and Identity	
		Opening Programme to welcome the spring – The Three Sisters	
IDEATE 2020	IDEATE 2020	IDEATE 2020	IDEATE 2020
Your Three Sisters	Your Three Sisters	Your Three Sisters	Your Three Sisters
Building Bridges	Building Bridges	Building Bridges	Building Bridges
How do we care?	How do we care?	How do we care?	How do we care?
New Cultural Communications	New Cultural Communications	New Cultural Communications	New Cultural Communications
Three Sisters Inspirational Women	The Cat Laughs does Cooperation	Camogie Vs Hurling: Gender, culture and sport	Performing Women
		The Fat of the Land - Children's Food Festival	
		Spraoi Festival	Children's Food Festival
		Opening Programme to welcome summer – The Three Sisters International Festival	
Waterford – International Centre for Glass Making and Design	Waterford – International Centre for Glass Making and Design	Waterford – International Centre for Glass Making and Design	Waterford – International Centre for Glass Making and Design
Building Bridges	Building Bridges	Building Bridges	Building Bridges
Storyfolds	Storyfolds	Storyfolds	Storyfolds
City of Sanctuary – City of Exile	South by South-East	Kilkenny Arts Festival	Kilkenomics on Culture
	Music Cities Convention	Spraoi International Street Arts Festival	
	Dance Immersion		
	Connecting Colours		



04 **CAPACITY TO DELIVER**

“I would like for people from other places to see what we have here, to experience the local and seasonal food, we can get fish from the sea to the harbour on the plate within minutes, it doesn't get any fresher than that!”

Michael Kelly, Waterford Grow It Yourself

THREE SISTERS 2020 IS A BID TO BE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE BASED ON UNPRECEDENTED PARTNERSHIP AND SUPPORT

Q: In accordance with the question;
Please confirm and evidence that you
have broad and strong political support.

OUR COMMITMENT

Three Sisters 2020 is a bid to be European Capital of Culture based on unprecedented partnership and support:

We have cross-party support from the leaders and executives of each major political party. This is enshrined through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) from the three Cathaoirleach (Chairpersons) of the Councils of the partner counties. **This MoU states:**

The South East Region's Local Authorities of Waterford City and County Council, Kilkenny County Council and Wexford County Council will develop a joint bid for the title of European Capital of Culture 2020.

Waterford, Kilkenny and Wexford Local Authorities are committed to a partnership approach in preparing our bid, with each LA supporting the bid preparation process and facilitating community and stakeholder engagement. Waterford will act as lead authority and will submit the bid on behalf of the region. Our bid will:

- Highlight the richness and diversity of our culture
- Celebrate the cultural features Europeans share;
- Increase our citizens' sense of belonging to Europe
- Foster the contribution of culture to the development of cities

We the Mayors/Cathaoirleach commit our Local Authorities to winning the European Capital of Culture 2020 for the South East.

We have high-level support from each County Chief Executive – providing a stable backdrop for the delivery of the programme and total commitment to the vision, priorities, aims and desired outcomes of the Bid. This process was robustly tested through a feasibility study, commissioned in 2014 as to whether a Bid for the South East, led by Waterford, was viable, desirable and compelling. This is where we introduced the 'Three Sisters' test: that we need it, we want it and we can deliver it.

We have formal staffing commitment from each County – with the Bid team staff financed by the three Counties. Our team is seconded from senior posts in each county. Bid advisers have been financed through co-investment from the three Counties. Office space and equipment has been provided in-kind by the three Counties. In addition, local authority arts, library, heritage, tourism and language officers have provided additional support in developing the Bid and building relations with the cultural sector and wider public. This support is formalised in our Support Group who meet every 6 weeks.

We have an agreement with our neighbour, the County of Carlow, that they will play a priority partner role. This arrangement involves the identification of three key programming areas which will be co-led by Carlow cultural organisations and specifically VISUAL Carlow's Centre for Contemporary Art. In addition we will benefit from audience development and in-kind arts development work from the Carlow municipality.

We have the full backing of all key cultural organisations in the region. Our cultural players have been actively engaged through our Cultural Steering Group (CSG), which feeds directly into the Executive Board of the Three Sisters 2020 via its three rotating chairs: Ben Barnes, Director - Waterford Theatre Royal; David McLoughlin, Chief Executive - National Opera House Wexford; and Evelyn McNamara, Innovation Project Manager - Design & Crafts Council Ireland. The CSG has played a hugely valuable role in developing our Bid – from direct input to themes, priorities and programme ideas; championing the Bid with their partners and stakeholders; to mobilising engagement with their audiences. They have also committed in-kind resources to attend the CSG meetings (every 6 weeks for a year), to stage targeted workshops to explore specific themes and to undertake research tasks.



→ Pictured is Mayor of Waterford Metropolitan District Cllr. James Tobin, Cllr. Malcolm Byrne, Cathaoirleach of Wexford County Council and Pat Millea Cathaoirleach, Kilkenny County Council, at the European Capital of Culture bid launch which was held at The Waterford Medieval Museum in January 2015.
Image by John Power

We have mobilised a diverse family of formal support. This includes structured relationships with the following organisations where a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or formal letter of support offering capacity and expertise for our bid is in place.

- Waterford Institute of Technology – an MoU for the Creative and Cultural Knowledge Programme.
- Institute of Technology - Wexford Campus
- Waterford Airport
- Rosslare Europort
- Gaelic Athletic Association
- Waterford, Wexford and Kilkenny Chambers of Commerce
- Local Enterprise Offices
- Businesses in the Region including Glanbia, Dawn Meats, Gynzyme and others
- Waterford Healing Arts Trust
- Education and Training Boards
- Partnership organisations

We have engaged national agencies to ensure we will receive their full support should we win the title. This includes the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland, Fáilte Ireland and Culture Ireland, and Arts Council. Such organisations have already shown commitment by providing us with available research and strategic information and having preliminary discussions on how we can shape complementary strategic goals through Three Sisters 2020.

We have leveraged our existing European collaborations and generated new ones. We have secured serious intent for collaboration from cities as diverse as Nantes, Pula, San Sebastian, Guimarães, Košice, Utrecht, Penela, Falmouth, Seville, Sheffield, Eindhoven and Lodz. We have also cemented collaborations with arts and cultural organisations, universities and creative business networks to ensure that we live and breathe our Arrivals Manifesto of doing everything through European to local collaboration.



↑ Tall Ships Race, Waterford 2011

Q: In accordance with question and following sub questions: Please confirm and evidence that your city has or will have adequate and viable infrastructure to host the title.

OUR CULTURAL CAPACITY

Three Sisters 2020 is an ambitious model for culture-led development in a non-metropolitan region. Although individual cities have significant capacity, together we have capacity and expertise to at least equal that of a large city. The official candidate city – Waterford has considerable capacity in its cultural infrastructure, transport and tourism offer and would be in a position to host activities of the scale associated with European Capital of Culture. Our successful hosting of the Tall Ships Race in 2011 demonstrated we have the capacity and know-how to host large-scale events, with an audience of over 500,000 participating across the programme. Wexford has the largest opera festival in Ireland, Kilkenny has the most extensive contemporary arts festival outside Dublin, and Waterford's Spraoi has just welcomed close to 100,000 people to the city for its 2015 event.

However, this is not, for us, the point. We know that in a post-crisis Europe, the only way to make sustainable use of your infrastructure and to build active, engaged, motivated and participatory audiences for culture, is to collaborate and share resources. We recognise the importance of building capacity for smaller organisations – being inclusive of the voluntary sector – if we are to make a real difference to people's lives. This is why we deliver our bid as a region and why every element of our programming has a European dimension – in terms of delivery partner, artists and expertise.

European Capital of Culture will make use of and develop the city's cultural infrastructure

Three Sisters 2020 will make use of our existing cultural infrastructure to anchor our main programme. This includes built infrastructure (e.g. our theatres, concert halls, galleries and heritage assets), festival infrastructure (our expertise, production and programming capacity), our public spaces, industrial sites, farms, river banks, coastline, and those 'between spaces' which can be so compelling and our people – the backbone of our cultural capability. Individually, we have some incredible assets, including two National cultural institutions – the National Opera House in Wexford and the National Craft Gallery in Kilkenny. Collectively, we have even more and much of it new and purpose-built (e.g. Spraoi Studios in 2003; National Opera House in 2008; and the brand new County Hall in Wexford, with its exhibition and library facilities). In Table 05 we describe our main venues and auditoria, to give an overview of our capacity, range and uniqueness:

TABLE 05

A Sample of Our Main Cultural Infrastructure

Description and Capacity

Performing Arts & Music

National Opera House - O'Reilly Theatre

Opera House / Concert venue. Receiving and programming house and home of the Wexford Festival Opera. Capacity 853 tiered seating. Orchestra pit, forestage, flat stage with traditional proscenium, scene dock.

National Opera House - Jerome Hynes Theatre

Studio/Rehearsal/Exhibition space - Theatre/Blackbox. Receiving space. Retractable tiered seating 176 people.

Waterford Theatre Royal

434 seat Victorian Theatre with stage extension and orchestra pit. Receiving and programming house for regional professional and amateur theatre.

Spraoi Studios

Waterford Spraoi produces commissioned street arts and spectacle events throughout Ireland in a variety of settings, on behalf of festivals, events and local authorities.

Ballykeeffe Amphitheatre

Ballykeeffe Amphitheatre is Kilkenny's very own outdoor auditorium. Located beneath Ballykeeffe Wood and Nature Reserve the Amphitheatre boasts a state of the art canopy which enhances the deep, worked-out quarry to offer acoustics and a setting designed to provide an unforgettable and memorable experience of theatre and music.

Creative Industries

Cartoon Saloon

Academy Award@ nominated animation studio formed in 1999. Developing short films to TV series Cartoon Saloon has carved a special place in the international animation industry.

Waterford Whispers

Internationally acclaimed satirical news website.

Fumbally Exchange

Shared and hot desk spaces for digital media creatives

Visual Arts, Craft and Design

Blackstack Studios

Fine art print studio offering access to eco-friendly facilities for artists and annual student bursaries for developmental practice.

Butler Gallery

A versatile and vibrant venue for programmed and touring visual art exhibitions. Its collaborative work in the art of arts and health and recent collaboration with Oscar-nominated Cartoon Saloon shows the versatility and vision of its team.

Grennan Mill and Craft School

This 18th Century grain loft has been converted into spacious and well equipped craft/art studios and an important centre of study in the craft making and design.

Lismore Castle Arts

In the historic setting of Lismore Castle this organisation offers distinctive exhibition space for touring programmes and curates its own series of exhibitions throughout the year. It has a dynamic and progressive education programme for young people and adults.

National Craft Gallery

Established in 2000, the National Craft Gallery is Ireland's leading centre for contemporary craft and design for national and international makers.

Visual Centre for Contemporary Art

VISUAL Centre for Contemporary Art & The George Bernard Shaw Theatre is a dynamic multi-disciplinary arts facility presenting the best of local, national, and international work in the visual and performing arts. VISUAL boasts an area of 3,130m², comprising four principle 'white cube' gallery spaces, a 290 seat performing arts theatre, a restaurant, bar and book shop.

A Sample of Our Main Cultural Infrastructure

Description and Capacity

Wexford Arts Centre	Delivers an arts programme of excellence for life and for all with emphasis on contemporary arts practice, participation and education and inspires creativity in the Wexford community.
House of Waterford Crystal	Visitor attraction telling the story of Waterford's association with crystal production. Offering tours, retail space and café for visitors.
Greyfriars Municipal Gallery	Hosting exhibitions of selected artworks from the Waterford Municipal Art Collection and community-based art events.
Garter Lane Arts Centre	Multidisciplinary Arts Centre in Waterford City. Receiving and programming house with gallery space.

Heritage & Museums

Irish National Heritage Park	Visitor attraction which offers a glimpse into 9,000 years of Irish history. Offering tours, trails, education events etc.
Kennedy Homestead	The Kennedy Homestead, a unique cultural museum is dedicated to the ancestral family of president John F. Kennedy and plays a vital part in the preservation of the Kennedy legacy in Ireland.
Kilkenny Castle	Kilkenny Castle is an Anglo-Norman stone castle built for William Marshall in the 13th century. Managed by the Office of Public Works it is open to the public as a visitor attraction.
Rothe House	Rothe House & Garden, a historic house in Kilkenny in the South East of Ireland, is the only example of an early 17th century merchant's townhouse in Ireland. The House is open to the public as a Museum, displaying some of the 2,500 historic artefacts collected by the Society since its founding in 1947.
St. Canice's Cathedral	St Canice's Cathedral and Round Tower are an essential part of the structural heritage in the vibrant medieval city of Kilkenny. Seats 6,000 people.
Viking Triangle	Waterford Viking Triangle is Waterford's Cultural and Heritage quarter. Boasting an array of cultural & heritage attractions including Waterford Museum of Treasures, Choirstors Hall, Bishop's Palace and Reginald's Tower.

Sport, Leisure and Education - Adaptable for Culture

The Wex	The Wexford Civic Centre offers both an ice arena and civic arena. The ice arena is an official NHL size rink that seats 500 spectators. The civic arena/auditorium is a 20,000sq/ft facility with seating for 1,800 guests.
Waterford IT	WIT delivers courses and conducts research across the Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Business, Engineering, Science and Education in campuses on the Cork Rd, College Street and Carriganore in Waterford and on St Kieran's campus in Kilkenny. The Institute supports local and regional development through its courses and research. Its ArcLabs Research & Innovation Centre together with the Institute's Centre for Entrepreneurship and the South East Enterprise Platform Programme (SEEP) provide entrepreneurs and early-stage ventures with the support needed to achieve success in national and international markets. A 2,000 seater conference centre is due to be finalised over the next two years.
IT Carlow - Wexford Campus	The Wexford Campus offers full time courses in Business, Computing, Social Studies, Early Childhood Studies, Art, Visual Communications and Design, Cultural and Heritage Studies.
Nowlan Park, Kilkenny	The home of the Gaelic Athletic Association in Kilkenny, this venue seats 30,000 and has hosted artists such as Bruce Springsteen, Bob Dylan, and has the largest capacity in the region.
The Hub at Cillin Hill	A premier multi-purpose venue in the South East. Located in a commanding roadside position on the outskirts of Kilkenny City, The Hub is located within Cillin Hill and is an ideal venue for exhibitions, conferences, comedy gigs, product launches, car/machinery shows, gala dinners, concerts and much more.

OUR TRANSPORT CAPACITY

We are a region of arrivals:

- The opening of the M9 motorway has opened us up to the rest of Ireland, with drive times from Kilkenny to Dublin 1.5 hours and 2 for Waterford and Wexford. A new coastal motorway will be open by 2020, cutting the travel time from Wexford to Dublin by a third.
- Each of the cities is on the mainline Irish train network. There are regular train services to Dublin and Cork from Wexford, Waterford and Kilkenny, each taking approximately 2 hours. A new train station will be built in Waterford as part of the North Quays development.
- State-owned and private bus companies operate services to the region to and from Dublin on a daily basis with multiple services delivered each day facilitating easy movement into and out of the region from the three main cities and smaller rural areas.
- Rosslare Europort is a major passenger and freight port in the heart of the region – between Wexford and Waterford. It carries 900,000 passengers per year (Irish Ferries and Stenaline), with the capacity to bring in 1.5 million – landing straight in the middle of the Three Sisters. 10% are foot passengers; the rest by car – which raises the challenge of ensuring they stay in the region rather than drive through. Rosslare Europort has backed our bid and scope exists to utilise the ferry terminal as a cultural venue.
- Waterford International Airport currently has capacity for up to 500,000 passengers per year. There are plans to extend and widen the runway, which is a regional strategic priority. This could, by 2020, open up the airport to enable it to attract larger passenger planes (e.g. Boeing 767s), which would represent a major development opportunity – for the economic and cultural life of the Three Sisters.

- Dublin airport is a maximum of 2 hours from any point in the Three Sisters. In 2014 it carried 21.7 million passengers, with routes to most European hubs and direct routes to several in North America and the Middle East.
- Cork airport is a maximum of 2 hours from any point in the Three Sisters. In 2014 it carried 2.1 million passengers.
- The New Ross Bypass is expected to commence later this year and be completed in 2018. The project will cost over €316m and be a new primary road construction of 14.8 km. The bypass commences at Glenmore on the Waterford/Kilkenny border and crosses the river Barrow with a new bridge into Wexford. This bridge will be the longest bridge in Ireland when complete and will be a landmark in it's own right. The interconnection between Kilkenny, Waterford and Wexford is vital to the socio-economic development of the Region. The primary communications channel for traffic between Waterford/Kilkenny and Wexford is through New Ross.

What is more difficult for the region are the transport linkages within the region itself. Although transport infrastructure is improving and each city in the region is on the national train line from Dublin, there are few inter-connecting services within the region itself. We see the Three Sisters 2020 as a catalyst for improving our public transport, increasing travel within the region and for our network of cycle ways and trails, including the Greenways and the Blueways.

Drive times between the cities are minimal with travel times of no more than 30 minutes between Waterford/Kilkenny and Waterford/Wexford and 45 minutes between Wexford/Kilkenny.

The national inter-city bus service operates between Wexford and Waterford 8 times per day from 07.00 – 19.30 and with a greater number of services and extended times between Waterford and Kilkenny. Private bus services operate between Enniscorthy, New Ross and Waterford – twice per day, however, no bus service operates between Kilkenny and Wexford – all services are via Waterford.



↑ FIG 4.1 Three Sisters Infrastructure Map

In essence, travel within the region is related to commuter work patterns. It is our intention to develop additional bus routes radiating across the region rather than servicing outward journeys to Dublin etc. We will look to extending the potential of the existing Rural Transport Initiative to develop culture buses which will enable audiences to travel within the region for cultural events for our 2020 year and beyond. Within the cities themselves for the 2020 year we will take a leaf from Eindhoven Design Week's initiative of 'Design Taxis' – taking various and locals to identified locations for events, festivals and attractions.

Our Shared Cultural Strategy will culture-proof the public transport offer, identifying ways to connect our cultural infrastructure and ensure transport is available after shows and at weekends. In addition, we will explore shared services for dedicated 'cultural transportation' – such as special buses, subsidised taxi services, car sharing for culture, and cultural trails through our industrial waterways, old railways and cycle ways.

OUR TOURISM CAPACITY

The Three Sisters range of visitor attractions, cultural spaces and public realm reflects our cultural and sporting programmes, our festivals, our history and heritage (industrial and built), our outstanding natural environment and our growing reputation for creating and making products of the highest quality.

Three Sisters 2020 offers a major opportunity to grow our visitor economy, to mobilise our hotels, our venues and attractions, our hospitality sector and other tourism partners to build on its impact in creating a sustainable destination focus for the region. Through our programme, we will enhance our existing events and festivals to complement new activities; develop our evening economy and capitalise on marketing and route development opportunities in partnership with our airport and port.

Tourism Ireland⁶ has reported significant growth in the sector in 2015. Both domestic and international markets have reported an increase of +12% year on year growth for Ireland for the period January to July 2015. Growth from mainland Europe was up 13% and Great Britain up 11%. It also cites an increase in visitor numbers to attractions in the South East of Ireland and a steady prospect for growth of 9% in the coming year and a trend for increased number of visitors travelling with cars. Rosslare Europort is a major gateway for international tourism to Ireland with 450,000 passenger arrivals a year representing 31 % of arrivals to the South East. There is room for significant growth in this traffic as cited by Tourism Ireland in their September 2015 SOAR report. When combined with the potential for development of Waterford International Airport, the region holds the prospect of becoming a significant destination in its own right for air and ferry visitors from the UK and mainland Europe specifically.

According to Fáilte Ireland's Regional Tourism Report 2014⁷, the south east region attracted 870,000 overseas visitors (485,000 holidaymakers), which generated €205m in revenue. These figures disguise considerable local differences across the region with different visitor profiles and trends for each partner county. We intend to maximise the opportunity which these different market segments present and to create new cultural experiences which will create a destination focus and thus increase dwell time in the region. Accommodation in the region ranges from 5* hotels to caravan and campsites. Our hotel stock is mainly located in and around our main cities and towns. Table 07 shows our current accommodation capacity.

TABLE 07

Type of Accommodation	Beds
Hotels	9,735
Guesthouses	533
Bed & Breakfast	1,438
Self-Catering	678
Caravan & Camping	5141
Hostels	200
Total accommodation stock in the Three Sisters region	17,725
Accommodation stock in bordering counties (Carlow, Cork, Tipperary and Wicklow)	28,812
Total potential accommodation stock	46, 537

Having felt that pain of over-development within the hospitality sector during the Celtic Tiger years and the subsequent 'empty-hotel' syndrome in relatively rural locations across Ireland since that time, the Three Sisters will take a sustainable approach to increasing accommodation capacity in the region. Our approach is to maximise existing bed stock by developing increased transport access across the region, so that visitors can stay in one location and participate in an event in another. We will also facilitate the development of AirBnB models and increase our hotel accommodation stock by working in partnership with the counties bordering the Three Sisters to ensure adequate capacity for our visitor targets for 2020.

A strategic priority for tourism development is Fáilte Ireland's newly launched umbrella proposition for the south and east of Ireland entitled Ireland's Ancient East. This programme is intended to create critical mass and increase consumer recognition for the destination in overseas markets specifically for the culturally curious visitor. It is a timely intervention in relation to the European Capital of Culture programme and the marketing and promotional spend which will be attributed to this proposition from Fáilte Ireland will be maximised to increase awareness of the Three Sisters 2020.

The Three Sisters has to date lacked a compelling regional brand. Our partnership with Fáilte Ireland in delivering our take on Ireland's Ancient East will generate a significant shift in the overall tourism brand and narrative for the South East and a shared approach to destination management across the Three Sisters. We are already working with Fáilte Ireland to amplify and animate the key tourism assets of our region and play a dynamic role as the 'attack brand' for Ireland's tourism economy for 2020 within the framework of this proposition, repositioning the region as a major cultural tourism destination. Ireland's Ancient East is currently in Year 0 of a 5 year roll out plan.



- ↑ Curraclloe Beach; Wexford
- ↔ House of Waterford Crystal, Waterford
- ↓ Graigueanamanagh Town, Kilkenny

⁶ <https://www.tourismireland.com/TourismIreland/media/Tourism-Ireland/Research/September-2015-SOAR-Report.pdf?text=.pdf>

⁷ Fáilte Ireland is the National Tourism Development Agency

Q: In terms of cultural, urban and tourism infrastructure what are the projects (including renovation projects) that your city plan to carry out in connection with the "European Capital of Culture" action between now and the year of the title? What is the planned timetable for this work?

For Three Sisters 2020, our organisational structure – with our Executive Board, Cultural Steering Group and Cultural Support Group – means we have access to all of the infrastructure outlined in Table 05 and a very high level of control in terms of priority usage. Our three local authorities have high level expertise in licensing requirements for any new temporary infrastructure requirements – such as stages, marquees, pop up and artist space.

In addition to the above existing infrastructure, we have at least five major new infrastructural cultural projects to look forward to by 2020, each of which is integral to our European Capital of Culture programme and legacy:

- **North Quays, Waterford**, which, inspired by Ile de Nantes (one of our collaborating cities), is set to undergo a €30m transformation to create an urban quarter with creative production space and the potential for flexible indoor and outdoor cultural facilities at its heart. This will include a new footbridge to the south quays and the city centre, opening up a huge part of the city for cultural and leisure use.
- **In Kilkenny, the 16-acre former Smithwick's Brewery site** by the River Nore is a large-scale cultural regeneration proposition that offers an enormous opportunity to add capacity, diversity and quality to the region's creative and cultural industries, to integrate creative thinking into design and use, as well as to develop a hub of knowledge-intensive businesses alongside the route/against the backdrop of the city's Medieval Mile.
- **Waterford and Kilkenny City Centres, Wexford Quay and Dungarvan and Tramore town centres** collectively bringing over €22m of investment to the region for revitalisation projects. These include new public art commissions – integrated to transform the public realm; new outdoor performance space (e.g. to complement the development plans for Spraoi in Waterford); and a commitment to pervasive media platforms – where digital technology will make spaces interactive, immersive and multi-layered. Three Sisters 2020 will fully ensure these new investments connect with the best public spaces in Europe and co-commission local and European-wide creative practitioners for design and animation activities.
- **A new home for Butler Gallery at Evan's Home in Kilkenny:** move to a purpose built gallery and education space, rather than stay within the distinctive yet inappropriate heritage setting of Kilkenny Castle. This will include new space for residencies, improved and expanded exhibition space, and special education facilities. This will enable Butler to work much more effectively with audiences, to improve the offer to international artists, and to deliver excellence on a par with its international partners, which include the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

- **The Greenways⁸ and Blueways are part of an investment programme for leisure and cultural amenities on our historic transport routes.** This is a shared regional agenda to improve connectivity and in doing so increase access and participation in culture, improve health and well-being outcomes, and stimulate a more active, happy region overall. It is envisaged that up to €20 Million could be committed to such projects over the next five years across the Three Sisters region.

But perhaps our greatest cultural assets – our stage, gallery, our outdoor amphitheatre – is our natural and agricultural landscape. We are already developing cultural activities in our lovely, rippling landscape and across our coruscating copper coast. From food festivals to outdoor performances from local choirs, from dramatic contemporary installations to community flash-mobs, we want to utilise our landscape as a cultural asset for all, with the four seasons of our programme at one with the rhythm of our rural region.

As part of the European Capital of Culture development phase, the partners and tourism related agencies in the region have committed to working together to deliver a Regional Tourism Development Strategy (RTDS) for sustainable tourism development to 2025. Key areas for development as part of this strategy include infrastructural projects such as:

- Increasing access to the region via additional air routes from Europe into Waterford Airport and increasing car and foot passengers via Rosslare Europort
- Developing a regional transport system to operate during the tourism season utilising our accommodation capacity across the region to service our artistic programme in 2020 and our international festival programme beyond that year
- Commit to infrastructural developments including cycle-ways, driving routes and cultural trails across the region
- Increasing the quality, capacity and range of accommodation in the region – incorporating different types of accommodation e.g. Airbnb, glamping etc in conjunction with more traditional accommodation models of hotels, bed and breakfast etc.
- Increasing dwell time in the region, reducing the proportion of visitors who drive through from the ferry port at Rosslare
- Leveraging complementary tourism offers around the region for growth in new market segments, specifically for the culturally curious visitor and building new tourism product to reflect our ECoC cultural and creative programme areas
- Delivery of a 20% increase in overnight visitors to the region; a 30% increase in day visitors and an ambitious target of increasing our international visitors to one million in 2020. In subsequent years, from 2021-30, we are targeting a 10% increase overall in our visitor numbers

Our famous Irish fáilte, or welcome, is greatly enhanced by the ability of our visitors to move freely and easily, our response to the visitors needs and wishes, and our provision of suitable and interesting cultural infrastructure.

⁸ Off road trails used by walkers and cyclists in a recreational environment that provides independent communication paths.

Our uniqueness lies in our ability to develop authentic and immersive experiences and creates a call to action for visitors to connect with the current cultural product and creative identity of our region. We will develop a holistic approach to sustainable tourism development in the region, understanding that we need to build greater capacity, competency and specifically quality in our tourism offer. In developing this fresh approach to cultural tourism, we will look to the success of EU partners in Bornholm, Denmark (glass) and Nantes, France (Culture and Visual Arts), and learn from their successes.

Our approach is to reflect the changing ways in how tourists make choices. We will incorporate the sharing economy (collaborative consumption) in our approach, where accommodation is dominated by Airbnb etc, car-sharing and taxi-services are coordinated, experiences are shared with strangers and significant opportunities exist to get the 'inside track' from locals. This model of sharing is authentic, cost effective, peer-reviewed and offers value for money for the visitor.

We will major on growing our festival economy, on crafts and design, on excellence and innovation, on cultural trails and cultural programming in the outdoors and unexpected urban locations, on digital engagement to increase the reach and interactivity of our offer, and on business tourism for creative and knowledge industries attracted to the region. Each programme element for the year will have an identified tourism audience and a distinct path to purchase for the visitor to access and engage with the region both during 2020 and beyond. Many of our programme elements will be delivered as tester programmes prior to 2020 and will connect with audiences who will return for the European Capital of Culture year through cultural exchanges, seminal events, and new tourism trails etc.

Our regional cultural strategy, our transport infrastructure, our numerous infrastructural and renovation projects and our tourism strategy will be coordinated to ensure maximum cross-over and will provide the backdrop for the successful implementation of European Capital of Culture across the Three Sisters region.

↓ Smithwick's Brewery, Kilkenny
 ↓ Kitesurfing, Tramore Beach





05 **HOW WE
OUTREACH**

"I like waking up and hearing
the birds singing"

Isabel Lucas, aged 11

OUR BID IS GENUINELY PARTICIPATORY. IT IS DEVELOPED WITH OUR PEOPLE RATHER THAN FOR THEM.

It is predicated on co-creation and we are shaping a future region where cultural participation and entitlement are hard-wired into all our communities. The Three Sisters is driven by the people of the region. Our principles are a combination of people-led and engagement-led:

- To involve our communities in everything we do and make the local European
- To mobilise audience engagement, active participation and ownership
- To build long-term capacity in the cultural sector through a shared regional approach
- To pioneer cultural innovation – in how we create, produce, connect and reach
- To utilise new and emerging modes of communication to ensure we are connected to our communities from here to 2020 and beyond

Q: Explain how the local population and your civil society have been involved in the preparation of the application and will participate in the implementation of the year?

Because our Bid brings together three cities and counties we need to work harder and more imaginatively than tightly drawn single city bids. Digital technology is a powerful tool for us in this regard as it complements rather than replaces the process of relationship-building. To deliver our outreach programme we have embraced the geography of our region, getting out to meet people in our small villages, towns and in our cities. Our future lies in a shared approach to regional development and thus our future rests on our ability to make connections in every neighbourhood, every sector, and every institution. Yet in a region where cooperation is in the cultural DNA and where voluntary cultural activity is the lifeblood of many communities and the starting point for our leading organisations, it is not as difficult as it seems.

To develop our Bid, we have undertaken our largest ever consultation with the general public and with our cultural sector. We have generated close to 2,000 ideas and an unprecedented level of mass participation in co-creating our future. It is unprecedented for local authorities to collaborate in this way, exploring shared cultural identities for the economic and social development of a region. Our public consultation programme has been supplemented by dedicated media activity, raising the profile of the bid and mobilising participation. Our media activity has utilised traditional and new digital platforms to ensure that we reach all intended audiences and generate a shared narrative for the Three Sisters 2020.

Our activities are in part driven by the marketing and communication requirements of building a successful European Capital of Culture Programme – including demystifying the notion of European Capital of Culture and shaping participation around a regional proposition - but primarily driven by a passion to bring our people together to achieve something very special: to share the experience of building a European Capital of Culture Programme, to be involved in a participative way in shaping their own future and building opportunities to connect with communities across Europe in the process.

We have paced this process to build momentum toward our Bid submission, which has culminated this summer in a dressing and badging programme with engaged citizen outreach work linked to our major festivals. Our bespoke Three Sisters Culture Cabin – an accessible mobile engagement platform which has been ever-present at our festivals during this period - has given the Bid increased visibility and generated connectivity with all generations and cultures across the region. The process has brought the sector together like never before and, we think, truly engaged the public and communities across the region.

Our outreach and engagement programme has been led by our Bid Team, working in close partnership with the Executive Board, Cultural Steering Group and Local Authority Support Group all who have played an intermediary role brokering broker links with communities and across sectors. The latter includes Chambers of Commerce, Gaeltacht organisations, refugee organisations, community partnerships, health providers, and specific sector interests – such as in tourism, education, sport and planning. The first stage of our Creative and Cultural Knowledge Programme – a Creative and Cultural Industries Mapping Study led by WIT – has given us privileged insights to the profile and dynamics of over 300 businesses, organisations and individuals working in this sector and opened up a new dialogue on how the sector can collaborate to maximise the reach and relevance of Three Sisters 2020.

A summary of our communications work so far includes:

- Monthly key partner meetings and individual agency briefings
- Launch of our Three Sisters Memorandum of Understanding with cross-party political and local authority support across the partner counties
- Public consultation/ World Café idea generation sessions held in each partner county with more than 500 artists and organisations consulted, briefed and ideas generated for the development of the bid
- Sectoral meetings held with identified stakeholders. Comprising over 200 cultural specialists, artists and organisations from professional, community and disadvantaged groups across rural and urban areas in each city and county
- Engagement of approx. 1,000 local people via one-to-one meetings and participation and awareness building in existing networks
- Development and ongoing management of our Three Sisters social media profiles (Website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest)
- Voicebox 2020 – a model developed to engage the “culturally curious” public to examine formal and informal collaborative networks was mobilised
- The Three Sisters Culture Cabin continue to visit large and small festivals and events promoting learning and knowledge around the Bid, answering questions and mobilising support, particularly with young people.
- National and European engagement – including briefing sessions with key national institutions, international partners, national Government and via our MEPs in Brussels. We have actively sought new levels of relationship with European cities and regions with a shared set of development challenges and opportunities; plus we have sought to catalyse existing relationships – through our Twinning Associations and organisation-led partnerships which are already in place.



↑ Three Sisters Culture cabin at Kilkenny Arts Festival

OUR OUTREACH STRATEGY

We have already established the building blocks of our Outreach Strategy, but are aware that we are at the beginning of a process of long-term engagement which, with Three Sisters 2020 as the catalyst, leads towards a more cohesive, inclusive, open, caring and sharing region. All elements of this strategy will be developed in alignment with our communications strategy for the Bid.

We are conscious of our need to ramp-up and intensify our current approach, with short-listing for European Capital of Culture mobilising interest and participation beyond the already significant levels we are experiencing in this 'start-up phase'. But we also need to explore new avenues, guided by our communities, to reach, inspire and connect. Our new shared Cultural Strategy will help us to shape our thinking and attune our approach. There are three key work streams for this:

Mobilising Our Partners

We have made excellent progress in weaving a fabric of cultural organisations, health and wellbeing organisations, educational institutions, businesses and civil society partners to date.

To leverage this work:

- The Cultural Steering Group will be formalised to be a Culture Board enabling us to task members with a range of audience development and outreach activities.
- We will develop terms of reference for partners in four sectors: education, health/wellbeing/happiness, tourism/leisure and business. This will outline clear opportunities for engagement, involve specific requests to mobilise the networks of such partners, and co-define some additional activities – including programming commissions - which will improve partnership working across the Region.

Mobilising Our Volunteers

- We will deliver on our Volunteer Strategy and where possible formalise relationships to ensure we have a strong, inclusive team in place as Three Sisters Ambassadors.
- We will develop our 'digital volunteering', where production and communication tasks can be crowd-sourced.
- We will recruit a specific team of Welcome Ambassadors for events promoting the Three Sisters from 2016.
- We will commission a Three Sisters look-book to style our volunteers in a consistent way for 2020.
- We will create a strong, flexible training programme for volunteers.
- We will deliver 'cultural welcome' briefings and training to our 'regional gatekeepers' at the port and airport, train and bus stations, taxi firms and through the business and hospitality sector.
- We will grow our Three Sisters Champions cohort.

Mobilising Key Groups

It is our intention that the Three Sisters 2020 is as open, accessible and inclusive as possible. We want to generate a legacy where cultural participation is universal across the region and in which every individual feels entitled to contribute to creating, making and of course enjoying culture. This is central to our wider mission to reduce inequality; increase mobility; improve health, wellbeing and happiness and foster a more confident, collaborative and connected community for the South East. To get there we will:

- Channel our energies toward harder to reach groups – with particular attention to our children and young people; our minority communities; our elderly; our sick and disabled; and our geographically isolated.
- Work with key partners and intermediaries in specific settings (e.g. Schools, community centres, hospitals and neighbourhoods).
- Co-design a set of outreach plans for each, with targets and outcomes, and evaluate our progress.

Q: Explain your overall strategy for audience development, and in particular the link with education and the participation of schools.

OUR AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

There are two critical communities to whom we are committing particular energy and focus to ensure they are part of Three Sisters 2020. These are:

Our Children and Young People

Building a grass-roots approach to culture as an integral part of societal development has to begin with our education system.

We are currently developing a working arrangement with our education partners to ensure their full participation in the final bid through an intensive programme of briefings to people engaged in working with youth at primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. Our education engagement programme will commence officially to coincide with the 2nd term of our academic year (January 2016) and will include:

- A series of awareness building events for the Bid.
- A concerted education awareness programme to be developed in association with the Department of Education and Skills.
- Connectivity with National Education programmes including – Young Scientists, Music Generation and with the legacy programmes from Yeats 2015.
- Workshops in schools, open days, teacher and student briefings.
- Sessions at youth clubs and through the youth arts clubs, hubs (e.g. Waterford Youth Spot) and programmes.
- Education and outreach activities and programmes with our cultural partners.
- Health and care sector (through our Bid partners Waterford Healing Arts Trust) to reach children and young people with poor health or in care settings.
- Engaging via programme for children at risk and social inclusion agencies.

This activity will be shaped into specific programme strands as we build toward 2020 – as part of our commitment to delivering a bold Regional Social Contract for culture-led development, health and happiness. For example:

Eoin Colfer, Ambassador for the Three Sisters 2020 Bid, is the Children's Laureate until 2016. In reaching out to our children and young people via our education sector we will seek to work with the Children's Laureate, the Department of Education and Skills, Children's Books Ireland and the Arts Council to build a framework for the development of a programme for children's literature. Such a programme would embrace new migrant and refugee communities from across Europe enabling them to express their contribution in their vernacular, creating a mechanism for sharing and embracing new literary cultures.

A further example of how our engagement with children and young people has shaped our priorities and approach is through our programme to develop both a regional Children's Choir and regional Youth Theatre. The former is to actively engage children in cultural activity at both county and regional level via events and competitions and the latter culminating in a Children's Theatre Festival to be developed in association with the National Association for Youth Drama.

Our Diverse Communities

- We are increasingly a region of Arrivals. In recent years we have benefitted from the arrival of new communities from Eastern Europe, primarily from Poland, Lithuania and Latvia; and additionally from Nigeria, China with small numbers from South America and North Africa. We are also looking forward to welcoming arrivals from war-torn Syria. We also have larger populations from the UK and USA and 'blow-ins' from the rest of Ireland, in particular Dublin.
- It is our intention to plan for the needs of future communities. These needs are not merely our provision of basic elements, food, water and shelter, but a genuine welcome which reflects people's need to express their culture fully and freely in the new place they call home.
- We are actively pursuing collaboration opportunities with Diaspora communities in the countries associated with our arrivals. In addition, we have prioritised participation from our diverse communities in our Three Sisters volunteer and champion activities – see below.

Our Volunteers

We are a region of *cumar* - cooperation: evidenced by our successful co-operative farming industry and embedded in our sporting and cultural life (through the GAA, Irish Countrywomen's Association and Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann). For us volunteering is part of how we live. However, we haven't ever really called it volunteering and with the exception of recent major cultural and sporting events – such as the Tall Ships race in 2011, key festivals or our Town Centre Ambassador Schemes – we have not fostered programmes of structured volunteering.

Our challenge is to strike a balance between our everyday, almost intuitive volunteering and trained and highly visible volunteers which will be required for the delivery of our 2020 programme. Our strategy here is to encourage all forms of volunteering – from the informal, ad hoc 'can I help you' enquiries we are receiving daily, the interns and placements who form part of our core team, our networks of bloggers, champions and critical friends, to our dedicated volunteering programme with its Welcome Ambassadors and Three Sisters Champions.

For the latter, we have designed a Volunteering Programme and Handbook, adapted and scaled-up from the Tall Ships Race held in Waterford in 2011, with some new innovations from the volunteering activities of our cultural festivals and organisations. This includes:

- A Volunteer Committee – to oversee all volunteering activities.
- A Volunteer Engagement and recruitment Programme – integrated with our communication and outreach activities.
- A Volunteer database – matching volunteers to tasks.
- A Volunteer coordinator to be recruited to coordinate volunteer activities, including the design of volunteer clusters and networks to cover different parts of the region and to connect with specific programme areas.
- A volunteer handbook – for induction processes and to deliver a standardised approach to our volunteering.
- Regular volunteer meetings and briefings – to ensure feedback, innovation and improvement of our volunteer programme.
- A Volunteer pairing and sharing project – a 'buddy system' to connect volunteers from different parts of the Three Sisters.
- A European volunteer exchange project – to share experiences and undertake volunteer activities in different localities.
- Ongoing evaluation of the volunteering process – a targeted evaluation project feeding into our meta evaluation and shaping our volunteering strategy in the Three Sisters post 2020.

Our Ambassadors

Our Three Sisters Ambassadors and Champions are high-profile voluntary positions for a range of people capable of mobilising participation and able to articulate our collective vision in original, creative ways that resonate across the region and internationally. We have already worked with Three Sister Champions, with one for each of the Three Sisters. Each has recorded a short film for our website: www.threesisters2020.ie. As we build to 2020, we will recruit more champions from diverse backgrounds and expand our Ambassador Programme and co-create a collective narrative for the Three Sisters and non-metropolitan regions across Europe. Our current Ambassadors include:

Vincent Power of Waterford, who owned and managed iconic music venue, The Mean Fiddler in London and helped popularise festivals in the UK through the rise of Reading, Leeds, The Phoenix, The Fleadh, Madstock, and many others.

Brian Cody of Kilkenny, Irish hurling manager and former player. Cody is regarded by many as the greatest manager in the history of the game.

Eoin Colfer of Wexford, internationally acclaimed children's writer from Wexford and Ireland's Laureate na nÓg (Children's Laureate).

“The region is very magical... sometimes forgotten... we don't mind, because we like having it all to ourselves. In the spirit of generosity we would like to open it up to the rest of the world now!”



06 **OUR
MANAGEMENT
APPROACH**

“I dance because it makes me feel great.”

Teresa Peacocke, *Dancer*

OUR PHILOSOPHY IN THE THREE SISTERS IS THAT WE CAN ACHIEVE MUCH MORE TOGETHER:

We can leverage our already significant investment in culture and we can integrate culture into our cores strategies for economy, community and place.

Q: Regional budget for culture: What has been the annual budget for culture in the city over the last 5 years.

FINANCE

Our philosophy in the Three Sisters is that we can achieve much more together: we can leverage our already significant investment in culture and we can integrate culture into our cores strategies for economy, community and place. Since 2010, we have grown our overall regional investment in culture from 4% to 6% of local authority expenditure:

TABLE 08

Regional Budget for Culture (£m)						
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Library	9.9	10.3	10.1	10.2	10.6	11.0
Community & Sport	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.8	1.8
Arts & Culture	2.7	2.6	2.7	3.5	3.6	3.8
	13.7	14.1	14.1	14.9	16.0	16.5
Total Budget	320.7	318.8	301.9	281.0	308.3	284.3
% of Total Budget	4.3%	4.4%	4.7%	5.3%	5.2%	5.8%

This increase has been achieved despite a reduction in Local Authority funding and resources of approximately 20% and reflects the value the organisations and Elected Members put on culture.

Q: In accordance with question; In case the city is planning to use funds from its annual budget for culture to finance the European Capital of Culture project.

As we progress towards 2020 the LAs will increase funding to support the development and delivery of the program contributing €7.5m in resources and funding. This is in addition to funding for existing cultural activities.

Q: Which amount of the overall annual budget does the city intend to spend for culture after the European Capital of Culture year (in euros and in % of the overall annual budget)?

TABLE 09

Regional Budget for Culture (£m)								
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Existing Cultural Activities								
Library	11.4	11.6	11.9	12.1	12.3	12.6	12.8	13.1
Community & Sport	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.0
Arts & Culture	3.8	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.3
	16.9	17.3	17.6	18.0	18.3	18.7	19.1	19.4
ECoC Operating Expenditure & Legacy	0.5	2.2	1.9	0.8	0.0	2.2	1.0	1.0
Total Budget	285.8	292.6	299.9	305.9	312.0	318.3	324.6	331.1
% of Total Budget	6.1%	6.6%	6.5%	6.1%	5.9%	6.6%	6.2%	6.2%

After 2020 the LAs will maintain an additional level of expenditure on cultural activities to ensure the legacy derived from the ECoC is maintained for the region and that the capacity developed over the preceding four years is sustained.

Q: In accordance with question:
Please explain the overall operating budget.

Operating Budget for 2020

Our projected operating budget for 2020 is outlined in the table below, with a programme budget of €31m Euros. This includes public and private sector expenditure. We see this as our minimum expenditure and anticipate the potential for an uplift of up to 20% on this figure through success in fund-raising and via leverage from a wider programme of economic and social development activities. This includes European Union investment via the structural funds, Creative Europe, Horizon 2020 and partnership programs with other State Agencies including the Health Service and TUSLA the Children and Young Peoples Agency.

TABLE 10

Operating Expenditure (€m)									
	€m	%	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Program Expenditure	22.9	74%	0.3	1.2	1.8	4.0	14.1	1.5	22.9
Promotion & Marketing	4.0	13%		0.3	0.3	1.3	1.7	0.3	4.0
Wages, Overhead & Admin	4.0	13%	0.2	0.6	0.7	0.9	1.2	0.3	4.0
Total	31.0		0.5	2.2	2.9	6.2	17.0	2.2	31.0

The operating expenditure is broken down between the program, marketing and communications and the staff and administration cost of the ECoC Team. The profile of the expenditure reflects a build up of effort over the four years as we build capacity within the cultural sector and develop initiatives for 2020.

TABLE 11

Total Income to Cover Operating Expenditure (excluding Melina Mercuri Prize of €1.5m)	Total		From public sector		From private sector	
	€m	%	€m	%	€m	%
	29.5		24.5	83%	5.0	17%

Q: What is the breakdown of the income to be received from the public sector to cover operating expenditure?

At a national (state) level, we will secure investment post-selection. The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht has indicated that national government will contribute €15m to towards the operating expenditure (exclusive of any European Union investment we can leverage).

TABLE 12

Income from the Public Sector to Cover Operating Expenditure		
	€m	%
Central Government	15.0	48%
Support from State Agencies	2.0	6%
City & Region	7.5	24%
Total	24.5	

Q: Have the public finance authorities (City, Region, State) already voted on or made financial commitments to cover operating expenditure? If not, when will they do so?

Our Commitment

We could not be more committed. Our budget has been agreed and signed-off by our Executive Board, which includes the Chief Executives of the cities and counties of Waterford, Wexford and Kilkenny. Led by Waterford for the Three Sisters, the local authorities are absolutely committed to supporting the project by assigning key staff from their organisations, providing funding of €7.5m and working with key stakeholders at regional, national and international level to ensure the success of 2020 but also in ensuring the maximum benefit from the legacy for the region. There is also cross-party support without exceptions from the Local Authorities in the region. This is set out in our Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and a letter of endorsement from the Mayor / Cathaoirleach of the three Local Authorities.

Q: What is your fund raising strategy to seek financial support from Union programmes/funds to cover operating expenditure

The Bid development process for Three Sisters 2020 has enabled us to audit our current EU investment portfolio, our connections and our skills and knowledge in this field. We have dedicated officers in each of the local authorities with responsibility for EU investment and, with the backing of our Three Sisters Executive Board; we will develop an EU Cultural Investment Plan for the region.

Ireland has a decent but not excellent track record in accessing EU investment. It is our intention to leverage European Union investment for cultural and creative industries for the region, covering operating expenditure, via existing programmes including; EU Structural Funds; European Regional Development Fund; Creative Europe programme areas - European Cooperation projects, European Networks and European Platforms the European Talent Exchange Programmes and the Melina Mercuri Prize.

Q: According to what timetable should the income to cover operating expenditure be received by the city and/or the body responsible for preparing and implementing the ECoC project if the city receives the title of European Capital of Culture?

Our Timetable for Investment

We are committed to year-on-year uplift in cultural investment to 2020. This is to ensure we develop capacity and mobilise engagement in a structured way, building energy to ready ourselves for 2020 and then to enable us to bounce into 2021 with a far stronger, more resilient and growing regional cultural sector.

The Local Authorities will provide funding during the program development phase until funding from Central Government and Sponsorship become available.

TABLE 13

Sources of Income for Operating Budget (€m)									
	€m	%	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Central Government	15.0	48%			1.0	4.0	10.0		15.0
Sponsorship	3.4	11%				1.1	2.3		3.4
Ticket sales & Merchandising	1.6	5%					1.6		1.6
Support from State Agencies	2.0	6%				0.4	1.6		2.0
Melina Mercuri Prize	1.5	5%					1.5		1.5
City & Region	7.5	24%	0.5	2.2	1.9	0.8	0.0	2.2	7.5
Total	31.0		0.5	2.2	2.9	6.2	17.0	2.2	31.0

Q: What is the fund-raising strategy to seek support from private sponsors? What is the plan for involving sponsors in the event?

Strand Three: Leverage of Sponsorship. A comprehensive sponsorship program will be developed to engage with the business sector to support the Three Sisters 2020. There will be four broad categories for targeting businesses and the Bid Team

- Event Partner. The Event Partner programme offers businesses the chance to associate their brand with what will be the most significant event programme in Ireland in 2020. The packages for Event Partners will give maximum return on investment before and during the event through extensive media exposure. This model was used in 2011 for the Tall Ships Event in Waterford and contributed 23% of the funding for the event.
- Patrons Programme – offering local businesses in the region the chance to associate their company with the Three Sisters 2020. The packages will be designed to give an appropriate level of recognition to the patron in the programme and at the many events and activities taking place up to 2020 and beyond. Four packages will be available, each with an attractive range of media exposure.
- Friends of the Three Sisters – available for small businesses and individuals who wish to offer support. The packages will offer preferential ticketing for events and recognition in the main programme and website.
- Crowd-funding – we will set up a Kickstarter account – (or equivalent) to raise investment for specific programming areas. These will be crowd-sourced – where we will hold an open commission to identify a programme of two-three events or activities per month during 2020 (and one a month in 2019); and crowd-funded – where we will engage audiences from the local to global to co-invest in their production. We will stream all selected and funded projects on-line to create a channel for user-generated, crowd-sourced and crowd-funded as our 'people's fringe'.

Q: Please provide a breakdown of the operating expenditure.

TABLE 14

Program Expenditure		Promotion & Marketing		Wages, Overhead & Admin		Total Operating Expenditure
€m	%	€m	%	€m	%	€m
22.9	74%	4.0	13%	4.0	13%	31.0

Q: Planned timetable for spending operating expenditure

TABLE 15

Operating Expenditure	Program Expenditure		Promotion & Marketing		Wages, Overhead & Admin		Total
	€m	%	€m	%	€m	%	
Timetable for spending							€m
2016	0.3	1%		0%	0.2	5%	0.5
2017	1.2	5%	0.3	8%	0.6	15%	2.2
2018	1.8	8%	0.3	8%	0.7	18%	2.9
2019	4.0	17%	1.3	33%	0.9	23%	6.2
2020	14.1	61%	1.7	42%	1.2	31%	17.0
2021	1.5	7%	0.3	8%	0.3	8%	2.2
Total	22.9		4.0		4.0		31.0
2022 & 2023	1.5		0.3		0.2		

Q: What is the breakdown of the income to be received from the public sector to cover capital expenditure in connection with the title year?

Capital Expenditure

Three Sisters 2020 will not involve substantial capital investment in cultural assets. Our strategy is to make better use of what we have – to share it, connect it, invigorate it – rather than to risk the instability and cost of large-scale capital investment. Where we plan to invest, it is for improving the existing offer and for regeneration and transport projects which can be culture-led in the ways they are planned, designed and managed; and can provide new facilities for cultural activities such as workspace and outdoor performance space. Our core capital investments have already been introduced in Section 5.

TABLE 16

Income from the Public Sector to Cover the Capital Programme		
	€m	%
Central Government	109.0	57%
Local Government	23.6	12%
European Union	20.5	11%
State Agencies	38.2	20%
Total	191.30	

Q: Have the public finance authorities (city, region, State) already voted on or made financial commitments to cover capital expenditure?

All of the major infrastructural and urban renewal projects have been included in the recently announced Government investment plan "Building on Recovery: Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2016-2021". This includes the Enniscorthy and New Ross Bypass projects which are to be funded under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) program.

Q: What is your fund raising strategy to seek financial support from Union programmes/funds to cover capital expenditure?

Our fund raising strategy will leverage public sector investment across relevant sectors at both regional and national level. It will be coordinated by our Executive Board and Bid Director, with dedicated fund-raising resources from the local authorities. Our shared approach brings an opportunity to reduce the replication of services across the region - freeing-up any duplicate funding to be re-allocated to other areas of culture-led development. In addition we will ensure we are wholly connected with developments which will emerge from the Government's current 'Culture 2025' policy development process. We are in the process of reviewing how we can orientate existing funds toward more efficient use and to identifying the kinds of activities we want to develop and grow. Overall, we are clear that resources unlocked through this review process will be reoriented toward investment in audience development, especially for harder to reach communities; in professional development – to build capacity and embed excellence; and in innovation – to establish a commissioning culture for new work based on collaboration regionally and with the sector across Europe.

This progressive approach to sectoral reform will, we anticipate, open up opportunities for co-investment in our work for regional priorities (such as health and wellbeing and economic development) – such as in cultural prescribing for health and in creative industries development. We will align with national investment programmes in the arts, heritage, creative industries, education, tourism and economic development to amplify our core activities via submissions to existing and emerging programmes with local and national agencies and organisations. For example, delivering a joint Three Sisters response to Enterprise Ireland's call for submissions to a Regional Enterprise Initiative to build capacity in our cultural and creative industries, where historically each city would have submitted a rival bid.

For Three Sisters 2020 to deliver the outcomes we desire – for our region, for our collective future, and for a strong and dynamic cultural sector – we are developing three strands to fund-raising. These will be developed in detail as the investment plan for our Shared Cultural Strategy.

TABLE 17

Capital Program						
	Expenditure €m					
	Total	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Cultural Projects						
Waterford Youth Arts Centre	2.5			1.0	1.0	0.5
Carriganore Arena (Conference Facility)	1.5	0.3	1.2			
Temporary Performance Venue	0.6					0.6
Wexford Arts Centre	3.0	0.1	2.0	0.9		
Kilkenny County & City Library	4.5		0.2	0.5	3.8	
Hurling Museum	1.3				0.3	1.0
Butler Gallery	4.5				2.0	2.5
Medieval Mile Museum	5.8	4.3	1.5			
	23.7	4.7	4.9	2.4	7.1	4.6
Urban Regeneration						
Waterford North Quays	14.7		5.9	6.8	2.0	
Waterford Public Realm	9.5	1.3	4.3	3.9		
Kilkenny St Francis Abbey Site	33.0	4.4	5.4	2.5	10.0	10.7
Kilkenny Urban Regeneration	3.0				2.0	1.0
Wexford Quays Revitalisation	4.0		1.5	2.5		
Tramore Urban Regeneration	3.2	0.3	2.4	0.5		
Dungarvan Urban Regeneration	3.0	2.0	1.0			
	70.4	8.0	20.5	16.2	14.0	11.7
Infrastructural Projects						
Waterford Airport Extension	5.0			1.0	3.0	1.0
The Deise Greenway	7.4	3.8	3.6			
Wexford Greenways	16.0	0.9	8.1	7.0		
Enniscorthy By Pass (PPP)	215.0			50.0	100.0	65.0
Newross Bypass (PPP)	316.0		116.0	150.0	50.0	
Rosslare Harbour Link Road	15.0			15.0		
Enniscorthy Flood Relief & New Bridge	35.0	0.1	0.9	2.0	16.0	16.0
Kilkenny Northern Ring Road	14.0		0.1		3.9	10.0
Kilkenny Central Access Road	9.3	5.0	2.5	1.3	0.5	
	632.7	9.8	131.2	226.3	173.4	92.0
Total Capital Budget	726.8	22.5	156.6	244.9	194.5	108.3

Many of the projects are being led by the Local Authorities and have been approved in our Capital Plans. Funding for the major transport infrastructure is being provided through Public Private Partnership. The table below gives a breakdown of the sources of funding for the capital programme.

Q: According to what timetable should the income to cover capital expenditure be received by the city and/or the body responsible for preparing and implementing the ECoC project if the city receives the title of European Capital of Culture?

TABLE 18

Sources of Funding for Capital Expenditure						
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	€m
Central Government	18.5	27.9	32.7	15.2	15.5	109.8
Local Government	4.0	6.1	7.1	3.3	3.3	23.8
Public Private Partnership	0.0	116.0	200.0	150.0	65.0	531.0
European Union	0.0	4.4	3.6	6.0	5.5	19.5
State Agencies	0.0	2.2	0.5	17.0	18.5	38.2
Other	0.0	0.0	1.0	3.0	0.5	4.5
Total	22.5	156.6	244.9	194.5	108.3	726.8

Q: In accordance with questions on organisational structure;

- Delivery structure
- Management and leadership
- Staff skills and experience
- Cooperation with local authorities
- General Director and Artistic Director

OUR ORGANISATIONAL AND DELIVERY STRUCTURE

Three Sisters 2020 has already mobilised an unprecedented process of organisational change across the region, cementing strategic commitment to a shared approach to culture at the heart of a shared approach to regional planning and investment. We have already put in place the basic architecture for governance, management and delivery of Three Sisters 2020. Our next task is to grow and adapt each element and to introduce our special purpose vehicle: an arm's length agency to drive the overall artistic programme, outreach, communications and partnerships.

By the autumn of 2016, we will have set up the Three Sisters Culture Company to deliver on the vision, aims, values and principles outlined in this Bid. This will be a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. It will:

- Deliver a world class cultural programme for the region and for Europe.
- Deliver a step change in cultural capacity and participation.
- Deliver a significant upturn in the regional tourism and visitor economy.
- Deliver growth and innovation across the regional cultural and creative economy.
- Deliver a lasting economic, social and cultural legacy for the region.
- Deliver an active and effective leadership role for cultural development across Ireland and Europe.

Our Shared Cultural Strategy for the region will identify preferred governance and investment model for shared delivery with or without European Capital of Culture 2020. In both scenarios, a shared strategic and delivery company for culture is envisaged – to ensure a coordinated, efficient and innovative approach to cultural planning and investment for the South East of Ireland.

The company structure is designed to manage the rapid transition from winning the Bid to delivery of the programme. To design this, we have taken account of previous delivery and governance models for European Capitals of Culture (and other large-scale events-led programmes), and are conscious of the need for creative independence, direct management of communication and marketing, and the agility to commission artists and other contributors without the bureaucracy of public sector procurement mechanisms. The Three Sisters Culture Company will focus on five key functions:

- Strategic direction and leadership
- Creative / artistic direction, content and standards
- Development – deliver step changes and legacy in participation, tourism and the cultural and creative economy
- Marketing, communications and sponsorship;

- Evaluation – working closely with WIT to provide open access to the evaluation team. We know that from the outset we need to maintain an appropriate balance between breadth of representation and fast track decision making. The objective of ensuring community participation will be both 'top down' from Executive Board level, but also 'bottom up' via engagement with a range of stakeholder groups (including through our proposed Citizens Panel and Engagement programme). The relationship between the Three Sisters Culture Company and the three local authorities at both a policy and operational level is vital. This will be manifested as follows:
 - The Executive Board will be responsible for the successful delivery of Three Sisters 2020 – inclusive of overall strategic priorities for the programme, management of the budget and funding and the realisation of the long-term legacy for the region. It will meet quarterly to 2019, then monthly, with scope for special meetings. A senior figure from the business/cultural sector will chair the Executive Board.
 - Other members of the Executive Board will include the three Chairs of the Culture Board, a nominee from Waterford Institute of Technology, a representative from the Fund-raising, Marketing & Communications and Visitor economy panels a senior community sector partner and a leading creative entrepreneur. National bodies – e.g. Fáilte Ireland and Arts Council – will attend as advisers to the Board.
 - The Culture Board and the Citizens Panel (and Engagement Programme) will allow a blend of technical, strategic and citizen-driven input, widening ownership and democratising accountability.
 - The selective integration of high quality staff teams from local authorities and others into the company (e.g. for legal and finance), plus the technical panels, will enable us to leverage in-kind support and nurture a professional community with a shared goal to deliver a successful Three Sisters 2020.

The Three Sisters Culture Company Team

This will be led by a **Chief Executive** who will be directly accountable to the Board. The Chief Executive would lead on strategic direction and leadership, advocacy, overall accountability for delivery and reporting to the Board. The Chief Executive will be the person with singular responsibility for the delivery of a successful 2020 ECoC programme. He/She will report to the board and will be responsible for:

- Co-ordination of the programme between the cultural and administrative functions
- Driving collaboration with key stakeholders at Regional, National and European level
- Liaising with the chair of the Executive Board, Culture Board and technical panels to ensure:
 - The delivery of a world class programme
 - That adequate funding is generated to support the programme
 - That the marketing and promotion programme maximises the potential of the ECoC – locally and across Europe.
- Managing resourcing for the programme
- Delivering of the long-term strategic objectives set by the Executive Board (and enshrined in the Bid Book and new Shared Regional Cultural Strategy).

This post will be undertaken by a highly experienced individual with at least 10 years experience in large-scale programme management, preferably in the cultural sphere. This post will be recruited at the earliest opportunity.

The **Artistic Director** will be responsible for the development of programming strategy, programme content, quality and delivery. He/she will report to the Chief Executive and Executive Board and will be responsible for:

- Developing the Cultural and artistic concepts for the programme
- Development and implementation of the 2020 program
- Work with the Cultural Board to enhance and approve the concept and mobilise a regional approach
- Drive collaboration with national and European organisations
- Co-ordination of the programme across the region

This post will be for an internationally recognised innovator in cultural programming, with a track record in excellence, innovation, flair and inclusive practice. Preferably this individual will have a track record of collaborative programming in different parts of Europe, plus the ability to develop bespoke, engaging programming that connects local cultures to audiences across Europe. This post will be recruited in early 2017 on a four year contract.

The Programme lead on Development and Legacy would hold responsibility for developing the engagement, skills and structures of the community and businesses to fulfil our four social and economic step changes and legacy, including lead liaison to the Creative and Knowledge programme (for which the evaluation forms a part). Our Three Sisters Programme Coordinators will share responsibility for outline programme development, partnership (local and European) and executive production. Our finance and legal officer will ensure the professional management of accounts, procurement and partnership. Our marketing and communications officer will be the lead on our overall marketing and communication

strategy and drive our social media campaigns. We will also build on our existing team of interns and volunteers – to develop in-house capacity and skills and ensure we have a demographic mix which resonates regionally.

These posts will be recruited at the same time – with the process commencing in mid 2016 – led by the new Chief Executive.

The core team will be supported by a suite of technical panels, each of which will provide technical and advisory support – e.g. on legal and safety issues, marketing/communication, fund-raising/financial management, transport/infrastructure, visitor economy. These will be non-formal, with in-kind officer support provided by the three local authorities plus from a wider group of expert advisers sourced as strategic partners to the Three Sisters 2020. Significant progress has already been made in recruiting these partners – e.g. with official support from Waterford airport, Rosslare Europort, Waterford and Carlow Institutes of Technology, each Chamber of Commerce (and the regional Chamber – IBEC), the local community Partnerships, plus many others.

To ensure we assemble a high quality team, we will adopt the recruitment and tendering policy of Waterford City and County Council. This will ensure detailed due diligence on the qualities we need, a commitment to fairness and equal opportunity, and effective management of the recruitment process. We will also adopt contracting and pay-roll systems to ensure we transition smoothly to the establishment of the Culture Company. In addition, we will continue to take guidance from our Bid advisers – who have worked on the development of effective governance and staffing structures for European Capitals of Culture in the past.



↑ FIG 6.1 Broad involvement from across the region and the community, political, business, local authority and cultural sectors

OUR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS

Three Sisters 2020 has already mobilised a hugely diverse cast of supporters, volunteers, partners and champions. The good will, energy and excitement is palpable. This is because we need it, we want it and we can deliver it. Below we list a sample of our supporters and partners:

Our Political Support

Mayor of Waterford,
Cllr John Cummins

Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny,
Cllr Mary Hilda Cavanagh

Cathaoirleach of Wexford,
Cllr Tony Dempsey

Our Executive Leads

Chief Executive Waterford City and County Council, Michael Walsh

Chief Executive Kilkenny County Council, Colette Byrne

Chief Executive Wexford County Council, Tom Enright

Our Ambassadors

Eoin Colfer; Novelist

Vince Power; Music Festivals

Brian Cody; Hurling Manager

Our Champions

Waterford:

Jim Nolan; Playwright

Michael Kelly; Grow Your Own movement

Niamh Briggs; Irish Women's Rugby Captain

Wexford:

Blathin Ennis; Jeweller

Michael D'Arcy; Musician

Lee Chin; Hurler

Kilkenny:

Mick McAuley; Traditional Musician

Siobhan Donohue; Presenter

Tomm Moore; Animator

Our Cultural Steering Group (subsequently to be renamed Culture Board)

Anna O'Sullivan; Butler Gallery, Kilkenny

Ben Barnes; Theatre Royal, Waterford

Brian McGee, Design & Crafts Council of Ireland, Kilkenny

Caroline Senior; Garter Lane Arts Centre, Waterford

Colm Lowney; Bui Bolg Outdoor and Youth Arts, Wexford

David McCoy; Waterford Wedgewood, Waterford

Eamonn Maxwell; Lismore Castle Arts, Waterford

Elizabeth Whyte, Wexford Arts Centre, Wexford

Eugene Downes, Kilkenny Arts Festival, Kilkenny

Evelyn McNamara, Design & Crafts Council of Ireland, Kilkenny

Mairead Stafford; Wexford Craft Trail Network, Wexford

Mary Grehan, Waterford Healing Arts Trust, Waterford

Miriam Dunne, independent festivals coordinator

Naoise Nunne, Sky Cat Laughs Comedy Festival and Kilkennyomics, Kilkenny

T.V. Honan, Spraoi International Street Arts Festival, Waterford

Our Cultural Officers Group

Arts officers

Irish (Gaeilteacht) officer

Heritage officers

Archivists

Librarians

Public Participation Networks

Tourism officers

Conservation officers

Museum staff

Our Business and Agency Supporters

Bausch & Lomb

Dawn Meats

Design & Crafts Council of Ireland

Pwc

Regional Chambers of Commerce

FDYS Voluntary Youth Service

IT Carlow

Waterford Institute of Technology, Waterford

TUSLA Child & Family Agency

Waterford Airport

Rosslare Port Company – Rosslare Harbour

Gaelic Athletic Association

Theatre Royal

National Opera House

HSE – Health Services Executive

Area and Leader Partnerships

Waterford Youth Arts

Regional Local Enterprise Offices

Q: In accordance with questions on Contingency Planning.

- Risk assessment

- Strengths and weaknesses

- Risk mitigation

OUR APPROACH TO CONTINGENCY

Waterford, Wexford and Kilkenny are cities which enter into projects in a fully considered and measured way. Our track record of delivering multi-million Euro projects – from the National Opera House to the Tall Ships Race – is built on a combination of the cities historically having to live with modest resources, our project management expertise developed over many years, and an instinctively realistic approach to risk. For European Capital of Culture 2020 we have engineered risk management into all our thinking from the start. We have a six point plan:

- Realistic budgets and income targets – including contingency sums throughout and synchronisation of commitments in tandem with the securing of resources.
- An accelerated programme of securing funding and sponsorship.
- Tight project management guaranteed.
- Flexible programming – based on sensitivity analysis of all programme and project options.
- A core bid and programme narrative – to avoid any scaling up/down undermining our programme shape and scope.
- An emphasis in our programme of building on existing successful activities and events and a dovetailing of the Three Sisters 2020 programme with our new Shared Cultural Strategy.

This gives a firm springboard for growth/scaling up but also a secure buffer in the event of scaling down. All our calculations are based on our default position of 'most likely' set out in Table 10. This shows a total spend of €31m (including a contingency of €2m). Led by Waterford for the Three Sisters, the three Local Authorities will provide funding during the planning and development phase from 2017-2019 until National Government funding and Sponsorship become available.

As part of our contingency planning, we have considered the impact on the programme of 20% less funding being available. While there will be some reduction in both Admin & Salaries and in Marketing & Communications activities the main reduction will be on the Program. To achieve the reduction we will flex the scale of some events and we will curtail the scope of cultural activities on a prioritised basis. This contingency planning will be incorporated into the initial developed stage of the program. Our scaled down position is reflected in Table 19 (pg 74) showing a total spend of €24.7m.

The Three Sisters approach will be to manage strategically across programmes and not just projects. This will ensure we can still deliver across our programme themes but deliver on a reduced scale. If selected as European Capital of Culture, a priority will be to develop and detail our approach at the scaled down level of funding and work with this as the guaranteed core programme. This will be our 'first base' and it will give the European Commission the comfort of knowing we have a programme that still meets our quality thresholds and is deliverable.

In both scaled up and down options, our choices will be informed by prior sensitivity analysis on a range of programme and project scenarios to assess likely changes in social and economic impact. This will be done 'hand in hand' with the expertise available to us via our meta evaluation (as part of the over arching Creative and Cultural Knowledge Programme). The sensitivity analysis will take account of a number of programming and spend variables including:

- management and staff
- marketing and communications
- frequency
- location
- scale
- audience reach
- development work
- pricing
- national/international impact.

However, it is our assessment at this stage that a scaled-up scenario is more likely than one which is scaled-down. This is because the regional offer means we can share resources and efficiencies, leverage the investments made and the connections to funders and sponsors that there local authorities have nurtured over many years. This gives us additional capacity – in infrastructure and people; there will be no shortage of expertise and energy; and we plan to conclude funding and sponsorship discussions with partners as a priority to ensure there will be no time wasted in seeking budget certainty.

Our greatest strength is our regional dimension and our over arching passion for re-imagining the possibility of the non-metropolitan region for Europe. The scale, diversity and collaborative potential enabled by a regional approach are what excite us the most. However, with a regional approach come different risks. These are, broadly, political (we need to maintain and grow support), financial (we need to ensure a level of core funding is reached to enable reach and depth of programming across the region), and cultural (we need to work with passion and openness so that the people of the Three Sisters co-own the narrative and feel absolutely part of it). These risks and more are introduced on following page.



→ Wexford Town

TABLE 19

Scaled Down Program			
Sources of Income for Operating Budget			
	Budget €m	Reduction €m	
Central Government	12.0	-3.0	-20%
Sponsorship	2.0	-1.4	-41%
Ticket Sales & Merchandising	1.0	-0.6	-35%
Support from State Agencies	1.0	-1.0	-50%
Melina Mercouri Prize	1.5	0.0	0%
City & Region	7.2	-0.3	-5%
Total	24.7	-6.3	-20%

	Budget €m	Reduction €m	
Program	18.3	-4.7	-15%
Marketing & Communications	3.2	-0.8	-3%
Admin & Salaries	3.2	-0.8	-3%
Total	24.7	-6.3	

Our ongoing risk management is informed by our over arching sense of our strengths (how we leverage them) and weaknesses (how we mitigate them):

Some Strengths – We Need it; We Want it; We Can Deliver It.

- Our bid is an innovative new partnership between the public and private sector, cultural organisations and creative businesses, and our citizens – as we seek to survive and thrive in a non-metropolitan region. It is based on both reason and passion.
- The model we are creating will be applicable to and shared with other regions in Europe – as a pathfinder for non-metropolitan regions in an age of urbanisation, mobility and hyper-connectivity.
- For a small region we have a diverse cultural offering with world class organisations which will lead the development of an inspirational cultural programme.
- We have experience of successfully delivering major events while nurturing a diverse ecosystem of micro, voluntary and cooperative activities.

Some Weaknesses & Mitigation

- As a small region made up of small cities and rural areas, we have limited resources for major cultural infrastructure projects. Our priority is to building capacity within the cultural sector and maximising the use of existing infrastructure. However, we think that an approach which seeks to innovate within our means is the reality for most parts of Europe and will offer significant learning for other regions.
- We are in the early stages of working collaboratively through culture – we lack a long term track record of working across the Local Authorities and cultural community. However we have the political support; we have the passionate backing of the cultural sector; we have reached out and built trust with so many citizens; and we have shaped an approach which feels both local and European, embedded and connected, authentic and radical.

The journey has begun and 2020 will be an important staging post in the culture-led transformation of the region and other like it.

- Like all of Ireland outside Dublin and perhaps Cork, we do not have a high profile at a European level and will need to work hard to attract the gaze of visitors, investors and strategic partners. Our structured approach to everything from communication to tourism development, and our serious and committed approach to partnership with national and international organisations, are mitigating factors here: we are transitioning toward being a much more active, visible, connected and accessible region.

Q: How are you planning to overcome weakness, including through the use of risk mitigation and planning tools, contingency planning?

A comprehensive project management procedure will be put in place to coordinate and control all aspects of the program. This will include

- Detailed project plans for all elements of the program development and delivery.
- Identification and management of the dependencies within the program.
- Management of the Critical Path particularly for elements of the program which are being delivered by outside organisations.
- Weekly and monthly project management meetings.
- Quarterly review of risks and mitigation measures with the Executive Board.

TABLE 20

Risk	Likelihood Scale from 1 (unlikely) to 5 (likely)	Impact Scale from 1 (low impact) to 5 (high impact)	Proposed Mitigation
Funding – don't achieve minimum 'scaled down' funding of 24.7m	1	5	Core funding already secured from City and County Councils. Establish and agree minimum core programme from this baseline position.
Funding – don't achieve 'most likely' core funding of 31m	2	3	Aggressive funding and sponsorship strategy. Expertise and resource in Three Sisters Culture Company to pursue funding. Accelerated strategy to determine funding levels early.
Political support lapses	2	5	Our bid is underpinned by a rock solid commitment by the three local authorities – enshrined in the MoU. This has cross-party political support. The establishment of a new culture company will enable programme development to commence without undue political interference, while we have developed the architecture for ongoing feedback loops into the 3 chief executives and their political representatives. With the 'win win' of growing the cultural sector and diversifying the economy at a time of austerity, we are confident of retaining and growing political support.
Failure to attract and retain key staff	2	5	Offer competitive salaries with long-term contracts (minimum 3 years). Seek secondees from the local authorities and wider partnerships to complement our open market recruitment.
Low attendance / engagement from 'harder to reach' groups	2	4	Major 'Take Part' marketing and engagement campaign Programme will dovetail with existing participation – in schools, community sector, sports. Programme lead on Development and Legacy in post ASAP to ensure community engagement and audience development Strong engagement from LAs and key social inclusion organisations
Strategic and delivery partners not fully engaged	2	5	Partners already have key strategic relationships with the Three Sisters 2020 and are already fully engaged and committed. Ongoing engagement activities will identify opportunities for shared benefit – so Three Sisters 2020 delivers on strategic outcomes for a wide range of partners and opens up specific tasks to keep them engaged.
Challenges in delivering impacts and legacy for the region	2	5	Strong programming and impact evaluation from the outset – with our Creative and Cultural Knowledge Programme in place providing real-time assessment and enabling a change of approach as required. The dedicated Programme lead on Development and Legacy in the Culture Company will test, challenge and oversee legacy.
Challenges in delivering a programme for Europe	2	5	We have positioned connection to and collaboration with Europe as a golden thread which runs through everything we do. This is enshrined in our Arrivals Manifesto. By working in close partnership with organisations and cities across Europe, and by paying attention to our ongoing evaluation (which will focus on European dimension as a key outcome), we will ensure our narrative and programme reaches out and appeals across the continent.
Difficult attracting priority international artists	2	4	We have already established strong in principle agreements with a range of cultural organisations across Europe, which will enable us to open dialogue with priority artists. We are also in advanced discussions with a number of internationally acclaimed artists from different sectors who live in or have strong ties with the region. Plus our track record – e.g. in the festivals sector – shows our track record on international commissioning is impeccable.
Reduced visitor numbers	2	4	For 2019-20, we will be the lead cultural brand for Ireland and Three Sisters 2020 will be complemented by a region wide cultural marketing and communication programme – led by Fáilte Ireland and commencing in the Autumn 2015. We are also working in close partnership with the port and airport, plus will engage train and bus companies to increase visibility and access.

Q: In accordance with questions relating to Marketing and Communication.

OUR APPROACH TO MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION

Three Sisters 2020 represents the value non-metropolitan and rural regions brings to a civil and culturally engaged society, rejecting the notion that centralisation is the key to sustainability and development. Our Bid can be captured by the slogan: it champions and coordinates. In other words, Three Sisters 2020 will vastly increase and improve the profile of the EU across all areas of governance and civil society in Ireland.

Better Together

Ní Neart go Cur le Chéile'

Together we have combined our skills, resources and capabilities to enable us to build competitive advantage, highlight our innovation capacity, our cultural merit and development path, engage our communities and build momentum for a Bid which was initially considered a pipe dream. In a region which has been relatively overlooked in favour of large city development, our communications process focuses on building our dream into a reality.

The bidding process for Three Sisters 2020 has catalysed the development of a new brand identity for the region. In the past however, our region has struggled in terms of positioning a clear and attractive brand narrative. The bid development process and its approach to branding, marketing and communication has involved consulting with key regional stakeholders from citizens to business and the arts, alongside external stakeholders such as inward investors, broadcasters and journalists, and politicians.

Our people are opening up to the fact that their region could become the 'European Capital of Culture', their ideas, energy and commitment is being shown through engagement on our social media platforms, attendance at our public meetings, World Café idea generation sessions, online submissions, Culture Cabin and through a myriad of communications channels from libraries and schools through to local, regional and national media exposure.

In the Three Sisters we are great believers that place marketing is driven by product rather than promotion. But we need to be much more effective in developing and then communicating that product and make it clear to domestic and global partners what we have to offer them. This spirit of our brand will be the platform through which we tell the 'Three Sisters story'.

Our marketing and communications strategy is underpinned by an implementation plan. The aim of this plan being to achieve the core objectives of the European Capital of Culture year, providing a cohesive and coherent message to aligned partners, stakeholders and relevant communities. The strategy focuses on audience and key stakeholder engagement with specific public relations plans for identified stakeholders. It includes both a macro and micro environment analysis ensuring that current market trends are considered and built upon, and that potential for additional market share is leveraged.

The Three Sisters has already committed to this process by engaging a public relations specialist to work with the Bid Team at this early stage of development. During 2016 our marketing and communications strategy will come firmly into focus with the engagement of a dedicated resource as part of the delivery team a key element of their role being to manage relationships with key media partners (press, radio and audio visual).

Ongoing management and the continued development of our online platforms is fundamental to our approach to building user-generated content and word of mouth for the year. This type of engagement has global reach and reflects our vision of engagement and participation. All channels will drive to our website, which will provide the central information point for build up to and for the programme year itself. It will be used as a tool for ongoing information and communication as well as the 'go to' space to volunteer, fund, engage with the programme for 2020 and beyond. Offline marketing is equally important in that the word of mouth awareness and involvement of partner organisations will require meetings, written material, media activity, networking etc.

Our Ambassador Programme enables us to communicate through individuals who have a genuine and credible link to the year of celebration but who are not working directly with the programme development and delivery itself. Their representation of the vision of the programme provides authenticity and their endorsement of the year will be vital in relating our message to those who would not generally access culture. The Three Sisters 2020 identity and vision highlights our ambition and our European agenda at home and abroad. People and place are the core of our message. Marketing and communications both in Ireland and across Europe will be significantly enhanced via partners and collaborators websites and social media platforms and viral messaging across these platforms and the potential for development of a shared media relations programme with the successful European Capital of Culture candidate city in Croatia.

Funders, sponsors and commercial interests also form part of our strategy. Their input provides reach to additional markets as well as the potential for development of bespoke marketing initiatives with commercial partners as appropriate and as determined by programme and audiences. We have already commenced this process through our current Stakeholder Engagement Process.

It is our intention to develop our range of media partners to ensure programme awareness to all intended markets. Our media partners are as likely to be Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and new social media platforms that will emerge in the coming years, as well as established traditional media including national and international press, television, radio, tourism agency partners and targeted tourism titles such as Conde Nast Traveller and Monocle. In many cases development of these partnerships has already commenced. All media partner relationships will be finalised in 2016. A sample of these media partnerships includes:

- RTÉ TV – Ireland's national broadcaster – development of a monthly magazine programme featuring highlights and outline upcoming events for the year and regular news items
- TG4 – Irish Language television – Broadcast of specific programme elements relating to traditional culture, language and community through the Irish language.
- Sky Ireland / Sky Arts – development of key
- TED Talks – inclusion of specific talks from key symposia in advance of and during the 2020 year to global audiences
- RTÉ LyricFM to promote the classical music elements of our programme – including the recording and broadcast of events to multiple audiences in other locations during the year.
- RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta - Irish language radio station
- Irish Times – Ireland's premier National Newspaper. We will work with The Irish Times through their Culture section to create a media partnership for the year which will promote the European Capital of Culture to global audiences through their epaper online and a special feature edition and programme pull out in advance of the 2020 Opening Ceremony.

- Tourism Ireland – www.ireland.com focussing on international markets (Europe) and culturally curious visitors in particular with delivery of targeted ezines for Three Sisters 2020 to key market segments in identified countries as well as a significant international audio-visual marketing campaign for Three Sisters 2020.
- Curation of the @Ireland Twitter account as regular intervals in advance of and during the European Capital of Culture Year.
- Fáilte Ireland – marketing campaign development and public relations activity as part of the Ireland Ancient East brand roll out, creating a distinct cultural identity for the Three Sisters within this new strategic marketing concept.
- Local and regional media partnerships will also be further developed and will link to specific programme elements to continue to build engagement with local audiences.
- Existing festival partner media relationships will be enhanced and further developed for our seminal year. We will work with our festivals to ensure proactive awareness building of the European Capital of Culture as part of all festival communications.
- An Post – Design competition and development of a postage stamp for the ECoC Year.

Q: How will you mobilise your own citizens as communicators to the outside world?

For Business and Investment

Our aim is to for Three Sisters 2020 to re-orientate and attract investors, both international and domestic, to do business with Ireland via Three Sisters 2020. The region lacks strategic networking opportunities for creative businesses. During 2020, our festival and conference activity will provide these networking opportunities on a regional, national and international level. Our approach includes working relationships with the communications teams in our national agencies; Enterprise Ireland, IDA, Design & Crafts Council of Ireland and in our regional partners Waterford Institute of Technology and regional Chambers of Commerce and local Government.

For Tourism

We need to work harder to capture a larger share of the tourism economy. We have moved from an era of mass communication – with passive audiences, to increasingly tailored interactive communications where audiences have an active role in the process. We will work with Fáilte Ireland to ensure maximum connectivity via their marketing campaigns, with Tourism Ireland in promoting the South East to international visitors, via their teams across Europe and with Culture Ireland in raising international awareness of the European Capital of Culture via their programming across Europe in the years leading up to 2020.

For Our Communities

Getting behind a concept and developing a call to action for visitors and local communities alike is an area where the Three Sisters already excels from recent large-scale international and national programmes such as Fáilte Ireland's 'The Gathering' and our 'Tall Ships' events. We will focus on audience engagement, active participation and sustainable culture-led development as key ingredients for legacy beyond 2020. This will be leveraged by our Citizen's Engagement Panel and activities for engagement before, during and after the year.

Q: How does the city plan to highlight that the European Capital of Culture is an action of the European Union?

For Europe

Three Sisters 2020 is all about Europe. It is a commentary, living lab, performance and demonstration of the contemporary European experience in a non-metropolitan region. This is introduced in detail in Section 2. The European element is pervasive and tangible. There are core elements to our marketing and communication strategy which will highlight that Three Sisters 2020 is an action of the European Union:

- In branding and positioning, we will adopt the guidelines of the European Union on the use of appropriate logos for all materials. We will also ensure all written materials (digital and analogue) include statements which refer to the European Union as a key partner and provider of the title. This includes references to specific EU policies and actions – so we connect to a broader EU strategic landscape.
- In programming, we will link to key European themes, policy priorities and events, to amplify the EU message and make it clear that our regional interventions are part of a wider EU policy and cultural landscape. This includes a focus on core programming activities. We will promote EU events and activities as additional programming elements and publish commentary on wider EU activities in our written communications.
- In partnership and collaboration. Every element of our programme will involve collaboration with European artists, programmes, cities and regions. Some of these activities will be supported through EU investment. All activities will explore and provide commentary on being European and how we collaborate to build a better future.
- In engagement and local translation. Our community outreach work, our schools activities, and our partnerships with organisations and businesses across the region, give us an opportunity to describe the role of the European Union and make clear that Three Sisters 2020 is supported by the EU. This will enable us to translate the role of the EU to local people on their terms in ways that they can engage with. It will include an intercultural dimension where our diverse communities are involved in shared activities enabling enable dialogue on notions of Europeanness and the role of the EU.

CLOSING WORDS

To close our Bid, we would like to remind the reader of our passion, our commitment and our vision:

Three Sisters European Capital of Culture 2020 will enable us to focus our collective creative ambition to delivering an informed and sustainable culture-led development for our region. Harnessing the cooperative, collaborative and creative potential of our urban and rural areas, we will foster new ways of working that connect, support and transform the lives of our citizens and embrace our shared European heritage and future.

Bid Team (from left to right): Cornelia McCarthy, Michael Quinn, Mick D'Arcy, Katherine Collins



ANNEX 2

DECLARATION OF HONOUR BY THE APPLICANT CITY

The undersigned : Michael Walsh

representing the following legal person:

full official name: **Waterford City & County Council**

official legal form: **Local Authority**

full official address: **City Hall, The Mall Waterford City.**

VAT registration number: **3263046AH**

- certify that the applicant city is not in one of the following situations which would exclude it from receiving Union prizes:
- is bankrupt or being wound up, is having its affairs administered by the courts, has entered into an arrangement with creditors, has suspended business activities, is the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
 - has been convicted of an offence concerning professional conduct by a judgment of a competent authority of a Member State which has the force of *res judicata*;
 - has been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the Commission can justify including by decisions of the European Investment Bank and international organisations;
 - is not in compliance with all its obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions and the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which it is established, with those of the country of the authorising officer responsible and those of the country where the action is to be implemented;
 - has been the subject of a judgement which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering or any other illegal activity, where such activity is detrimental to the Union's financial interests;
 - is subject to an administrative penalty for being guilty of misrepresenting the information required as a condition of participation in a procurement procedure or another grant award procedure or failing to supply this information, or having been declared to be in serious breach of its obligations under contracts or agreements covered by the Union's budget.
- declare that the applicant city:
- has no conflict of interests in connection with the prize; a conflict of interests could arise in particular as a result of economic interests, political or national affinity, family, emotional life or any other shared interest;
 - will inform the Commission, without delay, of any situation considered a conflict of interests or which could give rise to a conflict of interests;
 - has not granted and will not grant, has not sought and will not seek, has not attempted and will not attempt to obtain, and has not accepted and will not accept any advantage, financial or in kind, to or from any party whatsoever, where such advantage constitutes an illegal practice or involves corruption, either directly or indirectly, inasmuch as it is an incentive or reward relating to the award of the prize;

j) provided accurate, sincere and complete information within the context of this prize award procedure.

➤ I declare that the applicant city is fully eligible in accordance with the criteria set out in the specific call for submission of applications.

➤ I acknowledge that according to Article 131 of the Financial Regulation of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (Official Journal L 298 of 26.10.2012, p. 1) and Article 145 of its Rules of Application (Official Journal L 362, 31.12.2012, p.1) applicants found guilty of misrepresentation may be subject to administrative and financial penalties under certain conditions.

If selected to be awarded a prize, the applicant city accepts the conditions as laid down in the call for submission of applications.

Last name, first name: Walsh, Michael

Title or position in the city: Chief Executive of Waterford City & County Council

Signature [and official stamp] of the applicant:



Date: 24/9/2015

Your reply to the call for submission of applications will involve the recording and processing of personal data (such as your name, address and CV), which will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data. Unless indicated otherwise, your replies to the questions in this form and any personal data requested are required to assess your application in accordance with the specifications of the call for submission of applications and will be processed solely for that purpose by the Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Details concerning the processing of your personal data are available on the privacy statement at the page: http://ec.europa.eu/dataprotectionofficer/privacystatement_publicprocurement_en.pdf.

Your personal data may be registered in the Early Warning System (EWS) only or both in the EWS and Central Exclusion Database (CED) by the Accounting Officer of the Commission, should you be in one of the situations mentioned in:

- the Commission Decision 2008/969 of 16.12.2008 on the Early Warning System (for more information see the Privacy Statement on http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm), or
- the Commission Regulation 2008/1302 of 17.12.2008 on the Central Exclusion Database (for more information see the Privacy Statement on http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm#BDCE)

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Three Sisters