

UPDATE ON THE CRAFTS COUNCIL OF IRELAND (CCoI) STRATEGIC PLAN 2010 – 2012

September 2012

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

Based on the objectives of the Strategic Plan, CCoI set out to engage and consult with a number of key support agencies, particularly in January 2011 as part of the Year of Craft 2011 Craft Summit. The outputs of the Craft Summit provided strategic focus as the organisation set about delivering on the second year of the three year plan for 2010 – 2012.

Brief updates on the activities of each of the process teams of the organisation are set out below. These are presented as a high-level overview and do not attempt to cover all the activities of each team. All activities across the organisation are planned and implemented in line with the objectives of the Strategic Plan. Therefore all proposals and opportunities that arise are evaluated on a case by case basis and will only proceed if a project will assist in the delivery of CCoI's strategic goals and can be implemented through existing programmes.

The main focus of the Strategic Plan is on developing and growing the craft industry in Ireland. Four main strategic objectives were identified, each with associated areas of focus. An operational plan was developed in tandem with the Strategic Plan to map out activities across all programme teams.

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

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

Objective 1:

DEVELOPING THE MARKET FOR IRISH CRAFT

The Crafts Council of Ireland is committed to developing market opportunities for Irish craft, through two strands of activity: Developing Market Channels and Developing Craft Enterprises. The key aims are:

1a: Developing the Market Channels

- To expand the retail channels for Irish craft
- To increase direct selling opportunities for Irish craft

- To develop the tourism market for the benefit of Irish craft
- To develop the commercial gallery and exhibition channels for Irish craft

1b: Developing Craft Enterprises

- To deliver a range of supports for craft enterprises through a comprehensive CCol mentoring service
- To deliver skills training addressing specific industry needs
- To create business support information for CCol member organisations and craft enterprises
- To develop relationships with national and international partners to increase training and development in Irish craft
- To identify and influence opportunities for teacher education for craftmakers

UPDATE:

Expanding the retail channels for Irish craft has been a key area of focus during the term of the Strategic Plan and was a central component of the Year of Craft 2011 initiative. During 2011, CCol launched and supported four strong consumer marketing campaigns to grow understanding of disciplines, awareness of individual maker brands and sales across various channels. These campaigns were supported through the expansion of the www.giveirishcraft.com website. In addition to growing ties with major retailers, CCol encouraged innovative retailing initiatives through the launch of the “Curated Craft” programme as part of Year of Craft 2011. This year we were also delighted to work in partnership with Arnotts in launching a dedicated space in their gift department showcasing the best of contemporary Irish craft and design. The ‘Irish Craft Collective’ gives over 20 Irish craftspeople the opportunity to retail their products in a department store.

CCol also leveraged Showcase – Ireland’s Creative Expo to connect with international retailers. As part of the organisation’s plans for continually developing the annual show, CCol has expanded the Creative Island area at Showcase and launched a new Fashion Show at Showcase 2012. In order to increase opportunities for direct sales, CCol has exhibited at major direct-sales events during the term of the Plan, including Bloom in the Park, Tall Ships Race Waterford, the Interior Design & Art Fair and the National Crafts & Design Fair, while also supporting numerous smaller direct selling shows such as pop-up shops.

The National Craft Gallery has expanded both its programme of exhibitions in Kilkenny and the touring programme. CCol has created an External Exhibitions Fund and has also supported numerous makers to show abroad. Relationships continue to be strengthened with exhibition partner. A new show was launched at the Royal Hibernian Academy (RHA) featuring work from Irish Craft Portfolio in 2011 and work will be presented again at the RHA later this year. Throughout 2011, CCol also worked with Fáilte Ireland to visit and audit 130 craft studios in preparation for the roll out of a national craft trail initiative in 2012.

The Enterprise Development Team has hosted specialist workshops as part of the Building Craft Enterprise - Making it in Business programme. Last year alone, 56 enterprises received mentoring, and 70 businesses were awarded funds through our Continuing Professional Development (CPD) fund. 150 enterprises attended the Continuing Professional Development workshops and a regional delivery plan was implemented to make the service available to a wider audience.

Objective 2:

BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CRAFTMAKERS

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

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

UPDATE:

Existing education programmes are being enhanced throughout the term of the Strategic Plan and new initiatives were announced during Year of Craft 2011. In 2011, CRAFTed, CCol's craft education initiative for primary schools, was delivered as a nationwide programme in partnership with Education Centres and a new dedicated online learning resource for teachers www.learncraftdesign.com was developed and launched as a legacy of Year of Craft 2011. The Future Makers Awards & Grants programme has been maintained and the accompanying website has been redeveloped.

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

Objective 3:

RAISING AWARENESS OF IRISH CRAFT

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

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

UPDATE:

The Year of Craft 2011 initiative was promoted in advance and throughout 2011, with all events, promotional campaigns and activities across all process teams supported through national and local media, online and social media. Key coverage has been achieved across TV, radio and both national and regional print media, including several pieces of TV and print media coverage internationally.

Highlights have included An Post's launch of a series of five stamps promoting Irish craft to mark Year of Craft 2011. The media partnerships established for Year of Craft resulted in a series of adverts and a 32 page special supplement on Irish craft in The Irish Times in June 2011, and the airing of a specially created TV advert through the RTÉ Supporting the Arts Scheme.

Relationships established during Year of Craft 2011 continue to be developed with key media throughout the country and internationally. CCol was delighted to work in collaboration with Big Mountain Productions on a six- part TV series Craft Master which was aired on RTÉ One in autumn 2011. Craft Master was very well received and a second series is currently in production.

In preparation for supporting the level of activity for the Year of Craft 2011 programme, a new website www.craftinireland.com was launched in 2010. As part of CCol's ongoing web developments, the implementation of a new, comprehensive CRM system commenced in 2011 and is being rolled out during 2012.

Each December, CCol organises a Consumer Perceptions Survey. The annual survey in December 2011 was conducted by Millward Brown Lansdowne and the outcomes were very encouraging for the impact that the Year of Craft 2011 initiative had on consumers.

Objective 4:

STRENGTHENING THE MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

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

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

UPDATE:

During the term of the Strategic Plan the Guilds, Associations, Networks and Societies (GANS) have taken part in and provided craft demonstrations at numerous events across the country

such as Showcase, Bloom, Tall Ships Race Waterford, Electric Picnic and the National Crafts & Design Fair to name just a few. As part of Year of Craft 2011, the Network Supports Scheme was extended and 31 GANS participated with an exciting array of activities. CCol also coordinated a Counties Initiative, which saw 21 counties directly involved in the Year of Craft programme. Both the Network Supports Scheme and the Counties Initiative have been maintained for 2012, albeit on a smaller scale.

As a result of discussions at recent GANS meetings, a Craft Heritage Association has been set up in order to focus on maintaining the heritage of some traditional crafts.

As we approach the end of 2012, CCol continues to deliver our current programmes and activities, which will bring the Strategic Plan 2010 – 2012 to a close. We look forward to receiving input from our member organisations and clients on our strategic development as we formulate the organisation's Strategic Plan 2013 – 2015 which will be launched in November 2012.