Creative West
The Creative Sector in the Western Region

Creative Industries, Innovation & the Smart Economy

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Creative Sector Definition

‘Occupations and industries centred on creativity, for the production and distribution of original goods and services.’ (WDC, 2009)

- Creative Application
- Creative Expression
- Creative Technology
Background

- Research & policy on creative sector focused on urban areas – ‘Creative City’

- Potential for rural regions? Role in Smart Economy? Regional Policy?

- *Creative West: The Creative Sector in the Western Region* (www.wdc.ie)
Western Region

- 7 counties
- 68% of pop. in rural areas - few large centres
- Unemployment rate 10.8% (up from 5%)
- Rising education levels
- Potential growth areas: Green; Creative; Medical devices; ICT; Tourism; Marine; Elder care
Creative Sector & Rural Regions

- EU-27 – 24% of cultural emp in sparsely populated areas

- 50 fastest growing rural districts in Britain (5.5% creative emp) v 50 slowest growing (4.6% creative emp)
National Policy Context

- No national policy for Creative Sector

  
  ‘We need to pursue an integrated policy framework to maximise the return economically, culturally and socially from [the arts, culture and creative] sectors.’
Western Region’s Creative Sector

- 4,779 businesses
- €270m contribution to region’s GVA = 1.7% of total
- Direct employment 11,000 = 3% of total
- Size of businesses: 39% self-employed; 12% >10 employees
- Low export activity - Total exports €72m
## Creative Employment by County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Share of total employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donegal</td>
<td>1,929</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sligo</td>
<td>1,265</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galway</td>
<td>3,878</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayo</td>
<td>1,536</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clare</td>
<td>1,303</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roscommon</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leitrim</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Western Region</strong></td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td><strong>3.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3.4**
Estimated employment and share of total employment in the creative sector in each western county, 2008
Creative People: Issues & Recs.

- **Creative Talent:** Pool of creative talent, but difficult to access; Skills gaps in creative tech; Highly mobile

- **Education & Training:** Creativity not adequate in schools; Culture of creativity; Insufficient business-HE links (training, R&D); Lack of business skills

- Integrated national policy needed

- Mainstream creativity in curriculum

- Business training tailored for creative sector needs
Creative Place: Issues & Recs.

- Quality of Life, Natural Environment & Creative Inspiration:
  - Important attractors;
  - Quieter lifestyle;
  - Landscape; Gaeltacht

- Connectivity:
  - Lack of sufficient quality broadband in rural areas;
  - Weaknesses in transport access

- Regional pilots for Next Generation Networks in rural areas to allow creative people operate where they want to live

- Improve transport access infrastructure & services
Creative Place: Issues & Recs.

- **Workspace & Infrastructure**: Lack of low cost workspace; Many built own

- **Planning & Development**: Impact of recent developments on sense of place; Attractiveness of built environment

- Provide high-spec facilities & meeting hubs

- Local design councils to advise LAs on urban design to improve built environment
Creative Support: Issues & Recs.

- **Networking & Alliances:** Low networking activity in sector & with wider economy.

- **Marketing & Promotion:** Coherent marketing/branding seen as priority; Showcasing opportunities.
  - Creative website with database of operators, funding information, profiles etc.
  - Promotion of a ‘Creative West’ brand.

- Networks of practice & transfer of creative capabilities to wider economy through events.
Creative Support: Issues & Recs.

- **Access to Funding:**
  Eligibility criteria for funding & public procurement;
  Suitability for creative businesses; IP

- **R&D:** not sufficient
  R&D for creative sector; role of creative sector in innovation

- Review enterprise supports to assess suitability for creative sector

- Public procurement criteria, weighting for good design

- Examine research needs of CS;
  Creativity in Science & Technology research
Creative Sector & Regional Policy

- Preserving QoL, landscape, heritage, built environment critical for rural regions
- Creative talent is an asset in a rural region – needs to be retained & attracted
- Infrastructure to access international markets (physically & virtually) to reduce peripherality
- Catalytic & spillover impacts on regional innovation may outweigh direct benefits
- Public sector resources & regional policy under pressure
Thank You
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