



November 2013

# 4CNW Business Innovation Programme

## Independent Evaluation Report



This initiative is financed under the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) which aims to encourage the competitiveness of European enterprises.



**EUROPEAN  
Creative Industries  
ALLIANCE**



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# I Executive Summary



First Western were appointed by Sligo County Council, the lead partner for the 4CNW project to undertake an external evaluation and review of the project activities, its impacts and learning points over its two year duration from January 2012 to December 2013. This report presents the findings of the review and associated conclusions and recommendations.

## Project Overview

The Creative Challenge Celtic Crescent North West or more commonly known as the 4CNW Project was a pilot programme funded through the European Creative Industries Alliance with the overall aim of demonstrating how public authorities can stimulate business innovation take-up and increase enterprise competitiveness and growth through the use of creative services in business. The origins of 4CNW are contained in the Creative Sligo Strategy & Action Plan 2010-12 which was an initiative of Sligo County Development Board. Funding of €243,486 was provided over a 2 year period for the project with a matching contribution of €85,590 from Sligo County Council, giving a total budget of €328,876. 4CNW operated as a public / private partnership with Sligo County Council acting as lead partner. It operated in the North West region of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Western Scotland via its transnational dimensions.

The main programme actions were the management of a competitive talent voucher fund that supported small and micro enterprises to address creative challenges within their enterprise. A brokered match making service was administered to help enterprises define their creative challenge and select the most suitable creative supplier to address this challenge. A creative directory was developed to make the services of creative suppliers more accessible and encourage greater use of creative services in small and micro enterprises. A range of information and awareness events were organised throughout the programme region for beneficiary businesses and creative suppliers as well as 3 transnational events to stimulate transnational cooperation and working among participants.

## Rationale for 4CNW Programme

Enterprise policy in Europe and Ireland is increasingly recognising the role played by creative services and input not only in developing and driving the innovation agenda within individual firms, but also the sectors growing contribution to economic output, employment and GDP. In recognition of this the European Creative Industries Alliance was established under Europe 2020 to develop policy responses and test initiatives within the creative industry sector. The 4CNW project is one of four pilot initiatives with a focus on innovation vouchers to provide business support to Creative Industries' and to stimulate a greater uptake of Creative Industries services, capabilities and knowledge by other industries. The role is enshrined in Irish Enterprise Policy in key documents such as the Strategy for Science and Technology and the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs and the National Action Plan for Jobs. The 2013 Action Plan for jobs recognises the potential of the creative sector and in particular the role it plays in innovation and maintaining small enterprises.



# Summary of Key Findings

- The operation of 4CNW demonstrated a huge latent capacity for the application of creative services and input across business sectors. It showed a lack of capacity for businesses to define their creative needs and a lack of awareness of the depth of creative talent available in their local region. It demonstrates a need for capacity building mechanisms to grow the knowledge and awareness within industry as to the value of creative services.
- The application of the talent voucher fund allowed the value of creative services to be showcased and demonstrated. It created new avenues to markets and clients for creative industries while developing new solutions for participating businesses.
- The holistic, bespoke business supports offered by 4CNW offered a co-ordinated and targeted response, towards stimulating new markets, enhancing competitiveness and innovation among many small firms across a range of enterprise sectors.
- The matchmaking process was seen as beneficial from both a creative supplier and business point of view.
- The actions of 4CNW are welcomed as a good support and intervention measure by both the business sector and creative sector. Overall the talent voucher programme is a good incentive to get businesses to tackle creative issues and stimulate new business thinking
- The programme did allow the creative sector access to new potential clients and a new opportunity to showcase their services that would not be available elsewhere
- From the business perspective the programme allowed businesses to see and discover a wider range of creative talent and what is available to them than here to fore. It allowed them access and knowledge not only to the range of creative services that are available, but showed examples of how using such services can help their business and its sustainability



# Summary of Key Findings

- The project has shown the merits of what creative input can give to business in terms of value, changed thinking, opening mind-sets towards implementing new approaches to problems and thereby enhancing capacity competitiveness and innovation in industry. Therefore there is strong merit in the continuation and expansion of 4CNW actions. 4CNW fits well within EU and Irish enterprise policy, especially in relation to driving the innovation agenda and development of entrepreneurship skills.
- Overall promotional activities undertaken are seen as satisfactory, which is reflected in the project over achieving in the number of attendees, the numbers of applications for talent vouchers and applications for places on the creative panel.
- 4CNW has been successful in achieving its original aims and objectives and the learning acquired indicates that there is strong merit in developing a successor programme which would have a national reach and specifically supporting the development of solutions for business that require a more complex level of creative input.
- Strong progress has been made by the project team informing Government and key policy makers at regional and national level on the work of and actions of the 4CNW pilot and how it stimulates innovation and creativity in business to enhance competitiveness. An agreed proposal on sustainability of the programme has been agreed at Government level. This includes:
  - Solid recognition of the value of the 4CNW type approach and interventions.
  - The need to ensure that a successor programme will be additional to all current enterprise support provision with a strong focus on job creation
  - Future supports will move towards developing supports that involve higher and more complex levels of creative input to business





# Summary of Key Recommendations

## Project Management and Structure

- The expert panel and expert creative panel should act more like a strategic advisory group with responsibility for devising and laying out overall project direction, strategy and overarching implementation guidelines.
- The regional panels should be the responsible body for final awarding of talent vouchers, under guidelines and criteria approved by the expert panel.
- It is recommended that future such programmes are delivered through mainstream enterprise support structures. An ideal opportunity exists through the reform of local service delivery and proposed establishment of the Local Enterprise Offices.
- The recommendations on the future project sustainability strategy call for national engagement of stakeholders to examine the strategic fit of the 4CNW programme and develop a strategic framework to take this forward.

## Talent Vouchers

- For future programmes, it is recommended to test other variations of the matchmaking process with a view to making it a more efficient and faster process from the beneficiaries and creative supplier's point of view.
- It is recommended that future programmes continue the use of technologies to assist in the match making, pitching and supplier selection process.
- There is a real need for future programmes to maintain the experimental aspects and work with higher level and innovative creative inputs as well as 'mainstream' creative inputs.

## Creative Directory

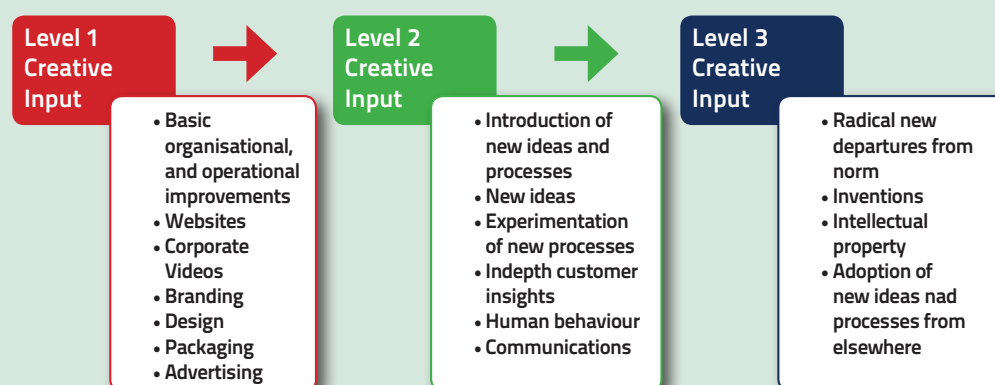
- It is recommended that the directory be structured so that it can be used as a Creative Business 2 Business tool.

# Summary of Key Recommendations

- Prepare a cost benefit analysis on the costs of building and maintaining the directory to become a national directory of creative services that can pinpoint and guide businesses in defining their creative needs and selecting an appropriate creative supplier.

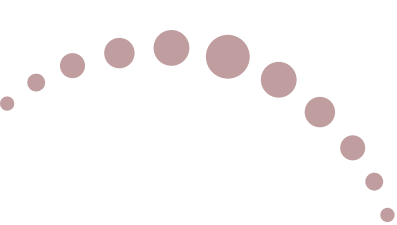
## 4CNW Sustainability

- There is strong merit in continuation and expansion of 4CNW actions. However the current project has an end date of December 2013. In order to ensure its future sustainability and broader rollout will require engagement of stakeholders on a national basis. To date the project has consulted extensively with the a number of national government departments and key agencies regarding their buy in to the programme and feedback has been positive. It is therefore recommended that a national strategy group is convened by the Department of Enterprise, Jobs and Innovation to develop a strategic framework to take project forward to next phase.
- As the programme is relevant nationally, any successor programme to 4CNW needs to have a lead partner with a national remit. To this end Enterprise Ireland would be a good fit, especially with their role in relation to the establishment of the new county based Local Enterprise Offices.
- It is recommended that a new programme structure is refined and developed to give it unique standout and no possibility of supplanting any other supports available.
- It is recommended that future 4CNW type programmes retain and develop their risk and experimental based approach towards innovation in business and strive to move towards level 2 and 3 challenges as per the figure below.



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## 2 Introduction



This report is an external evaluation of the Creative Challenge Celtic Crescent North West project, more commonly known as 4CNW. The report presents an overview of the project rationale, its work programme and evaluation of its impacts and learning outcomes. The 4CNW Project was a pilot programme funded through the European Creative Industries Alliance with the overall aim of demonstrating how public authorities can stimulate business innovation take-up and increase enterprise competitiveness and growth through the use of creative services in business. Funding of €243,486 was provided over a 2 year period for the project.

The main actions implemented were the management of a competitive talent voucher fund that supported small and micro enterprises to address creative challenges within their enterprise. Each enterprise was matched with a suitable creative supplier selected through a detailed brokered match making process that helped the enterprises to define their creative challenge and select the most suitable creative supplier.

4CNW operated as a public / private partnership with Sligo County Council acting as lead partner. It operated in the North West region of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Western Scotland via its transnational dimensions.

## Context

The project officially commenced in January 2012, the date set out in its letter of grant offer. However due to a number of reasons that are reviewed in this report, the actual start of project operations did not commence until late March in 2012. This evaluation reviews the project, its implementation, its efficiency, effectiveness in achieving its aims from its official starting point up to October 2013, which is the close of the programmes operational activities. The official close date is December 31, 2013.

At this stage it is not possible to evaluate the long term effects, or ultimate impacts, of the actions of the project on all beneficiaries due to the consequence that the work and impacts of the programme will likely have much longer term spin offs and impacts to beneficiaries than can be measured at this time.

## Evaluation Scope

The terms of reference for the evaluation as provided by the 4CNW Project required:

- Evaluate the cultural, social and economic impact of the programme through the following:
- Review of internal documentation, regarding feedback from 4CNW participants, collected during the duration of the programme
- Survey of 4CNW participants, both businesses and creative firms, to review the impact of the programme, the programme structure, implementation and recommendations for improvement
- Review of the effectiveness of the Creative Directory as a model to promote entrepreneurship, professionalism and expanding international reach in the Creative Industries
- Preparation of case studies to discuss the link between the programme intervention and its observed impacts.
- Review of the existing programme structure i.e. Creative State North West Partnership, including consultation with the Transnational Regional Broker Network and other relevant stakeholders
- Providing recommendations and suggestions for a future model of 4CNW, focusing particularly on:
- A sustainable model that could be rolled out as national programme through integration with existing and emerging enterprise and economic development structures e.g. Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) and Local Community Development Committees:
- Comparisons with other enterprise programmes which highlight 4CNW additionality and added value





## Methodology

The evaluation methodology employed included:

- Desk based literature review of project related documentation
- Establish a baseline of indicators that were used to measure project performance and progress
- An in-depth series of stakeholder consultations to gather views on project implementation, progress and impacts. Stakeholders include project management, beneficiaries, members of various steering groups and advisory panels and business development agencies.
- A Survey of 4CNW participants, both businesses and creative firms, to review the impact of the programme, the programme structure, implementation and seek views on successor programmes
- Research and development of suitable case studies with project beneficiaries
- Analyse all data collected to form evaluator's opinions and form conclusions and recommendations

## Structure of Report

This report is presented over a number of sections:

- Section 3 examines the role that the creative sector plays in an EU, Irish and Regional context and the definition of the creative sector as used within the 4CNW Programme
- Section 4 sets out the rationale, policy framework and programme description and reach of the 4CNW programme
- Section 5 sets out an analysis of the achievements of the programme and the findings of the evaluation
- Section 6 contains the conclusions and findings from the evaluation process

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# 3 Role of the Creative Sector





## European Overview

The fast paced nature of commerce and rapidly rising new economies in the last number of years has placed new structural and competitive challenges at the established and developed economies such as Europe. Increased globalisation and the rapid development and deployment of new technologies have created a shift in location of traditional manufacturing and services to lower cost economies. The new knowledge and digital economy is rapidly becoming more and more important as a driver of enterprise, jobs and innovation in Europe to replace the jobs lost in traditional sectors.

Within the European Union there has been a longstanding recognition of the importance of creative industries and their importance to the whole European economy. In recognition, 2009 was named the European Year of Creativity and Innovation. Europe's Creative Industries have come to the fore in recent times as more and more jobs in traditional sectors were lost due to outsourcing to countries with cheaper labour costs.

Remaining competitive in a European context means having the right enabling conditions in place to support creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship and fresh thinking. Europe's cultural and creative industries offer a real potential to respond to these challenges thereby contributing to the Europe 2020 strategy and some of its flagship initiatives such as the Innovation Union, the Digital Agenda, tackling climate change, the agenda for new skills and new jobs or an industrial policy for the globalisation era.<sup>1</sup>

Many recent studies have shown that the cultural and creative industries are highly innovative with a great economic potential and are one of Europe's most dynamic sectors, contributing around 2.6 % to the EU GDP, with a high growth potential , and providing quality jobs to around 5 million people across EU'.<sup>2</sup>

In March 2010 the EU published a green paper entitled 'Unlocking the Potential of Cultural and Creative Industries'. The paper set out a policy context and rationale for supporting the creative sector across the EU. Its recommendations focus on stimulating a creative environment within the EU, especially for the SME sector, the need to open a common platform for learning and sharing of approaches and expertise, capacity building, skills development and promotion of European Creative services globally.

In Europe the capacity and potential of Creative and Cultural Industries for creating new high quality jobs has been recognised and the EU is seeking the best way to help the sector realise its potential. This sector can also help in other areas such as economic development, promoting tourism, social integration and other forms of economic development at every level.

Creative companies are recognised as highly innovative and have the potential to be at the forefront of the move to a new Entrepreneurial culture. The green paper recognises that the Creative sector needs to be supported in order to fully achieve its potential as a creator of high quality jobs.

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<sup>1</sup> Green Paper - Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries

<sup>2</sup> Green Paper - Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries p 1 &2.



The green paper identified three areas where Cultural and Creative Industries CCI's need to be supported in order to succeed in growing its potential.

1. To put the right enablers in place by increasing the capacity to experiment, innovate and succeed as entrepreneurs, and providing easier access to funding and the right mix of skills;
2. To help CCIs develop in their local and regional environment as a launch pad for a stronger global presence, including through increased exchange and mobility; and
3. To move towards a creative economy by catalyzing the spill-over effects of CCIs on a wide range of economic and social contexts.<sup>3</sup>

Acknowledging the importance of the Creative Sector to the European Economy, the Commission inceptioned the European Creative Industries Alliance (ECIA), 2012- 2014.

## Ireland Overview

The development of the knowledge economy and innovation are key government policy priorities in its economic renewal strategy.<sup>4</sup> The creative sector already plays an active role in the Irish economy and has a higher proportion of activity than the EU average. The sector contributed 2.8% to the Gross Domestic Product of Ireland in 2011 slightly above the European average of 2.6%. The number of people employed directly in the creative sector in Ireland in 2011, also underpin how important this sector is in the Irish economy post 2008. The numbers of people directly employed in the sector stands at approximately 48,038.<sup>5</sup> This figure rises to 76,862 when indirect and induced jobs are added. There is great potential for Ireland to expand the numbers of people working in this sector in the coming years. The Irish government's 2012 Action Plan for Jobs highlighted the importance of the creative sector in providing high quality jobs throughout the whole country. 'The key focus for the arts and culture sector is to protect jobs and stimulate creativity right across the country'.<sup>6</sup>

The 2013 Action Plan for Jobs describes how the creative sector, '*relies on flexible networks of companies and independent artists coming together to work for relatively short periods of time on specific initiatives. Stimulating such initiatives and facilitating networked activities plays an important role in harnessing cultural and creative talent to best effect*'.<sup>7</sup> This effectively describes the work of 4CNW and illustrates how relevant this programme is to the Irish economy at the current time.

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<sup>3</sup> Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries p3

<sup>4</sup> Building Ireland's Smart Economy 2008

<sup>5</sup> Assessment of the Economic Impact of the Arts in Ireland 2012 p12

<sup>6</sup> 2012 Action plan for jobs p 119.

<sup>7</sup> 2013 Action plan for Jobs p 129.



## Regional Overview

To examine how creative industries are performing in the North West region reference can be made to the Creative West, The Creative Sector in the Western Region a report compiled by the Western Development Commission in 2009. 'In total, it is estimated that there are 4,779 creative businesses in the Western Region which directly employ 11,000 people, equal to 3% of total employment in the region. The creative sector generates annual turnover of €534m and directly contributes €270m to the Gross Value Added of the region'.<sup>8</sup> Though the WDC's report includes the counties of Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon, Mayo, Galway and Clare, its findings establish that the highest numbers of Creative businesses are based in Leitrim, Sligo, Galway and Donegal.

The majority of creative industries in the region are small scale businesses 'with 39% of the sample of 293 businesses which were surveyed, being self-employed with only 12% employing more than 10 people'.<sup>9</sup> These businesses are unsurprisingly inward focused with very few businesses exporting their products to the wider outside markets, 66% of those surveyed received less than 5% of their total turnover from exports.<sup>10</sup> The report highlighted the lack of business networks for creative companies in the region with many businesses isolated and not aware of other creative businesses operating in their region.

The North West region has been identified as an area of particular potential for grow and jobs in the creative sector. 'Since 2007 significant economic analysis in creative industries in the North West of Ireland undertaken (engaging over 500 people; 30 agencies / organisations; 140 people in 1:1 meetings / workshops) and 232 businesses surveyed in 2010 informed the economic model for the 4CNW proposition in the context of a regional Creative West 2020'.<sup>11</sup> The 2009 report illustrated the need to help the regions Creatives to reach their potential, to create jobs and export their products and services. 'In the western region, of existing creative businesses 66% do not access global markets and only 13% of turnover are from exports'.<sup>12</sup> These statistics show how there was a need to link the creative sector in the region with Businesses to build market share and new customers. However this has to be matched with a demand from businesses for creative services. The 4CNW project recognised the need for demand side interventions to demonstrate how the application of creative products and services can enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of an individual business.

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<sup>8</sup> Creative West, The Creative Sector in the Western Region p 11.

<sup>9</sup> Creative West, The Creative Sector in the Western Region p 11.

<sup>10</sup> Creative West, The Creative Sector in the Western Region p 11.

<sup>11</sup> WDC Creative West Report 2009 Recommendations

<sup>12</sup> WDC Creative West Report 2009

## Definition of Creative Sector

There are a number of definitions for the Creative Industries. For the purpose of the 4CNW Programme the definition used is:

*The term ‘creative industries’ refers to a range of economic activities, which deal with the generation or exploitation of knowledge and information. They comprise businesses that deal with the creation, production and distribution of creative goods and services. They build upon a rich and diverse core of cultural heritage and skilful arts and other creative crafts. Creative industries thus provide products and services in sectors such as publishing, media, software, consultancy, advertising, arts, entertainment, design and architecture. Many of these sub-sectors are commercially oriented and part of other sectors. The common element is that they deal with the creation, production and distribution of goods and services that are strongly based on creativity.*<sup>13</sup>

### Creative Application

- Industries which develop products or services primarily based upon meeting a market demand. This category includes products such as signature designer pieces, books, blueprints or advertisements, and services such as private art galleries. Six creative industries fall within this category:
- Art/Antiques trade (private art galleries, antique shops)
- Architecture
- Fashion
- Publishing Advertising
- Crafts

### Creative Expression

- Industries where products or services are developed for audiences with an expressive story in mind. There is a relatively high level of public funding involved within this category and it includes the arts sector. Three creative industries fall within this category:
- Music, visual and performing arts (musicians, artists, theatre groups)
- Video, film and photography
- Radio and TV broadcasting

### Creative Technology

- Industries which rely most on technology and digital media, particularly for their core functions. Three creative industries are in this category:
- Internet and software
- Digital media (gaming, animation)
- Design (graphic design, web design).

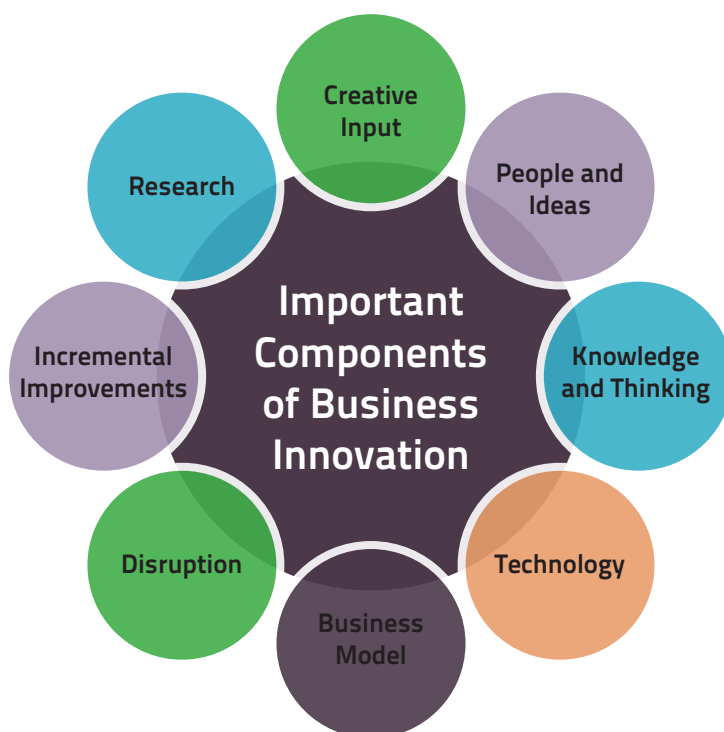
<sup>13</sup> Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries – European Commission Green Paper 27 April 2010

## How the Creative Sector drives Innovation

The creative sector involves 'the use of cultural resources as an intermediate consumption in the production process of non-cultural sectors, and thereby as a source of innovation'.<sup>14</sup> It is a central pillar in the application of innovation and knowledge in the quest for enterprise innovation and growth. Creative industries are an innovative sector that they can stimulate innovation in other sectors too, through their supply chain linkages. 'There is a growing body of evidence that creative businesses in sectors like software, architecture and advertising tend to introduce product and process innovations at a higher frequency than other sectors of the economy'.<sup>15</sup> Creative industries can drive innovation by helping SME's to become more creative in their approach and act as a source of new ideas and knowledge; they may exert positive influences on innovation in other firms they are transacting with.<sup>16</sup>

'Internationally, it is increasingly acknowledged that this wide ranging sector has the potential to drive employment and exports, cultural diversity and social inclusion. Its broad nature makes it challenging to define, but it's complementarily with tourism, software and technologies make it one that has the potential for significant impact across the entire economy. For example, cultural products and services, such as festivals and galleries, play a core role in the vitality of countries, cities and regions as places to live work and visit. They also have a significant impact on international perceptions of a location thereby influencing business investments generally and sectors such as tourism in particular'.<sup>17</sup>

**Figure 1: Components of Business Innovation**



<sup>14</sup> KEA 'Economies of Culture in Europe' 2006 p3.


<sup>15</sup> Nesta p10

<sup>16</sup> Nesta p 10

<sup>17</sup> 2013 Action Plan for Jobs p129.

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# 4 The 4CNW Programme



In this section the policy framework for the 4CNW Programme is reviewed, the history and background to the programme and present data on the programme itself including:

- Description of 4CNW
- 4CNW Aims and Objectives
- 4CNW Anticipated Outcomes and Impacts
- 4CNW Structure
- 4CNW Delivery

## Policy Framework

### Europe

Europe 2020 is the European Union's ten-year growth strategy. It is aimed at delivering the necessary conditions to deliver smart, sustainable and inclusive growth throughout the EU in the period to 2020. It sets out a longer term strategy to address shortcomings in the EU growth and development model and covers five key target areas being:

1. Employment
2. Education
3. Research and Innovation
4. Social Inclusion / Poverty Reduction
5. Climate and Energy

The strategy also includes seven 'flagship initiatives' around innovation, the digital economy, employment, youth, industrial policy, poverty, and resource efficiency.

Under Europe 2020, Innovation Union is the strategy to create an innovation-friendly environment. A specific initiative of Innovation Union is 'The European Creative Industries Alliance' or 'ECIA'. The ECIA is an integrated policy initiative that combines policy learning with 8 concrete actions on innovation vouchers, better access to finance and cluster excellence & cooperation. It is an open platform that brings together policy-makers and business support practitioners from 28 partner organisations and 12 countries. Its overall aim is to shape a community in Europe that actively supports creative industries as a driver for competitiveness, job creation and structural change by developing and testing better policies and tools for creative industries.

It is through this mainstream EU enterprise policy initiative that the 4CNW project is funded.

## Ireland

Enterprise Policy in Ireland is directed and set by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation with support, advice and guidance provided by Forfas who are a policy advisory board for enterprise, trade, science, technology and innovation. Irish Enterprise policy is committed towards prioritising investment in science, technology and innovation and the development of the knowledge society. Policy promotes enhancing the enterprise environment leading to the growth of start-up enterprises, competitive firms and sustainable development. A number of key policy instruments support these aims including the Strategy for Science and Technology and the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs. However the main policy at present is on the creation and maintenance of employment. To this end the Department prepares an annual Action Plan for Jobs which drives the development agenda for all enterprise support agencies. The 2013 Action Plan for jobs recognises the potential of the creative sector and in particular the role it plays in innovation and maintaining small enterprises.

*‘Creative industries are virtually synonymous with innovation, based on the creation, production and distribution of goods and services that use knowledge and intellectual property as a primary input. It is also a sector that is characterised by the fact that it often relies on flexible networks of companies and independent artists coming together to work for relatively short periods of time on specific initiatives’*

SME's play an important role in the Irish economy and to this end the Department has established an SME policy unit under the Minister for Small Business. The role of the Unit is to maintain a key focus on the needs of small business and entrepreneurs and to ensure that the interests of Irish SMEs are taken into account in the development and execution of policy initiatives at national and international level. The unit manages the activities of the Advisory Group on Small Business which inputs the concerns of small business into national policy. The unit is responsible for initiatives such as:

- The Credit Guarantee Scheme
- Microenterprise Loan Fund
- Late Payments Legislation



## Importance of SME's in Europe

There are more than 20 million SMEs in the EU represent 99% of businesses, and are a key driver for economic growth, innovation, employment and social integration. European Policy aims to promote successful entrepreneurship and improve the business environment for SMEs, to allow them to realise their full potential in today's global economy.

As the vast majority of creative enterprises fall into the SME category, it is important to ensure that support programmes align with EU policy regarding SME development. The key EU policy instruments in relation to SME promotion and growth include:

- Promotion of entrepreneurship and support networks such as the European Enterprise Network.
- Giving special attention to the promotion of enterprises by women entrepreneurs and supporting crafts and social economy enterprises.
- Implementing the Small Business Act for Europe in an effort to make the EU a better place to do business.
- Supporting member states and regions to develop policies aimed at promoting entrepreneurship, assisting SMEs at all stages of development, and helping them to access global markets.
- The identification and exchange of good practices are key elements of this policy.

## The Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP)

The CIP runs from 2007 to 2013 and has an overall budget of € 3,621 million. The CIP was adopted by the European Commission to further the objectives concluded at the 2000 European Council in Lisbon, which emphasised the importance of creating a friendly environment for starting up and developing innovative businesses, especially small or medium-sized enterprises ('SME's'). With small and medium-sized enterprises (SME's) as its main target, the CIP supports innovation activities, provides better access to finance and delivers business support services through a range of programmes.

The CIP is divided into three operational programmes. Each programme has its specific objectives, aimed at contributing to the competitiveness of enterprises and their innovative capacity in their own areas, such as ICT or sustainable energy:

1. The Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP)
2. The Information Communication Technologies Policy Support Programme (ICT-PSP)
3. The Intelligent Energy Europe Programme (IEE)



Each one of these pillars has a separate annual work programme which is managed by the European Commission, assisted by separate committees (consisting of representatives from the Member States).<sup>18</sup>

The CIP programmes support activities to:

- Access to finance for the start-up and growth of SME's and investment in innovation activities;
- Cross-border co-operation;
- All forms of innovation, in particular eco-innovation;
- Entrepreneurship and innovation culture;
- Enterprise and innovation-related economic and administrative reform.

## Rationale for 4CNW Programme


Within the overall context of enterprise policy at EU and national levels, there is growing recognition of the role that creative industries and services can play in enhancing competitiveness and innovation. In addition it is now recognised that the creative sector is a strong driver towards moving Europe towards its goal of being a leader in knowledge based products and services and a leader in the field of research. In recognition of this the European Creative Industries Alliance was established under Europe 2020 to develop policy responses and test initiatives within the creative industry sector. The 4CNW project is one of four pilot initiatives with a focus on talent vouchers to provide business support to Creative Industries' and to stimulate a greater uptake of Creative Industries services, capabilities and knowledge by other industries. A central feature of the 4CNW is the Brokered Matchmaking Service it tested.

The results of these pilot actions will feed into broader regional and national discussions on how future business support for creative industries should be planned and implemented in order to increase the innovation capacity and value creation in creative industries and in those industries they work with.

Support programmes such as the 4CNW assist a particularly sensitive group of firms: start-up and early-stage innovative companies with high-growth international potential. Many operate in areas where there are unproven markets or technology or established applications for their products and services. Their value proposition can, therefore, be difficult to quantify and they find it difficult to get their business off the ground and achieve market penetration. The market development approach and the environment of cross industry understanding that is cultivated by 4CNW help to reduce the market risks that affect these firms. For example the provision of the 4CNW Discovery Events increase the likelihood that businesses from other sectors understand the value that they can obtain from the application of creative services and hence increase the likely hood of them employing such services.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/cip/>



The rationale for providing specific supports to address the ‘market failure’ when it comes to the application of creative input to industry is clear. The operation of 4CNW showed that what is needed is a specific capacity building mechanism to grow the knowledge and awareness within industry as to the value of creative services and couple this with small incentives to allow the value of such services to be showcased and demonstrated. The holistic, bespoke business supports offered by 4CNW offered a more co-ordinated and targeted response, towards stimulating new markets, enhancing competitiveness and innovation showing that together the benefits realised are greater than the sum of the parts that exist independently. This is in contrast to other types of business support which are more familiar to businesses such as capital investment grants.

## Description of 4CNW Programme

The origins of 4CNW are contained in the Creative Sligo Strategy & Action Plan 2010-12 which was an initiative of Sligo County Development Board. Under this plan, a delivery mechanism called ‘Creative State North West’ was set up which is a public / private partnership charged with implementing and driving actions contained within the strategy. Membership is made up of key players from the fields of local government, regional development, business, enterprise, innovation and the creative community. The Board adopted creativity as a common growth driver for Economic, Social and Cultural Development in its 2009-2012 strategy and agreed to develop the Creative Sligo brand as one of its overarching priorities. Creative Sligo provided a ‘test bed’ for collaborative action focused on the creative and cultural industries and demonstrated the potential to address issues that fitted with EC Policy, such as;

- Evidence of need and how it linked with strategies and initiatives.
- Showed added value through shared services and pooling of resources.
- Fitted with EC policy of spillover effects of CCI's through cross cutting themes and integrated approach to projects to support a smart green creative local economy.

In June 2011 – Sligo County Council submitted a successful bid to the EC (DG Enterprise and Industry) for funding for 4CNW Business Support Programme.

## Project Description

4CNW (Creative Challenge Celtic Crescent North West) is a Business Innovation Support Programme with the overall aim of demonstrating how public authorities can stimulate business innovation take-up and increase enterprise competitiveness and growth through the use of creative services in business.

The Programme implemented a range of actions to achieve its aims and these included, managing a competitive talent voucher fund that supported small and micro enterprises to address creative challenges within their enterprise. A brokered match making service was administered to help enterprises define their creative challenge and select the most suitable creative supplier to address it. A creative directory was developed to make the services of creative suppliers more accessible and encourage greater use of creative services in small and micro enterprises. The

approach used by the project encouraged practical collaboration and co-production between businesses and creative professionals.

The project has two key target groups, 1) Small and micro enterprises and 2) creative supply companies. Within the small and micro enterprise sector, four high growth industry sectors were targeted to test the supports and methodology of the project. They were:

1. Life Sciences
2. Tourism
3. Technology
4. Agrifood

The project is delivered by the Creative State North West, which is a partnership of key regional players from local government, regional development, innovation, enterprise and the creative sector. The partnership is led by Sligo County Council. Other members include local government partners in Donegal, Leitrim, Mayo Roscommon, the Western Development Commission and the cross border partners of NORIBIC in Northern Ireland and the Cultural Enterprise Office in Glasgow.

The project was awarded EU funding of €243,486 for a two year programme of activities commencing in January 2012 and finishing in December 2013. The Programme operates in the North West Ireland, (Sligo, Leitrim, Mayo, Roscommon and Donegal), Northern Ireland and Scotland.

## Project Aims and Objectives

Key Aims of the Project included:

- To enable knowledge exchange between creative businesses and the wider business environment using brokered matchmaking to encourage better practice in demand-led innovation.
- To demonstrate how public authorities can engender a higher degree of multi sectoral business innovation take-up and increase enterprise, through unique service innovation linking creative SME's with the wider economy.
- Pilot the initiative on a cross border basis to show how the regions' strong creative sector can participate more fruitfully in innovation led growth.

**Specific Objectives included:**

1. Increase **knowledge transfer** between 400 companies in 'brokered' matchmaking to demonstrate better practice in demand-led innovation support. 300 creatives and 100 industries will be targeted trans-nationally towards forging new connections focussed on creative challenges that demonstrate economic, social and cultural impacts.
2. Ensure **better practice** in innovation support through a competitive selection of demand-led creative service innovation needs implemented through a €100,000 talent vouchers fund to motivate and incentivise practical collaboration between diverse sectors
3. **Leverage** up to €100,000 in match funds through 4CNW Business Champions.

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4. Address identified **delivery gaps** in regional creative innovation service offering to wider industries, thus through 4CNW and wider NW cluster development support programme leveraging existing €1.3m from InterReg Creative Edge Project and liaising with DG Enterprise and Industry Programme e.g. Regional Innovation Monitor([www.rim-europa.eu](http://www.rim-europa.eu)).
  5. Increase local **creative industries access to the wider business** environment and European marketplace leading to long term export growth through 4CNW Directory and Mobile App
  6. Create a '**test-bed**' in **trans-national services innovation** in the North Western periphery of Europe as a practical demonstration model informing national policy and the ECIA.
  7. Use the project as a test bed for implementations of some of the recommendations of the Western Development Commissions – Creative West<sup>19</sup> report on growth in the creative economy. These recommendations included:
    - a. Facilitate transfer of creative industries into the wider business environment – showcase European case studies to help raise awareness of potential for business model innovation
    - b. Facilitate export growth – better connections between global companies located in North West regions, and locally rooted creative enterprises informing user centred demand needs
    - c. Develop creative connectors and hubs in the region – better connect and utilise the skills of the innovation professionals within the enterprise agencies to focus on 'brokering' connections between traditional industry and disconnected creative enterprises

## Anticipated Programme Outcomes

- Drive new linkages between the creative sector and 4 key industry sectors; Life Sciences, Tourism, Technology & Agri-Food through engagement with 400 companies. 300 Creative firms and 100 industry SMEs, trans-nationally forging new connections focused on creative challenges that demonstrate economic, social and cultural impacts.
- Demonstrate the role of creative industries in the wider eco system of innovation through the competitive selection of demand led creative service needs implemented through €100,000 talent vouchers fund.
- Provide a new model for measuring Creative Industries impact as a catalyst for economic growth through the delivery of 20 Creative Challenge project collaborations.
- Support the Western Development Commission's 2020 forecasted achievement of 17,000 employment opportunities, €100 million growth in exports, and a platform to leverage private sector investment with spill-over impacts by 2020. Furthermore, it is expected that 150 jobs will be safeguarded.

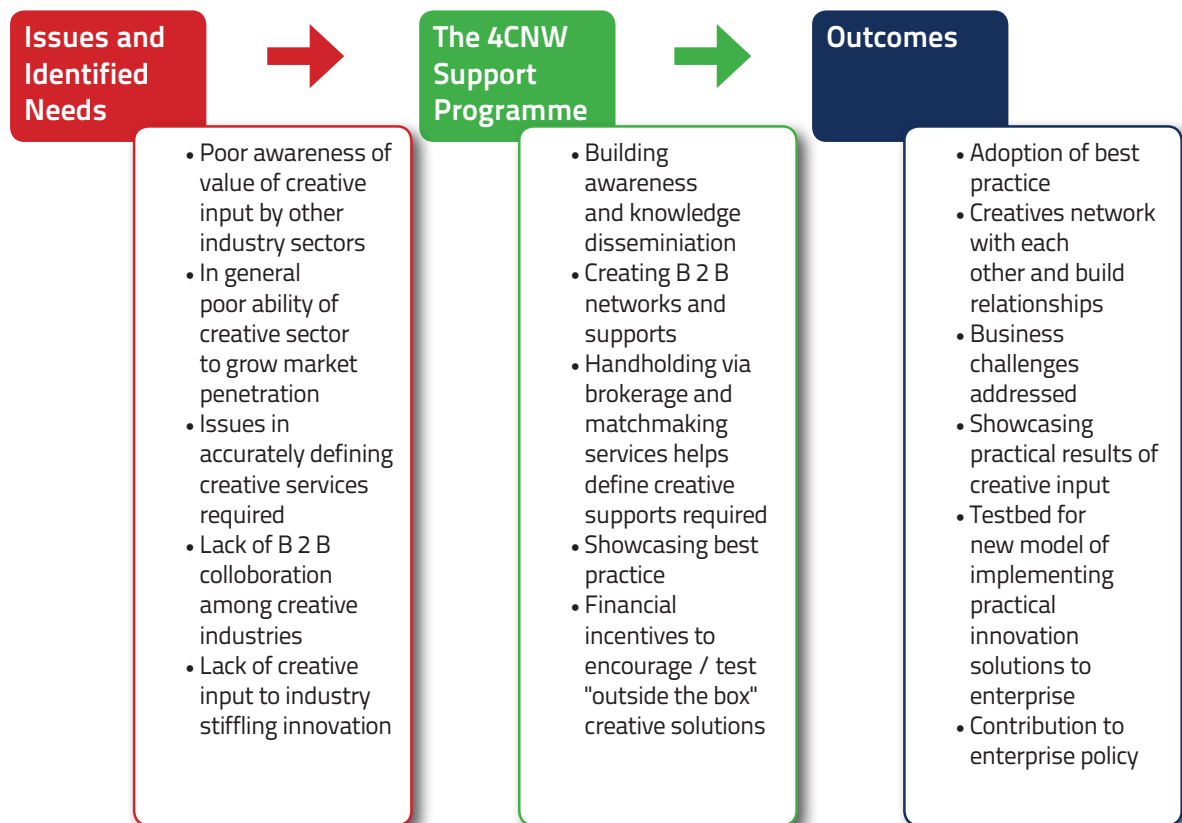
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<sup>19</sup> WDC Creative West Report 2009 Recommendation re Networks of Practice

## Logic for 4CNW Programme

Figure 2 shows the intervention logic model for the 4CNW Programme. The model links the identified needs of SME's to the specific supports that were developed and implemented in the 4CNW Programme and the anticipated outcomes from these. It shows that the 4CNW programme sought to address an identified market failure of creative innovation take up in SME's in the project region.

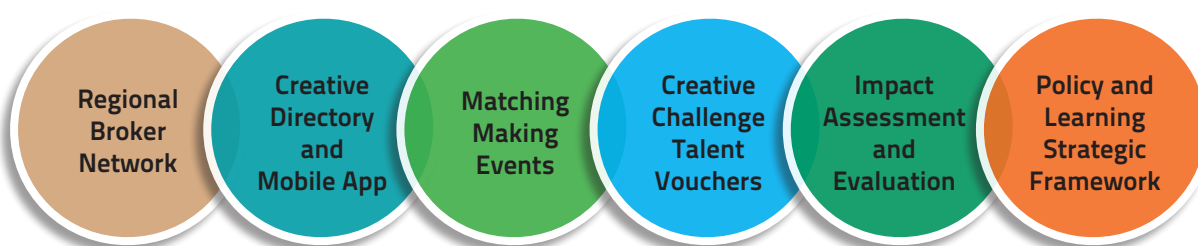
**Figure 2: 4CNW Intervention Logic Model**



## Programme Mechanisms

There were six **Key Strands of Business Support Activity** to increase knowledge transfer between creative and other industries. All six activity strands were developed and tested in the North West of Ireland in 2012 prior to launching the transnational voucher programme in 2013.

**Figure 3: 4CNW Strands of Activity**



### **Establish a 4CNW Regional Broker Network and consolidate inventories**

- To increase local creative industries access to the wider business environment through engagement of creative suppliers in matchmaking activity
- Promote 4CNW at key industry and enterprise events.
- Promote the integration of creative/design thinking in business and support identification of 40 industries to engage in match-making over 2 years
- Support industry in the identification of 'Creative Challenges' and brokering matchmaking that can demonstrate the impact of engaging creative services to address identified innovation challenges.
- Promote Impact through dissemination of Programme Information
- Demonstrate Better Practice in identifying Demand-Led Innovation Support with existing inter-agency structures and to identify support services and target sectors.
- Facilities and share best available knowledge.

### **Creative Directory and Mobile App**

- The 4CNW Creative Directory aims to integrate and promote creative sector activity enterprise support services and consolidate a trans-national 'Network of Practice', creative services and promote creative companies collaboration.
- Facilitate export growth by increasing trans-national activity and cooperation among creative businesses.
- The 4CNW Mobile App will provide a supplier profile and encourage the identification of sourcing 'best-fit' supplier through designing-in a 'sign-posting' searching facility.

## **Matchmaking events and activity**

- A managed process of engagement between creative suppliers and participating companies to assist them to define the creative challenge, select the most appropriate creative supplier and develop and action plan to address the creative challenge.
- The matchmaking process will showcase the potential of Creative enterprises so that businesses can better understand their benefits in inspiring and driving innovation within a business.

## **Creative Challenge Talent Vouchers**

- Award a minimum of 20 Talent Vouchers for 'matched' Creative Challenges over two years, vouchers will have a maximum value of €5,000 and be matched with a similar amount from the participating company.
- A maximum talent voucher fund of €100,000 available.
- Successful recipients of talent vouchers must demonstrate commercial viability and present a creative challenge that seeks new and innovative ways to address a particular problem or exploit an opportunity.

## **Evaluation to assess outcomes and impact at economic, social and cultural levels**

- Collate data to inform and learn from the impacts of the projects activities
- Assess the wider impacts of the programme such as the increase in awareness of the relevance and importance of creative services and the impacts of discovery and awareness events
- Allow learning to inform the design and rollout of phase 2 of the programme and any future programmes

## **Provision of a Policy and Learning Strategic Framework**

- The outcomes and impacts of 4CNW will inform national policy, transnational learning and the ECIA through the cluster networks already established.
- 4CNW will disseminate the results of its activities, its impacts and learning's to inform future policy and in the design of future enterprise supports.

## **Implementation of 4CNW**

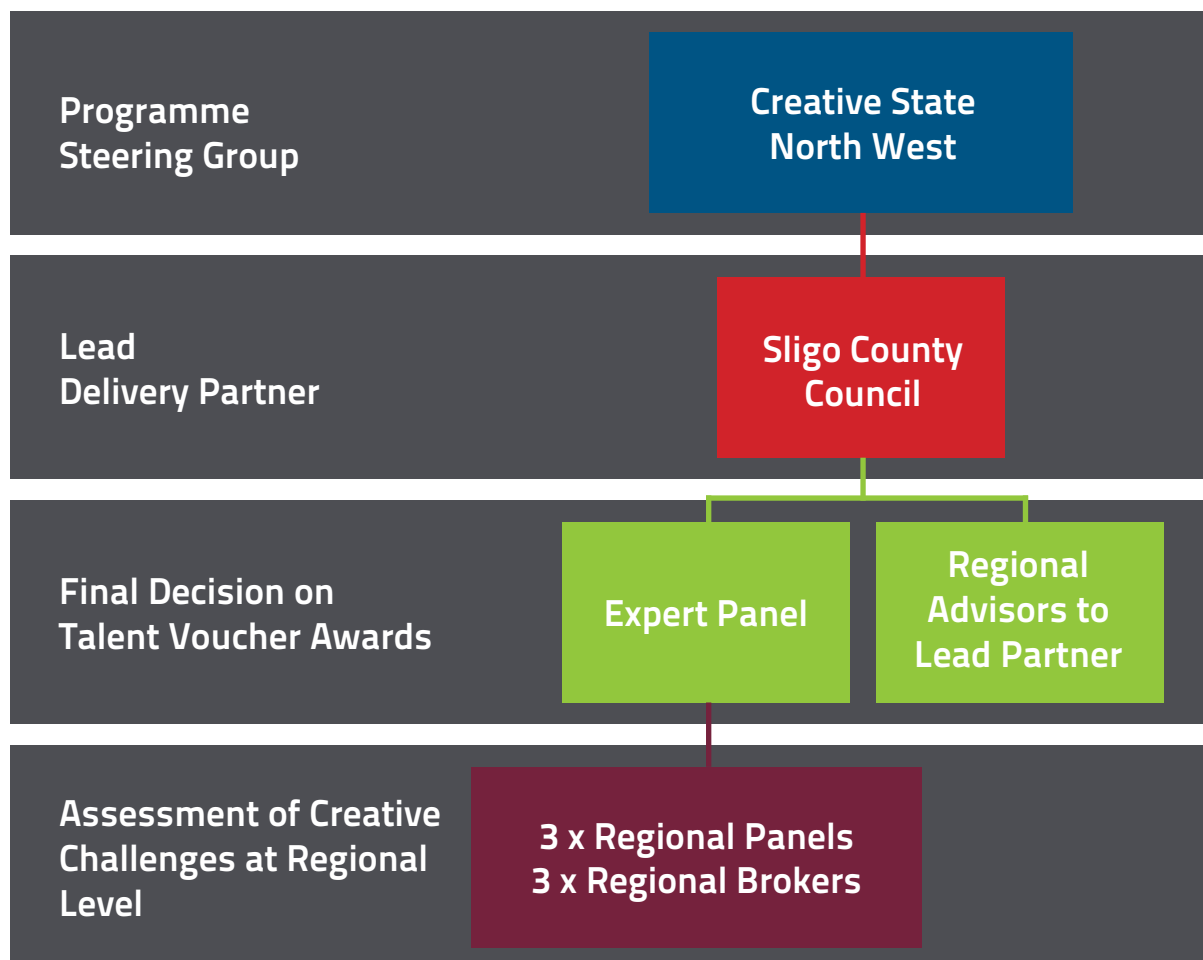
The 4CNW project was delivered through 6 strands of related activity all designed to:

- To increase knowledge transfer between creative and other industries
- To make access to and knowledge of creative services more accessible and available for the business sector
- To develop learning's from the rollout of the project that will inform policy makers in relation to innovation, enterprise policy and development of the creative sector.

## Project Delivery and Management Structure

A wide array of private and public sector stakeholders were involved in the management and implementation of the project. The management and implementation structure is represented in figure 4.

**Figure 4: Programme Management and Delivery Structure**





## Steering Group: Creative State North West PPP

A managed process of engagement between creative suppliers and participating companies to Overall Programme Management, Policy direction and strategic actions were set by the Steering Group. The membership of this group is composed of:

**Table 1: Steering Group Membership**

Name	Position
Hubert Kearns	Sligo County Manager
Dorothy Clarke	Sligo County Council, Director of Services
Ian Brannigan	Western Development Commission, Regional Development Manager
John Reilly	Sligo CEB, CEO
Hugh Mc Conville	Sligo County Development Board
Paul Keys	Team Sligo & Sligo Chamber of Commerce
Bernie Butler	Fáilte Ireland North West
Damien Devaney	Team Sligo
Shaun Purcell	Sligo County Development Board & VEC

The Creative State North West Partnership was formed from the development of the Sligo Creative and Cultural Strategy with a mission to drive forward the recommendations and actions contained in this strategy.

## Lead Delivery Partner: Sligo County Council

Sligo County Council was the lead partners on the project. Sligo County Council is the local authority responsible for the infrastructural, economic, social and cultural development within Sligo County. The project was administered by the Department of Community, Enterprise and the Arts.

The Creative Sligo Initiative: Strategy 2010 – 2012 envisaged a structure that could be used to implement the actions of that strategy which would also be suitable for rollout of 4CNW. This structure involved establishing a public private partnership steering group with a dedicated Project Director. The steering group for 4CNW evolved from this proposed strategy and become known as the Creative State North West.



## Selection & Assessment: Expert & Regional Panels

On behalf of the Creative State North West PPP, an Expert Panel was established in 2012 to independently assess talent voucher awards and review applications to the creative directory. They were responsible for short listing industry beneficiaries for the award of Talent Vouchers against agreed selection criteria. Recommendations by the Panel for Talent Vouchers awards were then ratified by the Creative State North West Steering Group.

The Expert Panel met to assess round 1 voucher applications on the 7th of September 2012 and at that time proposed the following changes for selection and assessment in round 2;

1. Establish a specialist Creative Peer Review panel with membership drawn from across participating regions to assess all applications for the creative directory
2. Establish 3 Regional Panels to review challenges locally and recommend a long list to the Expert Panel who would decide the final shortlist for the award of Talent Vouchers in round 2.

Members of the Expert Panel were drawn from relevant agencies and organisations at local, regional, national and transnational level. The chairperson of each regional panel sat on the expert panel to provide a link back to each region and regional panel.

**Table 2: Expert Panel**

Name	Position
Philip Flynn – Chair	CEO Digital Hub, Dublin
John Coll	Director of Community & Integrated Planning, Mayo County Council
Chris Gonley	CEO, Sligo Leader Partnership Company
Dr. Judy Scully	Ashton Business School, Ashton University, Birmingham
Dr. Pat Collins	Whitaker Centre, NUIG
Pearse Moore	Director The Nerve Centre Northern Ireland
David Smith	Cultural Enterprise Office Scotland

**Table 3: Creative Sector Expert Panel**

Name	Position
Louise Allen	Head of Development & Innovation Programmes, Crafts Council of Ireland
Patrick Fox	Director, CREATE, National Centre for Collaborative Arts Dublin
Pearse Moore	Director The Nerve Centre, Derry Northern Ireland
Matt Johnston	Director, Digital Circle, Belfast Northern Ireland
David Smith	Cultural Enterprise Office Scotland

### **Regional Panels**

Membership was drawn from relevant agencies and organisations operating at local and regional level, their role was to assess applications for talent vouchers on a regional level and make recommendations to the expert panel. Their work was supported by the Regional broker i.e. NORIBIC, Northern Ireland; Cultural Enterprise Office CEO, Scotland and the Creative State North West, Ireland North West.

## Project Resources

### 4CNW Project Team

The 4 CNW Programme was one of four applications selected by the ECIA to demonstrate approaches to better business support using Innovation Vouchers. The 4CNW Programme commenced on the 1st January, 2012 and is resourced by Sligo County Council who assigned a core 4CNW project team.



The operation of the programme was carried out by executive staff as follows;

- Mary Mc Auliffe – Programme Director CSNW & 4CNW Coordinator
- Aisling Smyth – 4CNW Programme Manager
- Devona Finnegan – 4CNW Programme Administrator

Support to the project was also provided through Job Bridge Internships:

- Deirdre Melvin, Communities Manager Intern, May –Dec 2012 - Supported the project team with the management of third party social media platforms and in ongoing communications with Talent Voucher beneficiaries and their creative suppliers, Round 1, 2012.
- Ceolin Devaney, Marketing and Business Support Intern, April –August 2013 – Supported the project team with the delivery of the Brokered Matchmaking process in Ireland North West, Round 2, 2013.

## External Expertise & Specialist Inputs

The Programme Director identified the need for expert technical support to ensure satisfactory rollout and delivery of the project actions in areas, such as communications, marketing ICT, industry liaison and facilitation, together with coaching/mentoring for industry beneficiaries and creative suppliers.

The additional funding necessary to cover these costs was secured from the Creative State North West programme budget in 2012 and 2013.

Input by external specialists was occasional and targeted over the duration of the pilot programme and services assisted when required were as follows;

- Aoife Flynn, Asquared, Communications and ICT - provided ongoing advice and support to the 4CNW Project Team up to June 2013.
- DHR Communications, PR and Event Management – provided support to deliver the Transnational Event and Launch of the Creative Directory on the 17th June 2013.
- Una Parsons, UP Solutions, Industry Liaison – assisted the project staff in promoting the programme to key industry and public body stakeholders throughout the Ireland North West region in Round 1, 2012.
- Sally Brasier, CEOSTRA, Coaching and Mentoring – supported the Programme Director with specialist inputs for target industry SMEs and creative micro enterprises in Ireland North West, 2012-2013



## Regional Brokers

Regional Brokers for Northern Ireland and Scotland were procured as sub-contracted service providers to deliver the transnational element of the programme for 2013. They were:

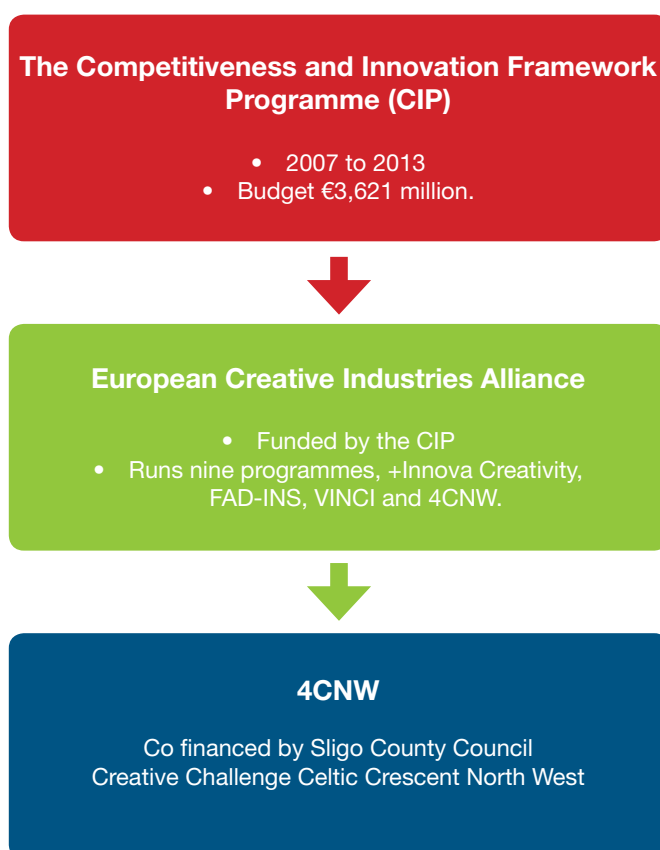
- Dr. Barney Toal, Chief Executive of NORIBIC, Northern Ireland
- Carol Sinclair, Adviser and Trainer with the Cultural Enterprise Office, Scotland.

## Regional Advisors

Through a competitive tendering process a firm of management consultants, Meehan Tully and Associates were appointed to advise on matchmaking, capacity building actions, together with project management and administrative aspects of the programme.

## Project Funding

The pilot 4CNW Business Innovation Support Programme (2012-13) is co-financed by Sligo County Council and the European Creative Industries Alliance (ECIA). Funding of €243,000 was awarded of which a fund of €100,000 was ring-fenced for the talent vouchers fund.



## Budget Overview

	EU Contribution	Sligo Co. Co. Contribution	Total
Salaries		€ 80,590	€ 80,590
Travel and Subs	€ 11,800		€ 11,800
Consumables and Supplies	€ 902		€ 902
Transnational Events	€ 3,300		€ 3,300
Discovery Sessions	€ 5,500		€ 5,500
Matchmaking events and costs	€ 11,600		€ 11,600
Audio Visual / Reports	€ 12,198		€ 12,198
Talent Vouchers	€ 95,000	€ 5,000	€ 100,000
Northern Ireland Broker	€ 20,100		€ 20,100
Scotland Broker	€ 20,100		€ 20,100
Regional Programme Advisors	€ 10,000		€ 10,000
Project Evaluation	€ 10,000		€ 10,000
Creative Directory and Mobile App	€ 15,000		€ 15,000
Website Development	€ 13,000		€ 13,000
Indirect Costs	€ 14,986		€ 14,986
<b>Totals</b>	<b>€ 243,486</b>	<b>€ 85,590</b>	<b>€ 329,076</b>

The contribution of €85,590 made by Sligo County Council was a cash contribution covering the salary costs of those employed. In running the programme the actual time incurred by staff exceeded that allowed for in the budget. This was also covered by Sligo County Council. It is estimated that final personnel costs are in the region of €140,000, thus making the Sligo County Council contribution to the project €145,000.

Expenditure under all other budget headings will be broadly in line with the budget, apart from the talent voucher fund which will show an under spend of €35,000. The reasons for this are outlined in the evaluation findings section of the report.





# Programme Reach

Over the period of operation of 4CNW (April 2012 to December 2013) the following key activities have been achieved.

## **Engagement through Events:**

- 3 Transnational Events were held in Ireland North West with attendances in excess of 550. Two of the three events were streamed live on the EC [www.howtogrow.eu](http://www.howtogrow.eu) platform.
- 12 Discovery Events were delivered which facilitated engagement with 100 industry SMEs and 200 Creative Micro Enterprises as follows; 4 in Ireland North West, 2 in 2012 and 2 in 2013 and 4 in Northern Ireland and 4 in Scotland 2013
- Awareness Raising Sessions in Ireland North West to promote the 4CNW programme to the creative sector in advance of the Discovery Event facilitated engagement with a further 95 creative micro enterprises across the region.
- Other Events: Regional Brokers attended sector specific events run by programme partners and relevant stakeholders to promote the programme which facilitated engagement with an additional, 70 industry SMEs and 140 creative micro enterprises.

## **Marketing & Promotion;**

- 20 electronic e-mail promotional drives were delivered through the 4CNW integrated inventory of enterprise, innovation, business development and creative sector agencies. 10 in 2012 and 10 in 2013
- The Creative State North West PPP developed a dedicated web platform to promote the 4CNW programme which was launched on the 7th January 2013. 10,728 web hits were recorded during Open Calls for Talent Voucher and Creative Directory applications, between April/September 2012 and January/June 2013.
- 2,699 subscriptions were recorded across Creative State North West third party platforms LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube and Facebook.
- The 4CNW programme was covered by press and media at national and regional level i.e. Irish Times and RTE Radio 1, Ocean FM, Mid-West Radio and county broadsheets such as, Sligo Champion.



# Programme Reach

## Talent Voucher Programme:

- A total of 38 vouchers were offered to 38 companies
- A total of 20 creative challenge project collaborations were successfully completed
- A total voucher fund of €100,000 was allocated with an additional €100,000 leveraged as match funding from the private sector. Of this a total spend of €61,498 in talent vouchers drawn down has been achieved. The bulk of the under spend resulted from match fund resourcing issues in 3 companies, 2 were unable to select a suitable creative and 2 went out of business before the project could be completed.
- 146 number of applications from businesses were received for talent vouchers
- 190 creative micro enterprises were selected for profiling on the creative directory



# Summary of Key Programme Deliverables

The following are the key deliverables for the 4 CNW Programme agreed before commencement of the programme.

- 1 annual trans-national event engaging national and regional stakeholders
- 6 Annual Promotion / dissemination to inventory through regional broker network
- 2 Annual ECIA Meetings
- 2 Steering Group Meetings Annually
- 1 Annual Programme Evaluation and Impact Report
- Trans-national Creative Directory of 150 Creative Suppliers
- 40 Talent Voucher Submissions over 2 years
- 20 Talent Vouchers Awarded over 2 years
- 10 Talent Voucher Project Case Studies
- Year 2 4CNW Executive Strategy 2014+ (Exit Strategy)
- Enhanced positioning of Ireland regarding innovation policy and lifting capacity to deliver on stated innovation policy around creativity and entrepreneurship
- Create/safeguard 150 employment opportunities and support the 2020 forecasted achievement of 17,000 jobs



# 5 Evaluation Findings



## Assessment of Impacts

This section presents the analysis, findings and conclusions of the independent evaluation in relation to the performance of the project in meeting its key deliverables and targets.

Data in relation to project performance was acquired from a number of sources:

- Project documentation and records retained by the 4CNW project
- Survey of beneficiaries and creative companies carried out by the independent evaluator
- Direct consultations with beneficiaries and creative companies carried out by the evaluation team through phone interviews.
- Within each section that follows a specific aspect of the programme is examined and findings presented.

## Context

4CNW was a pilot project designed to enable knowledge exchange and experience between creative businesses and the wider business environment through brokered matchmaking, to encourage better practice in demand-led innovation.

Pilot projects by their nature are just that, they are designed to experiment and test with new approaches and solutions to particular problems. Their merit comes from the learning that is achieved and the transfer of this learning into future policy and programme implementation so that the best solution can be tailored for future service delivery.

In the context of the overall evaluation of the 4CNW project, it is important to remember therefore the highly experimental and pilot nature of this project.

## Achieving Key Deliverables

A number of key deliverables were set for the project at the outset and progress made in achieving these is now set out.

### One annual trans-national event engaging national and regional stakeholders

In total three transnational events were held by the project.


- A transnational launch event for the 4CNW Programme was held in Sligo on 22nd March, 2012. The event was attended by 450 persons and was the flagship event for Sligo's Enterprise and Innovation Week. The event received national press and media coverage in the Irish Times and Radio 1.
- Show & Tell Events for Business & Creative Champions, The Model, Sligo on 13th Dec 2012,
- Transnational Event & Launch of the 4CNW Creative Directory, The Model, Sligo on 17th June, 2013.

## Marketing and Promotion

The following events were held over the life time of the project to raise awareness of its services and disseminate information.

**Table 4: Promotional and Dissemination Events**

No	Event	Location	Details
1	22nd March, 2012, Transnational launch Event Sligo, North West Ireland.	Sligo	Launched the 4CNW Business Support Programme in Sligo, North West Ireland. The event had an attendance of 450 people
2	7th June, 2012 Discovery Session for Creative Sector Sligo, North West Ireland	Sligo	In excess of 120 creative SMEs from across the North West Ireland region registered to attend the event which resulted in the attendance of 95 Creative Suppliers on the day.
3	Industry Discovery Session July 11, 2012	Sligo	70 companies registered to attend the event with 50 attending. The purpose was to promote and disseminate information on the programme and its benefits to the Business sector. The event was promoted widely in a similar fashion to the Creative Discovery Session i.e. via a mix of direct and indirect marketing. Extensive research was also undertaken in consultation with the regional enterprise and development agencies to develop a databank companies in the growth stage from the four target sectors for direct marketing of the Programme. A work shop was also carried out to assist SMEs to prepare their innovation challenges. Post event surveys were carried out to monitor knowledge transfer/ engagement.
4	13th December, 2012 Show and Tell Event	Sligo	To showcase the completion of the Test Phase/Round 1 project collaborations in North West Ireland.



5&6	22nd January 2013 Discovery Session for Business & Creatives,	Derry Northern Ireland	Round 2 events to market and promote 4CNW opportunity to SME's and Creative Micro Enterprises in NI
7&8	23rd January 2013 Discovery Session for Business & Creatives,	Belfast, Northern Ireland	Round 2 events to market and promote 4CNW opportunity to SME's and Creative Micro Enterprises in NI
9&10	24th January 2013- Discovery Session for Business & Creatives,	Edinburgh, Scotland	Round 2 events to market and promote 4CNW opportunity to SME's and Creative Micro Enterprises in Edinburgh, Scotland.
11&12	30th January 2013 - Discovery Event for Business and Creatives,	Sligo, Ireland	Round 2 events to market and promote 4CNW opportunity to SME's and Creative Micro Enterprises in Ireland North West Region.
13&14	11th February 2013 Discovery Event for Business & Creatives,	Inverness Scotland	Round 2 events to market and promote 4CNW opportunity to SME's and Creative Micro Enterprises in Edinburgh, Scotland.

## 4CNW Promotions to Creative Sector Ireland North West 2012

Date/Month	Promotion	Purpose
April 2012	E-mail promotion to creative sector via local authority partners in the Ireland North West region.	To promote and market regional 4CNW Awareness Raising Sessions.
May 2012	Promotion to creative sector via print media, social media and third party web platforms. This promotion drew on integrated supply inventories, such as County Enterprise Boards, Local Authorities, Leader Companies, Business Innovation Centres and national representative agencies e.g. Crafts Council of Ireland, RIAI etc.	To promote and market the 4CNW Creative Directory & Discovery Event to the Creative Sector in the Ireland North West region.
June 2012	Promotion at Ireland North West Discovery Event via Creative State North West temporary word press site.	Open Call launched re applications for Creative Directory
	Promotion to Craft Businesses in Mayo at Mayo Craft Network Event	To promote and market open call for applications to the 4CNW Creative Directory
	Promotion to independent film makers in the North West region at the Cinema North West Forum in The Model	To promote and market open call for applications to the 4CNW Creative Directory
July 2012	Promotion to creative sector via print media, social media and third party web platforms. This promotion drew on integrated supply inventories, such as County Enterprise Boards, Local Authorities, Leader Companies, Business Innovation Centres and national representative agencies e.g. Crafts Council of Ireland, RIAI etc.	Reminder re closing date 27th July for applications to the 4CNW Creative Directory

## 4CNW Promotions to Industry SMEs & Companies Ireland North West 2012

Date/Month	Promotion	Purpose
April 2012	Promotion to businesses in the North West at the IBEC Business Leaders Forum	To raise awareness of the 4CNW Business Support Programme and Talent Voucher Fund
June 2012	Promotion to target industry sectors via print media, social media, third party web platforms and the Creative State North West word press site. This promotion drew on integrated demand inventories, such as County Enterprise Boards, Local Authorities, Leader Companies, Business Innovation Centres and national representative agencies e.g. Engineers Ireland, Bord Bia etc.	To promote and market the 4CNW Talent Voucher Fund & Discovery Event in the Ireland North West region.
	E-mail promotion to businesses listed on the 4CNW databank of high growth/ innovative companies in the North West region developed in collaboration with Enterprise Ireland and IDA	To promote and market the 4CNW Talent Voucher Fund & Discovery Event in the Ireland North West region
July 2012	Promotion to target industry sectors via print media, social media, third party web platforms and the Creative State North West word press site. Drew on integrated demand inventories, such as County Enterprise Boards, Local Authorities, Leader Companies, Business Innovation Centres and national representative agencies.	To promote and market the Open Call for 4CNW Talent Voucher Applications to target industry sectors in the Ireland North West Region



### 4CNW Promotions to Creative Sector Ireland North West 2013

Date/Month	Promotion	Purpose
January 2013	Promotion to the Creative Sector via e-mail, social media and third party web platforms in; - <i>Ireland North West</i> - <i>Northern Ireland</i> - <i>Scotland</i>	Launch Web Platform Creative State North West
January 2013	Promotion to creative sector via print media, social media and third party web platforms. This promotion drew on integrated supply inventories, such as County Enterprise Boards, Local Authorities, Leader Companies, Business Innovation Centres and national representative agencies e.g. Crafts Council of Ireland, RIAI etc across; - <i>Ireland North West</i> - <i>Northern Ireland</i> - <i>Scotland</i>	To promote and market the Open Call for applications to the 4CNW Creative Directory and the Discovery Event to the Creative Sector in the Ireland North West region.
February 2013	Promotion to creative sector via e-mail, social media and Creative State North West web platforms. Ireland North West	Reminder re closing date 8th March for applications to the 4CNW Creative Directory
May 2013	Promotion to creative sector via e-mail, social media and Creative State North West web platforms. - <i>Ireland North West</i> - <i>Northern Ireland</i> - <i>Scotland</i>	To promote and market the upcoming 4CNW Transnational Event and the Launch of the Creative Directory
June 2013	Promotion to creative sector via print media, social media and third party web platforms. - <i>Ireland North West</i> - <i>Northern Ireland</i> - <i>Scotland</i>	To promote and profile guest speakers at the 4CNW Transnational Event and the launch of the 4CNW Creative Directory

## 4CNW Promotions to Industry SMEs & Companies Ireland North West 2013

Date/Month	Promotion	Purpose
January 2013	Promotion to Industry SMEs & Companies via e-mail, social media and third party web platforms in; - <i>Ireland North West</i> - <i>Northern Ireland</i> - <i>Scotland</i>	Launch Web Platform Creative State North West
January 2013	Promotion to target industry sectors via print media, social media, third party web platforms and the Creative State North West word press site. Drew on integrated demand inventories across; - <i>Ireland North West</i> - <i>Northern Ireland</i> - <i>Scotland</i>	To promote and market the 4CNW Talent Voucher Fund & Discovery Event in Ireland North West, Northern Ireland and Scotland.
January 2013	E-mail promotion to businesses listed on the 4CNW databank of high growth/ innovative companies in the North West region developed in 2012 in collaboration with Enterprise Ireland and IDA	To promote and market the 4CNW Talent Voucher Fund & Discovery Event in Ireland North West, Northern Ireland and Scotland.
February 2013	Promotion to target industry sectors via-mail, social media, third party web platforms and the Creative State North West web platform. Drew on integrated demand inventories across; - <i>Ireland North West</i> - <i>Northern Ireland</i> - <i>Scotland</i>	Reminder re closing date 18th February for Talent Voucher applications.
June 2013	Promotion to industry via print media, social media third party web platforms. - <i>Ireland North West</i> - <i>Northern Ireland</i> - <i>Scotland</i>	To promote and market the 4CNW Transnational Event and the Launch of the 4CNW Creative Directory

## Two Annual ECIA Meetings

### 2012

- 4CNW Team Members attended ECIA Policy Learning Platform Meeting on June 14th in Amsterdam.
- 4CNW Team Members attended ECIAP Innovation Vouchers Workshop on October 4th in Milan to present to the EC's Head of Unit, DG Industry & Enterprise, Dr Buscher, together with other innovation voucher pilots on the status of the 4CNW programme, key learning to date and issues emerging.
- 4CNW Programme Coordinator represented Sligo County Council and the Creative State North West PPP at the 2nd ECIA Policy Learning Platform meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark from the 28th to the 30th November.

### 2013

- 4CNW Team members attended a meeting in June in Barcelona and are scheduled to attend a meeting in Milan in November 2013

## Two Steering Group Meetings Annually

- Creative State North West Partnership Meeting were held on April, May, July, August and December of 2012 – Total of 5
- Creative State North West Partnership Meeting were held in February, March, May, September and October of 2013 – Total of 5

## 1 Annual Programme Evaluation and Impact Report

A detailed annual impact report covering the first year of implementation of the project was completed and delivered to the Commission in February 2013. This report was detailed and covered a comprehensive review of all of the project actions to date.

## Trans-national Creative Directory of 150 Creative Suppliers

The Programmes 190 Creative suppliers are listed on the 4CNW Creative Directory as a result of an 'open call' across the North West, Northern Ireland and Scotland. The Creative Directory is used to raise the visibility of creative businesses and to assist them to make contact with other creative businesses and with potential client businesses in order to improve their work prospects. The directory is also fully downloadable as a mobile app. The final creative directory is available at [www.thecreativestatenorthwest.com](http://www.thecreativestatenorthwest.com). It has a search functionality to allow searching of creative by location, name or specialism.

The directory and mobile app are one of the six activity strands of 4CNW and while the project management acknowledge that further development work is required, the directory is live and testing of its functionality has showed the some further development work on search functionality and data input is required.

## 40 Talent Voucher Submissions over 2 years and 20 Talent Vouchers awarded over 2 years

**Table 5: Summary of Talent Voucher Programme**

Round	Applications Received	Talent Vouchers Awarded	Completed Projects	Spend
Round 1	21	7	5	€14,998
Round 2 – Ireland North West		8 (2 additional on a reserve list)	6	€16,500
Round 2 – Northern Ireland		10 (2 additional on a reserve list)	5	€16,800
Round 2 – Scotland		8(2 additional on a reserve list)	4	€13,200
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>35</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>€61,498</b>

The talent voucher programme was spread out over 2 rounds, the first a pilot round operated only in North West Ireland which aimed to offer up to 10 vouchers. This aim of round 1 was to test the administration and associated brokered match making service of the programme prior to full rollout on a transnational level for round 2.

In total 35 talent voucher awards resulted in a total monetary award of €61,498. This represents 61.5% allocation of the original talent voucher fund of €100,000 and 130% of the initial target of 20 talent voucher awards over a two year period.

**Round 1** - The Expert Panel met on 7th September, 2012 to assess challenges and recommend creative skill pools for shortlisted challenges. They noted the quality and range of the 21 challenges received from 19 businesses. They recommended that Round 1 Vouchers be offered to seven businesses amounting to €26,500. From the offers made, five of these materialised amounting to €14,998 a completion rate of 71 per cent.

**Table 6: Round 1: Talent Voucher Offers.**

Company Name	County	Creative Supplier	Creative Challenge	Amount Drawn Down	Comment
Ireland West Airport Knock	Mayo	Tara McGowan (Sligo) & Michael O Domhnaill – Live Trad (Sligo).	Streaming/social media – cultural event for marketing	€4,298	Completed
Koko Latte	Sligo	David Quinn, Avenir	Diversify business – using graphic designer.	€4,200	Completed
Woodrow	Sligo	David Quinn, Avenir	Brand Awareness /rebrand – graphic design.	€1,000	Completed
The Model	Sligo	Gordon Ryan, Applied Sense (Leitrim).	Increasing visibility of services using interior architecture and customizing merchandise.	€3,500	Completed
Voya – Celtic Seaweed Baths	Sligo	Peter Martin (Sligo)	Videoining/ product demonstration /brand story telling.	€2,000	Completed
Mulrines	Donegal			€0	€5,000 offered. Not drawn down due to Change in personnel in organisation – i.e. project manager.
Cuinneog	Mayo			€0	€5,000 offered. Company wanted to use own supplier and not partake in the matchmaking process which was a compulsory element of the Programme.
<b>Round 1 Total</b>				<b>€14,998</b>	

The round 2 talent vouchers competition was extended to include Northern Ireland and Scotland and the assessment process included the changes recommended by the expert panel following the administration of the round 1 talent vouchers. The talent vouchers awarded ranged from €1,000 - €5,000. The following tables show the awards and progress made.

**Table 7: Round 2: Talent Voucher Offers Accepted – Projects Completed.**

Company Name	County	Creative Supplier	Creative Challenge	Voucher Amount Accepted:
<b>Ireland North West</b>				
1. <i>Yeats Society</i>	Sligo	In tandem (Leitrim)	Rebranding of Society on line activity	€3,000.00
2. <i>Liber Bookshop</i>	Sligo	Judo Design (Sligo)	Web online sales customer interface.	€2,500.00
3. <i>Quick crop</i>	Sligo	GCD Technologies (N Ireland)	Web tool development – customer interface	€4,000.00
4. <i>Connaught Gold</i>	Sligo/Donegal	Journey For (N Ireland)	Niche branding	€5,000.00
5. <i>Farmflo</i>	Donegal	Wiretrace (Scotland)	Animation web	€1,000.00
6. <i>Woodrow</i>	Sligo	Meadow Designs (N Ireland)	Product development	€1,000.00
<b>Northern Ireland</b>				
7. <i>Loughlun Ltd</i>		Journey For (N Ireland)		€4,000.00
8. <i>Irony Metal Works</i>		Uproar Comics (N. Ireland)		€2,500.00
9. <i>Troll Inc</i>		iAd-Man (N. Ireland)		€3,000.00
10. <i>EMK Marketing Ltd</i>		Big Small Design (N. Ireland)		€5,000.00
11. <i>Unit 7 Audio visual Ltd</i>		Big Fish Design (N. Ireland)		€2,300.00
<b>Scotland</b>				
12. <i>Coolgenics</i>		CGH Creative (Scotland)		€1,000.00
13. <i>Hebridean Chocolates</i>		Umbilical (N. Ireland)		€3,000.00
14. <i>Duncryne Ltd</i>		CGH Creative (Scotland) & E-business Promotion (Scotland)		€5,000.00
15. <i>NeurocentRx Pharma</i>		Vivimotion (Scotland) & Crofteleven (Scotland) & Oui 3 (Scotland)		€4,200.00
<b>ROUND 2 TOTAL</b>				<b>€46,500</b>

**Table 8: Analysis of non-complete projects Round 2**

Company Name	Amount Offered	Reason for not proceeding
Croagh Patrick Seafoods Ltd	€1,000	Resourcing.
Shells Café	€3,000	Resourcing and timing- Staff shortage due to sudden bereavement of family member coinciding with opening of new shop venture for Shells.
IWA Knock Airport	€5,000	Change in personnel.
West Coast Dental	€3,700	In the Brokered Matchmaking process it became clear that companies expectations re what the talent voucher project would deliver could not be completed within the assigned time frame.
Comprized Ltd	€2,500	Company felt that they required a specialist creative and could not identify one from the panel. A potential suitable creative was identified but did not provide enough data to determine if they could be admitted to the panel.
Windy City Baking Co Ltd	€3,000	Broker has been unable to contact the business despite both email and telephone attempts. May have gone out of business.
Watson General	€2,500	Gone out of business.
Kookycook Fresh Pesto	€1,500	The company received an Innovation Voucher from INI – resources needed to be put towards this.
Peak Discovery	€5,000	The company could not source a suitable creative from the panel
Marble hill	€5,000	Received INI support for a different portion of their business and wish to focus on this first
Eosurgical	€5,000	Lack of finance to match fund
The Moffat Partnership Ltd	€5,000	Timeframe too short for delivery
Insignia Ltd	€5,000	Lack of finance to match fund
Cargo Publishing	€4,000	Not in a position to undertake project
Golden Age Honey Ltd	€1,200	Lack of finance to match fund
Whitmuir Organics Ltd	€5,000	Lack of understanding of offer. Had hoped to work with own design team not listed on 4CNW directory

**Table 9: Talent Voucher Targets and Achievements in Round 1**

Target	Achieved	Notes
Attract 10 challenge submissions	21 submissions 7 Voucher awards	High quality submissions received 5 of 7 awarded were completed, Completion rate of 71%

No reserve list was made for round 1 awards

**Table 10: Talent Voucher Targets and Achievements in Round 2**

Target	Achieved	Notes
Attract 30 challenge submissions Award remaining balance of the 20 vouchers (13)	31 Voucher awards 15 projected completed	Completion rate of 48% Round 2 was transnational 48 challenges presented to Expert Panel for final assessment

**Table 11: Regionality of Voucher Awards (All Rounds)**

<b>North West</b>	17 vouchers awarded,	11 projects proceeded
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	11 vouchers awarded,	5 projects proceeded
<b>Scotland</b>	10 vouchers awarded,	4 projects proceeded

In round 2, 15 completed their projects out of a total of 31, a completion rate of 48 percent. This shows a decline in the percentage of completed projects during the second phase of the programme, despite the fact the timescale for completion was increased from two months to three months. While the reason why projects didn't proceed varied, many of these issues were examined in the matchmaking process, but applicants gave confirmation that the projects would proceed. A non-completion rate of 52% for various reasons, while not a huge issue for a pilot initiative, it demonstrates the need for thorough assessment processes to be in place.

**Table 12: Reasons given for not proceeding**

Reason for not completing	No. of Projects
<b>Timescale Issues</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Resourcing Issues</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Unable to source suitable creative</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Change in company personnel</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Selected other support option from another programme</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Gone out of business</b>	<b>2</b>



A wide range of reasons were given for projects not proceeding. Resourcing issues is the top reason with 3 companies unable to secure the funds to match the voucher award. While companies can show evidence of matching funds at application stage, it is a reality that they might not be available when needed to match the talent voucher. The inability to source a suitable creative from the panel is the second highest stated reason. This is surprising given the effort that went into creating a high quality panel with over 180 members. The main issue arose from companies wanting to use a provider not on the creative panel and consideration should be given in future programme for a fast-track mechanism to add new creative to the panel if required and suitable.

## Brokered Matchmaking Service

A distinctive element of the 4CNW Programme was its brokered matchmaking service, which provided support to both businesses and creative suppliers. The aim of brokered matchmaking was to use the expertise of the regional brokers to work with the talent voucher awardees to:

- Help define their creative challenge
- Assist them to pitch it to creative suppliers
- Assist in drawing up a short list and then final selection of the most appropriate creative to address the creative challenge.

The brokerage and match making element was, as it built upon the lessons learned in the evaluation of NESTA's Creative Credits Programme which was delivered in the UK. An Independent evaluation of the Creative Credits Programme showed that it underestimated the importance of getting the matches right between SME's and Creative Services.

Supports offered by Brokered Matchmaking Service	
Businesses	Creative Suppliers
1-1 facilitation to assist businesses to develop their business challenge into a project brief for circulation to prospective creative suppliers.	Facilitate and assist to develop an effective pitch to business i.e. their 'elevator pitch'
Assist businesses to carry out an assessment to define their core creative needs to implement a successful project.	Help-desk support.
Contractual guidance	
Help desk support	

## Brokered Matchmaking

The independent expert panel recommended creative skills to meet the challenges awarded.

### Round 1: Brokered Matchmaking

- The Ireland NW regional broker selected a minimum of three creative suppliers registered for the directory for introduction to each Talent Voucher beneficiary.
- Beneficiaries were assisted with the development of their supplier briefing document.
- Briefs were then forwarded to creative suppliers who developed a proposal in response.
- Suppliers pitched their proposals at the 4CNW Matchmaking Event held on the 20th September 2012.

### Round 2: Brokered Matchmaking

Following the implementation of Round 1 Vouchers and the establishment of the Regional Broker Network it was agreed that each region would experiment with its own approach to the Matchmaking process, but in general the following format was used:

- Regional Brokers selected the best skills match from the creative directory and worked with Talent Voucher beneficiaries to develop their supplier briefing document.
- Creative businesses with the capabilities for the challenge were proposed by the Broker to each Talent Voucher beneficiary.
- Following research the beneficiary short-listed 3 creative suppliers whom they invited to pitch a proposal.



- Pitching meetings took place between the 29th April and the 1st May via Skype and 1/1 where this was feasible.
- Beneficiary selected supplier and advised Broker of their choice.
- Beneficiary gave feedback to unsuccessful creative suppliers.

## The Regional Broker Network

The 4CNW Programme team held two selective tender competitions for the appointment of regional brokers for Northern Ireland and Scotland in July 2012. The appointments were ratified by the Creative State North West PPP at their meeting on 24th September, 2012. Thereafter, induction meetings were held with the prospective brokers in Scotland and Northern Ireland in October, 2012.

NORIBIC, part of the European BIC Network was appointed as regional broker for Northern Ireland and the Scottish Cultural Office for Scotland.

Following appointment, an Inaugural Broker meeting was held in Sligo, North West Ireland on 20th November, 2012 (attended by the three brokers i.e. NW Ireland, N Ireland and Scotland).

A second Regional Broker meeting was held on Wednesday 12th December, 2013 and 13th December, 2012. The content of the second meeting was focussed around Project Planning for Round 2 including brokered matchmaking, assessment panels, kick off meetings along with the review and sign off of online application forms and online programme content.

- Mary McAuliffe is the Broker for The Creative State's 4CNW programme in the North West of Ireland.
- Dr. Barney Toal, Chief Executive of NORIBIC, Northern Ireland
- Carol Sinclair, Adviser and trainer with the Cultural Enterprise Office Scotland.

## 10 Talent Voucher Project Case Studies

As part of the on-going programme publicity and data collection, individual project case studies on the impacts of the programme both on creative suppliers and participating businesses was undertaken. These are available through the 4CNW website and also prepared as part of this evaluation report.



## Year 2 4CNW Executive Strategy 2014+ (Exit Strategy)

The exit and sustainability strategy of the project was forefront to the minds of the project executive throughout most of 2013. The results and impacts of the 4CNW pilot will be critical to informing the exit strategy. The programme director Mary McAuliffe has made strong and steady progress in:


- Informing key policy makers at regional and national level on the work of and actions of the 4CNW pilot
- Meeting with, and discussing the programme with all relevant enterprise support agencies including the County Enterprise Boards, Western Development Commission and Enterprise Ireland
- Meeting and informing key Government Departments including Tourism, Agriculture, Enterprise, Jobs and Innovation and Arts and Culture. The purpose was to disseminate the work, impacts and role of 4CNW and initiatives of its type as a driver for business innovation and change.
- Presentation to the Minister for Small Business and senior officials of his department and departments of Agriculture, Tourism, Arts and Culture on the work, role and place of 4CNW as an innovation driver and enterprise support measure.
- Making submissions to relevant policy makers such as the BMW Regional Assembly and government departments to raise the awareness of 4CNW and what role it can play in national enterprise development.

This level of work to date on defining and positioning the 4CNW programme has to be commended. The present view of the exit / mainstreaming strategy for 4CNW which has been discussed and refined in detailed discussion with the evaluation team can be summarised as:

- Any successor programme to 4CNW must not in any way duplicate the services or supports of any existing business support programmes
- It must have a strong focus on job creation / maintenance and promote business growth and development via opening new markets for creative businesses and give capacity to other business sectors to grow and become more internationally focussed
- There is a real need for a more sustained awareness and capacity building campaign to demonstrate the benefits and impacts that the application of creative services can bring to businesses. Any successor programme should focus strongly on this.
- Any successor programme needs to promote creative input to companies at higher, more complex and riskier levels. By this it is meant that supports should be used to focus on cross fertilisation of creative ideas and services in other business areas. (See figure 5)

A decorative graphic consisting of a series of light gray circles of varying sizes arranged in a smooth, downward-curving arc across the upper half of the slide.

# 6 Conclusions and Recommendations



This section sets out the key issues, conclusions and recommendations based on the review of the project by the evaluators and analysis of stakeholder feedback and project data.

## Overall Review

4CNW was a pilot project and set out to test and pilot the effectiveness of a number of new approaches towards stimulating innovation across a number of industry sectors through the application of creative input to address a particular problem or issue. The programme was highly experimental in its design, delivery and structure.

Continuity with the Sligo Creative and Cultural Strategy and Action Plan was ensured by having the Creative State North West as the overall project steering group. This ensured that 4CNW aligned with that strategy and maintained the expertise of that strategy group into the rollout of 4CNW.

4CNW has been successful in achieving its original aims and objectives and the learning acquired indicates that there is strong merit in developing a successor programme which would have a national reach and specifically supporting the development of solutions for business that require a more complex level of creative input.

- The levels of demand from businesses for the talent voucher fund and interest shown in the programme was very high. This indicates a huge level of latent demand for creative input and services within the business sector. This key learning point demonstrates that businesses are actively seeking new and innovation solutions to grow and sustain their businesses and programmes with small intervention aids, can release a large response and investment in time and money from participating enterprises and stimulating a latent market.
- The level of demand from creative companies to get involved in the programme and promote their services was also very high. This learning point demonstrated:
  - That there are a significant number of creative enterprises located in rural areas, offering a wide range of creative services and expertise
  - Many of these businesses are seeking new market and client opportunities and welcome initiatives like 4CNW that can help open new markets and provide opportunities for further business to business collaboration. Again a small level of support and intervention has shown the extent to which new markets can be stimulated.
- The 4CNW pilot tested a new approach to matching and selecting suitable creative input to meet a business challenge. This matchmaking process was seen as beneficial from both a creative supplier and business point of view. It addressed challenges that were specific and unique to a particular company (e.g. Ireland West Airport, targeting the German market) to more general challenges (Company branding). The key learning point from this is that brokered matchmaking needs to be retained particularly for more complex creative challenges, while a more streamlined version can be used for more straight forward challenges.
- The project through its various promotional activities has shown the appetite for information and capacity building in relation to:

- the role and value creative service and input can bring to business
- the demand from creative service providers to research, enter and grow new markets for their products and services
- Any successor programme needs to have a very powerful capacity building programme for both the business and creative sector so as to stimulate creative innovation from a demand and supply led perspective.

In terms of meeting its pre-set targets the project has been successful. Table 13 and following notes summarise performance.

**Table 13: 4CNW Headline Targets**

Description	Target	Achieved
Engage Creatives through events	300	340
Enlist Creatives to Directory	150	190
Engage Industry Companies	100	170
Applications to Creative Directory		336
Attendance at Transnational Programme events		500+
Talent Vouchers Awarded	20	38
Talent Voucher Applications	40	146

## Project Management and Structure

### Conclusions


#### Organisational Challenges – Lead Partner

The project encountered significant delivery and organisational challenges from the lead partner's perspective. Irish Public authorities including local authorities such as Sligo County Council face significant operational challenges in the current economic climate. These include:

- The reduction in annual national exchequer contributions
- The decline in the local income base through a reduction in its rates income from business closures
- The management of borrowings in the context of a lower income base from traditional income sources
- Staffing and human resource pressures from the public service moratorium on recruitment and newly introduced redundancy and early retirement schemes

While the delivery of projects such as 4CNW is somewhat peripheral to the core business of a local authority in Ireland, credit is due to Sligo County Council for taking the initiative to develop and deliver a practical programme to support its role in enterprise and economic development. The delivery of a project such as 4CNW was new to the local authority sector in Ireland. The





nature of the project required a nimble and flexible operating framework to respond to the target stakeholders needs along with needing the administrative and management structures required to deliver an European Project. This represented a challenge when it came to integrating the needs of the project within the firmly established financial and administration structures of a local authority. While the Programme can be viewed as tool to encourage new practices it did bring with it considerable challenges in delivering and driving change.

Due to some of the significant public sector operational challenges already described the programme delivery date was delayed by 3 months, commencing in March, 2012. Two team members were allocated at this stage with the 3rd member of the team in place by the end of April, 2013. It is concluded that any delays in the start of the Programme were outside the direct control of the project team. It has to be acknowledged that while there was a delayed start every effort took place to ensure that the overall completion of the Programme was delivered within the timeframe of the Programme e.g. Staff time allocated to the Programme was increased periodically.

The organisational and delivery challenges that the project encountered from a lead partner perspective. This finding concludes that the project is best suited to be operated within a flexible operating framework such as those provided by existing business development agencies.

### **Sector Specific Expertise**

Significant effort was made by the project team towards creating a pool of expertise and experience to assist with the management and rollout of the project. At top level the appointment of leading creative experts to the expert panels was welcomed as this ensured that project strategy could mirror best practice and the most up to date thinking. The membership of the regional panels reflected the best creative and business development expertise available at regional level and ensured that the project sought to address the most pertinent creative needs of the businesses in each region.

The membership of the regional panels was strong and representative of the main enterprise support bodies, which have in-depth knowledge of the local or regional enterprise scene and the challenges faced. In this respect it is concluded that the regional panels were a strong and representative body, capably equipped to fulfil their advisory and assessment role. In addition their membership prevented duplication of activities with other enterprise agencies.

While initially it may be difficult to understand the roles of the various panels and committees involved, taken as a whole, each one had a defined role and purpose. It is considered by the evaluators that each panel served a useful purpose in defining the scope of services to be provided by 4CNW, approving the award of talent vouchers so that a number of different creative ideas and approaches could be tested and ensuring the project at all times maintained a strategic intent to pilot new and innovative approaches.

### **Transnational Element**

The transnational nature of the project added a layer of complexity to overall management in that it involved training and briefing regional brokers in Northern Ireland and Scotland, dealing with regional panels from Northern Ireland and Scotland and running public procurement competitions to select the regional brokers. However it was an integral and deliberate part of the pilot and its purpose was to try and encourage transnational collaboration on a Business to Business level between Creative Industries and between Creative Industries and other Business sectors. This 4 CNW project was the ideal laboratory to test this approach and implementation on a transnational basis.



# Recommendations

## Project Management and Structure

### **1. Role of Expert Groups and Regional Panels**

The expert panel and expert creative panel should act more like a strategic advisory group with responsibility for devising and laying out overall project direction, strategy and overarching implementation guidelines. They should have a key role as part of the strategic group to develop the future of the 4CNW project, post 2013. Their expertise and skills sets will better serve the project in this respect.

The regional panels should be the responsible body for final awarding of talent vouchers, under guidelines and criteria approved by the expert panel. The regional panels will have the local knowledge of the most appropriate types of intervention and support required for businesses within their respective regions. In addition this system has added benefits of ensuring a faster turnaround time for voucher applications and simplification of the overall approval process. They should also be responsible for advising the expert panel in respect of regional needs and challenges.

It is recommended that the terms of references and engagement for the expert and regional panels are changed in line with the roles and responsibilities outlined above.

### **2. Project Delivery**

Given the nature of actions under the 4CNW programme, its experimental role and testing of new approaches, it requires a very flexible and fluid structure to allow it to quickly deal with challenges and obstacles whether foreseen or not. Going forward it is recommended that future such programmes are delivered through mainstream enterprise support structures. An ideal opportunity exists through the reform of local service delivery and proposed establishment of the Local Enterprise Offices. The LEO's will be the first, one stop shop for all enterprise support functions within a county and it is recommended that future 4CNW type programmes become part of mainstream service delivery via LEO's

# Recommendations

## Project Management and Structure



### **3. Project Delivery**

The recommendations on the future project sustainability strategy call for national engagement of stakeholders to examine the strategic fit of the 4CNW programme and develop a strategic framework to take this forward. This engagement should be led by the expert panel working closely with relevant agencies and personnel from key Government departments.

### **4. Transnational Elements**

While there was a strong transnational element to the project, the level of transnational national business to business completed was small, but not surprisingly so given the short timeframes involved in the project. It is recommended that future programmes retain a transnational element at least around sharing of good practice of creative input to towards improving business practices and innovation. This will result in a good mechanism to share new experiences, solutions and methodologies.

# Talent Voucher Programme

Based on our analysis of the operation of the talent voucher competition and the feedback from the regional panels and expert panels, the views and final decision of the expert panel on the award of the talent voucher did not always reflect the views of the regional expert committees or the regional broker. Our view is that the expert committee awarded talent vouchers based more on the complexity and innovativeness of the challenge whereas the regional panels based their recommendations more on addressing individual business and regional needs. While both approaches were correct and valid, It is recommended that for future programme final voucher awards are made by the regional panels under guidelines set by the expert panel.

## Conclusions

### Project Aims

The aims and actions of 4CNW are welcomed as a good support and intervention measure by both the business sector and creative sector. Overall the talent voucher programme is a good incentive to get businesses to tackle creative issues and stimulate new business thinking

### Opening Markets and Opportunities

The programme did allow the creative sector access to new potential clients and a new opportunity to showcase their services that would not be available elsewhere. In summary it opened up a valuable new channel to new markets for their products and services that would have been very difficult for a creative business to do individually given their small scale nature.

### Raising Awareness

From the business perspective the programme allowed businesses to see and discover a wider range of creative talent and what is available to them than here to fore. It allowed them access and knowledge not only to the range of creative services that are available, but showed examples of how using such services can help their business and its sustainability.

### Matchmaking

The services offered through the matchmaking and brokerage process overall was seen as a good system. It allowed participating businesses to avail of expert mentoring support to properly analyse their creative challenge, ensure that it met their needs and devise a creative brief and was accurate and relevant. This in turn simplified the creative supplier selection process, as a relevant shortlist of creative businesses could be selected to bid for the challenge and make a pitch against the agreed brief. From the creative business side the process gave them an accurate brief, allowed a short list of suitable creative businesses to be selected for a particular assignment.

In a small number of cases the matchmaking process was felt to be too long and cumbersome. The main comments recorded were that the time taken in pitching for work was too much in relation to the fee for and the size of the creative challenge on offer. However it has to be remembered that this was a pilot project and the main aim was to test the matchmaking approach in terms of its suitability and effectiveness as a 'Creative to Business' matching platform. Therefore while this sentiment has some relevance to the size of the challenges delivered through 4CNW, it is not in itself seen as a major flaw of the matchmaking process.



### **Reserve Lists**

Longer reserve lists should have been approved for creative challenges, which would probably have led to a higher final take up of talent vouchers. All of the reserve lists were exhausted to take the place of first choice challenges that did not go ahead. A longer reserve list would have meant a greater completion rate of talent vouchers.

### **Completion of Challenges**

The lower than expected completion rate of the creative challenges (53%) was surprising given the careful and detailed assessment process that went before each talent voucher was awarded. The main reason cited for non-completion of projects was time. It is felt that the time window of 2 months in round one and 3 months in round 2 is too short to allow the full completion of creative projects, especially those of a more complex nature and where dedicated staff were not available full time within the participating business to work with the creative company (e.g. marketing staff). This is a key learning point for future programmes.

### **Local Knowledge**

The local on the ground knowledge of the regional expert groups was a cornerstone of the project, in terms of identification and initial screening of creative challenge applications. It is evident that their recommendations were not followed by the expert committee in all cases in awarding talent vouchers. Recommendations of this evaluation will deal with harnessing closer strategic and operational understandings at regional and national level for future programmes. There is some evidence to show that this may also have been a small contributing factor in the completion rate of creative challenges.

# Recommendations

## Talent Voucher Programme

### **1. Award of Vouchers**

The final award of talent vouchers should rest with the regional expert panel. This panel has the local and regional knowledge of businesses in their area, the challenges they face and suitability of solutions proposed and are therefore better equipped to make the decision process on talent voucher awards.

### **2. Matchmaking Process**

For future programmes, it is recommended to test other variations of the matchmaking process with a view to making it a more efficient and faster process from the beneficiaries and creative supplier's point of view. Examples can include allowing companies to use the creative directory as a creative supplier screening tool, allowing companies to select their own shortlist and supplier for lower value voucher awards and lower level creative challenges. The current screening and matchmaking process can be retained for larger and more complex creative challenges.

### **3. Use of Technology**

It is recommended that future programmes continue the use of technologies to assist in the match making, pitching and supplier selection process. The more frequent use of such technologies in round 2 assessments was beneficial to the programme. This will save time and cost for both sides involved and streamline the process. It is recommended that the creative directory is build further to allow suppliers to showcase work and services using videos, slideshows, photo galleries etc. this will help in supplier selection and reduce the level of information required in pitching.

### **4. Continue to Experiment**

There is a real need for future programmes to maintain the experimental aspects and work with higher level and innovative creative inputs as well as 'mainstream' creative inputs. It is strongly recommended that the experimental aspects of the programme continue, but are pitched at a much higher and more innovative application of creative input to business.



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# Creative Directory

## Conclusions

### Functionality

The Creative Directory while a good idea needs more development work in terms of its functionality and search features. The current awareness of the directory is poor. While recognising that 4CNW is a pilot project, the population of the directory with creative firms and services needs to be built upon much more to make it a really useful tool for sourcing, research and recruiting creative services.

### Uses

Careful consideration need to be given to uses that the directory is intended for. If it is intended as a tool for businesses to use to research and recruit creative service providers, then for it to be effective it needs to be populated, needs to be advertised and promoted so that it becomes a tool of choice. This will take substantial funds on an on-going basis to achieve and the anticipated impacts and effectiveness of the directory need to be evaluated against on-going running costs. The development and launch of the directory late in the project cycle gives little time to fully evaluate its effectiveness and impacts. As stated more work is needed to make its search and refine features more user friendly and functional.

For any product to be successful needs stand out from competitors and a unique competitive advantage to give it market and user appeal. From our evaluation we believe that the greatest potential in the directory lies in a Creative Business 2 Business application. A fully populated directory with detailed profiles of creative companies would allow a sharing of creative resources and creation of larger talent and expertise teams to allow smaller creative companies to collaborate and bid for and win larger projects. This will ultimately help these smaller businesses to grow, wider their customer base and geographical market share.

# Recommendations

## Creative Directory



### **1. Business 2 Business Tool**

It is recommended that the directory be structured so that it can be used as a Creative Business 2 Business tool for the sector to encourage cross business collaboration and cooperation that will result in opening of new markets clients and possibly export growth for small and micro creative businesses.

### **2. Cost Benefit Analysis**

Prepare a cost benefit analysis on the costs of building and maintaining the directory to become a national directory of creative services that can pinpoint and guide businesses in defining their creative needs and selecting an appropriate creative supplier. This analysis should take into account the overall future running costs of the directory and the resources it will take to make it a first choice tool for selection of creative suppliers.

### **3. Development of the Directory**

It is recommended that the current directory receives the necessary investment in testing and functionality development to make it a full working prototype and therefore demonstrated as such.



# Raising Awareness

## Conclusions

### Promotional Activities

Overall promotional activities undertaken are seen as satisfactory, which is reflected in the project over achieving in the number of attendees, the numbers of applications for talent vouchers and applications for places on the creative panel.

All promotional and awareness events were well attended, well run and contained good information on the programme and its actions. The spread of promotional events across the region was satisfactory and contained good programme information and advice.

### Online Activity

The programme developed an attractive and informative website, with clear and detailed programme information. As the project progressed well designed and presented information was posted on success stories with beneficiary testimonials and demonstration of the impacts on their business. In the latter 6 months of project implementation, there was a notable slowdown in the activity feeds to the project facebook and twitter pages.

The project has maintained a very professional and useful video channel on YouTube consisting of 32 videos that demonstrate the actions, benefits and impacts of 4CNW, explain the benefit of using creative services within business and other relevant material. This is considered by the evaluators as a valuable and desirable learning and dissemination resource not only for 4CNW but also for wider promotion of creative application within business. The programme achieved 10,728 hits to the website coinciding with open calls for challenge and creative directory application in rounds 1 and 2 (March – September 2012 and Jan – June 2013). Third party platforms Facebook, LinkedIn Twitter and YouTube achieved subscriptions of 2,699.

# Recommendations

## Raising Awareness



### **1. Promotion Activities**

Continuation of the process of one to one selling of the programme features, benefits and activities to all relevant agencies throughout the region which is the best method to secure solid buy in from relevant partners.

# 4CNW Sustainability and Exit Strategy

## Conclusions

### The Value of 4CNW

- The project has shown the merits of what creative input can give to business in terms of value, changed thinking, opening mind-sets towards implementing new approaches to problems and thereby enhancing capacity competitiveness and innovation in industry. Therefore there is strong merit in the continuation and expansion of 4CNW actions. 4CNW fits well within EU and Irish enterprise policy, especially in relation to driving the innovation agenda and development of entrepreneurship skills.
- The current 4CNW programme has some elements of overlap with other county or regional based programmes of innovation vouchers, but it is clear that there is room for a specific support programme to engage creative services with business.
- The evidence base gathered as part of the evaluation has shown that there is a real need for a quality capacity building and awareness programme to:
  - inform and educate the business sector of the impacts and benefits of creative input and how to procure it
  - inform and educate the creative sector in ways to expand their market reach and position their products and services to potential clients
- The evaluation has shown that there is a large latent demand in the market for creative input to businesses and a huge untapped potential within the creative industry in the project regions to expand and grow their businesses. The project has in effect highlighted these market failure issues and demonstrated successful methods to address them via its programme actions.
- A longer evaluation time frame necessary to gauge the longer term impacts of 4CNW, for example have businesses continued to engage with creative services, has their creative challenge really increased their competitiveness, marketability, profile etc. More quantitative data is should be collected throughout 2014 from beneficiaries to allow these measurements to happen.

# Recommendations

## Sustainability of 4CNW



### **1. Sustainability of 4CNW**

There is strong merit in continuation and expansion of 4CNW actions. However the current project has an end date of December 2013. In order to ensure its future sustainability and broader rollout will require engagement of stakeholders on a national basis. To date the project has consulted extensively with a number of national government departments and key agencies regarding their buy in to the programme and feedback has been positive. It is therefore recommended that a national strategy group is convened by the Department of Enterprise, Jobs and Innovation to develop a strategic framework to take project forward to next phase.

### **2. Lead Partner**

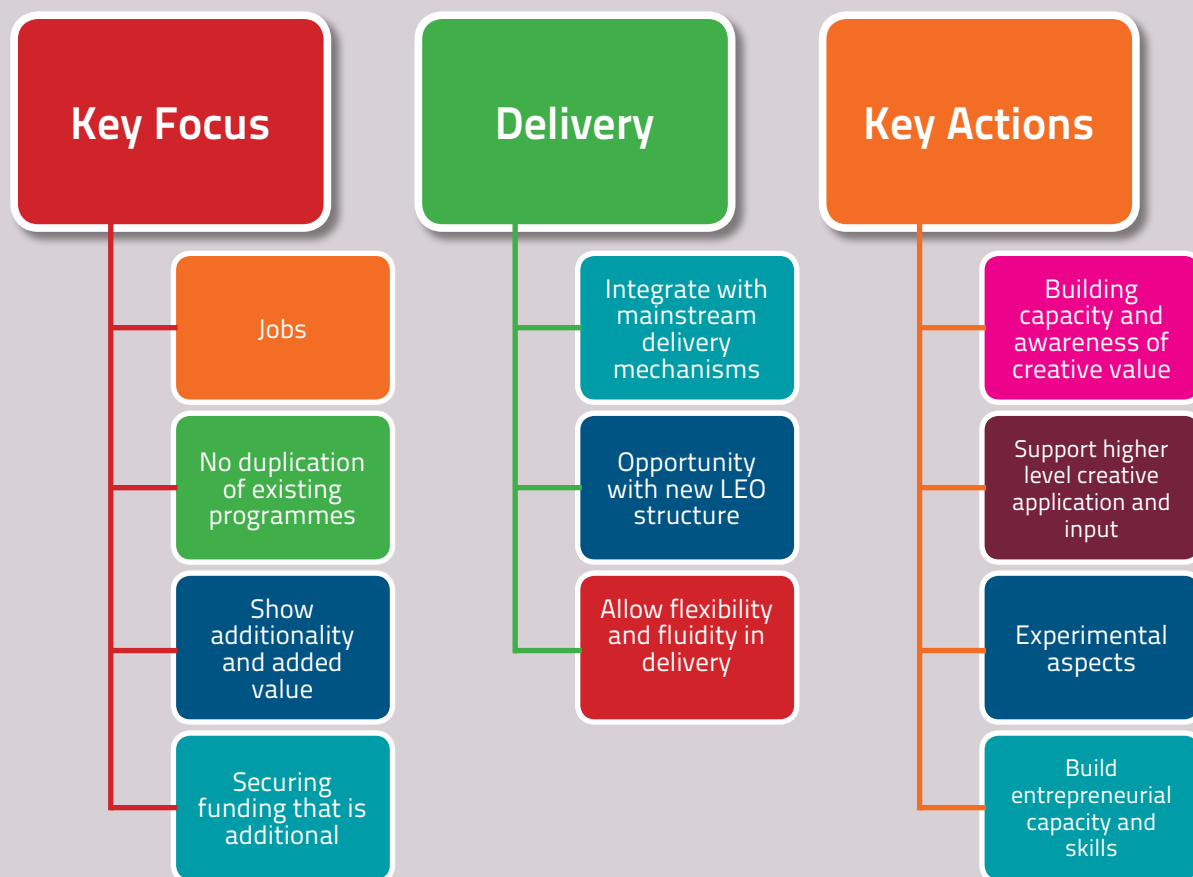
As the programme is relevant nationally, any successor programme to 4CNW needs to have a lead partner with a national remit. To this end Enterprise Ireland would be a good fit, especially with their role in relation to the establishment of the new county based Local Enterprise Offices. Enterprise Ireland have complimentary expertise from their own innovation voucher programmes and engagement with SME's, that could be of immense benefit to the 4CNW programme and would add significant value in terms of application of their knowledge of creative and innovative business practices

### **3. New Programme Structure**

It is recommended that a new programme structure is refined and developed to give it unique standout and no possibility of supplanting any other supports available. The following chart shows what its key focus; delivery mechanism and specific actions should be centred around.

# Recommendations

## Sustainability of 4CNW

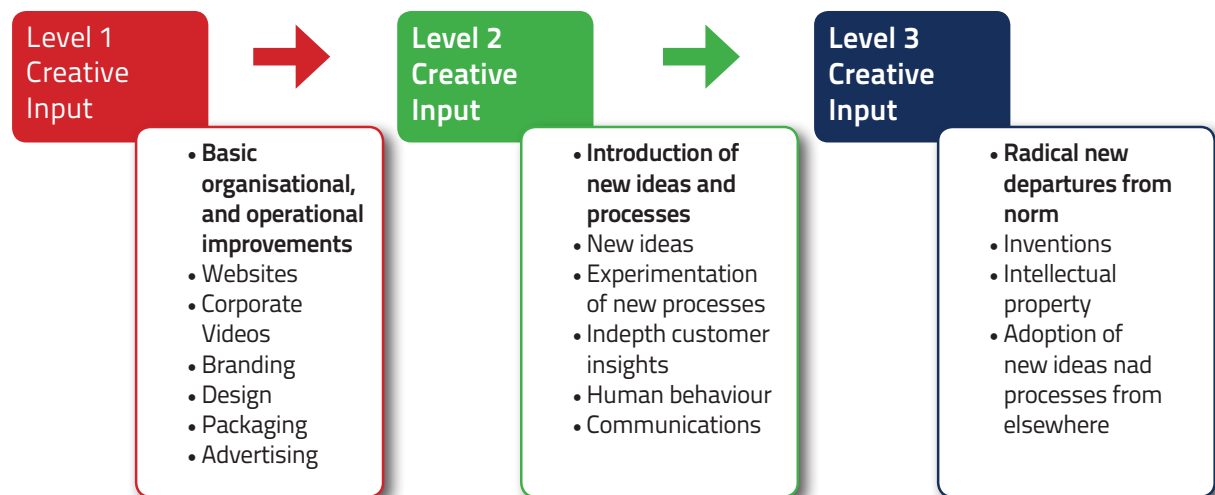


#### 4. Driving Innovation

- It is recommended that future 4CNW type programmes retain and develop their risk and experimental based approach towards innovation in business. Specifically it is recommended that the programme activities move towards supporting Level 2 Creative Challenges and eventually towards Level 3 type Challenges. (see figure 5 below)
- It is recommended that future programmes allow a longer time period for completion of creative challenges and allow a longer preparatory period if required for businesses and creative to match with each other.
- The programme should have extensive promotional tools to build business sector awareness and understanding of the need for, and value of creative input and use transnational elements to learn of best practice

4 CNW needs to move from being a Level 1 support provider to a Level two and eventually to a Level 3 provider. At levels 2 and 3, this is where the programme will find real ground for change and room to develop its own unique value proposition.

**Figure 5: Proposed Evolution of 4CNW Activities**



# Appendix 1

## Assessment Criteria for Creative Challenges

### Scoring Criteria for Talent Voucher Recipients

<b>Innovation Challenge</b> Development of new products/processes/services New uses of existing products/processes/services Business Model Innovation	<b>Max 50 marks</b>
<b>Growth Potential &amp; Commercial Viability</b> Market place potential Product & service development potential Employment creation potential Sustainability & Impact	<b>Max 40 marks</b>
<b>Overall Presentation</b> Overall presentation of your application Clarity of layout	<b>Max 10 marks</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>Max 100 marks</b>

### Scoring Criteria for Creative Suppliers

- Has a business address in required area? If yes 10 no 0
- Can demonstrate previous experience of working collaboratively? - Available marks 25/100
- Demonstrates ability to offer a professional creative service? - Available marks 25/100
- Has proven track record in primary creative field? - Available marks 40/100

# Appendix 2

## Evaluation Consultations

### Phone and Personal Interviews

Business Name	Interviewee	Region
Yeats Society Incorporated	Ian Kennedy	North West
Woodrow	Sharon Eastwood	North West
IWA Knock	Donal Healy	North West
Troll Inc	Tim Murray	Northern Ireland
Libre Bookshop	Brian Caliendo	North West
Koko Latte	Martina Henry	North West
Hebridean Chocolates	Hector Mc Cloud	Scotland
Quickcrop Ltd		North West
Eosurgical	Mark Hughes	Scotland
Insignia Technologies	Stephen Currie	Scotland
Creatives	Interviewee	Region
Avenir	David Quinn,	North West
Peter Martin	Peter Martin	North West
I AD Man	Damien Donnelly	Northern Ireland
Umbilical	Alison Scott Adams	Northern Ireland
Qui 3	Ken Craig	Scotland
In Tandem	K Collins	North West
Judo Design	Paul O Connor	North West
CGH Creative	Christopher Hamilton	Scotland
Name	Position / Organisation	
Carol Sinclair	Regional Broker Scotland	
Barney Toal	Regional Broker NI	
David Mc Connell	Northern Ireland Panel	
Susan Harkins	Scottish Panel	
Monica Corcoran	Arts Council	
Chirs Gonley	Sligo LEADER Partnership	
Ian Brannigan	Western Development Commission	
John Reilly	Sligo County Enterprise Board	
Richard Murphy	Enterprise Ireland	



# Appendix 3

## Summary of Consultation Feedback

### Feedback from Participating Businesses

- Creative companies were very helpful in defining and structuring their creative challenge. In general the recipients of the creative services are very happy with the quality of work done and the results. At this stage it is difficult to state what level of new business or enhanced competitiveness the businesses have gained as a result as it is too early to evaluate this fully.
- Drawdown of funding for the talent voucher was a little cumbersome.
- The matchmaking process worked well and the detailed approach and insights given by the process was appreciated. Once the process started, it was able to move at a pace suitable to the businesses requiring the services.
- The programme is seen as a good fit for micro and small businesses and is a very good introduction to the value that creative input can bring to a business. It presents good relevant information and a quality suite of creative to choose from.
- The quality and level of expertise on the creative panel was seen as very high by the participating businesses, many could have used any of those shortlisted to undertake their creative challenge.
- There was adequate programme information circulated and the discovery events and launch events were very adequate in terms of content and information.
- The opportunity to engage with new creative companies brought a fresh approach and more awareness of the range of creative skills and services that a business can employ to grow and develop their business. The short list of creative companies offered gave businesses a much wider awareness of the type of creative expertise available in the region.
- In some instances the time frame available to complete a creative challenge was unrealistic

### Feedback from Creative Businesses

- The programme allowed a new opportunity for small regionally based creative enterprises to showcase their talent and expertise to many potential new clients. It gave them a rare opportunity to show what different products and services they have to offer.
- From working on a creative challenge, many creative businesses have high expectations that the experience will result in additional work from the same client and / or new clients.
- In general the Creative Business are happy with the idea and concept of a directory, but recognise that further work is needed to refine it.
- More guidance could have been offered from 4CNW regarding the format of the pitch to make to businesses and what should be involved. Examples include guidance on the budgets they are working towards, sample contractual arrangements, next steps to undertake after being awarded a contract.
- More guidance on the time frame for projects as in many cases it was a tight schedule.

# Appendix 3

## Summary of Consultation Feedback

- Participation in the programme helped to raise awareness of creative businesses and helped to distinguish their service from competitors as well as access new clients.
- Matchmaking could be improved through better consultation with brokers as to the suitability of a prospective match in advance of such a match being made. Screening of businesses in advance of the process to ensure they are in fact set up to appropriately engage with the process for what is a fairly concentrated period with a defined deadline’.
- Participation in the programme created new networking opportunities for creative businesses
- Provision of information from the 4CNW programme and through events was excellent and provided the right level of information.
- The matchmaking service was seen as a useful tool to get creative companies ‘in the door” to pitch for new work and therefore offered an opportunity to acquire new clients that would probably not otherwise exist.
- 4CNW Programme has allowed me to bring together a "cluster of creative services companies" to deliver appropriate services to the new clients. The documentation and presentation standards required to win the new clients was of the highest standards. It was due to this quality of delivery that we were successful in winning the new 4CNW projects’.

### Feedback from Regional Brokers

- The 4CNW programme was a good idea, in so far as it brought together different sectors who may not be innovative. It got traditional businesses to think outside their normal parameters to see how Creative services can help their business.
- The programme in Northern Ireland received a lot of interest from businesses with over 60 applicants from the business sector, showing that there is a great interest amongst traditional businesses to used and reap the benefits of the creative sector. There was also big demand for the programme from Creative businesses.
- The main weakness was the timeframe. Time was too short to allow one on one meetings with business applicants to draw out what they were seeking (the application form too short to describe what they needed).
- Assessment panels were both a strength and weakness. The weakness was mainly due to the application form, in some cases the panel missed the nub of what business was trying to get at. The same too could be said about the creative panel. 57 unsuccessful applicants to the creative directory, based on a short application form, where some excellent creative should have been included. However it is acknowledged that this is a pilot programme and the learning’s will inform future schemes.
- The greatest problem was the short timeframe given to get challenges completed. It needed a longer period for businesses to get used to idea of working with Creatives.
- Application on a rolling cycle would have worked better as some interested businesses were not in a position to meet the arbitrary application deadlines.
- Brokered matchmaking worked well. For Creatives pitching for business is a fact of life. Businesses were more lightly to go for Creatives who put a lot of work into their proposals and showed a solution to the businesses problem.

# Appendix 3

## Summary of Consultation Feedback

### Feedback from Regional Panels

- The programme had two distinct merits, firstly providing a stimulate to local businesses and secondly it offered support and advice.
- The application form was easily accessed and was short. Decisions were made quickly with the panel meeting and deciding on one day. This was unlike other public programme which can be overburdened with bureaucracy and long time frames.
- The greatest strength of the programme was its holistic approach, of funding and support.
- A weakness for members of regional panel was the short application from which made it difficult to get a grasp in on the businesses requirements. A one page outline of the businesses needs would have been better than the short paragraphs.
- The panel was a good method to assess the applicants for talent vouchers, they each score applicant independently and confirmed together afterward and brought the best applicants through.
- The programme was a good idea as it served to fill in the gap between the creative and business sector.
- Application forms made it difficult to get an understanding for the potential for growth for each applicant; financial information disclosed on forms was limited, making it difficult to gauge the growth potential.

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ECIA website - how to grow <http://www.howtogrow.eu/ecia/>

DG Enterprise and Industry – policy [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/index_en.htm)

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