

# IRELAND AT VENICE



## REQUEST FOR TENDER

### OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR IRELAND AT VENICE

Ireland at Venice is a partnership between Culture Ireland and the Arts Council to jointly support Ireland's representation at La Biennale di Venezia (the Venice Biennale). The Venice Biennale is one of the most prestigious international exhibitions in art and architecture in the world. The Biennale offers a major global platform for artists from participant countries to exhibit their work and attracts an audience of international critics, peers and the general public.

Culture Ireland and the Arts Council are committed to supporting the best of Irish contemporary art and architecture practice to represent Ireland at the Venice Biennale. Through Ireland's participation we aim to raise the profile of Irish art and architecture while positioning Irish artists and architects at an international level.

#### Required services

In order to ensure that Ireland at Venice have the best operational framework in place to select, resource and enable the delivery of Ireland's representation at the Venice Biennale we are seeking the services of suitably qualified tenderers to undertake the following:

- Critical assessment of the selection, resourcing and delivery model of Ireland at Venice with analysis of the last 14 editions (seven art and seven architecture) since 2011;
- Evaluation of the outputs and outcomes of Ireland at Venice in relation to strategic alignment and value of opportunity;
- International benchmarking with at least five countries of similar scale to Ireland to include analysis of models for selection, resourcing and delivery of national representation.

## **Deliverables**

Propose options for the best operational framework for the selection, resourcing and delivery of Ireland at Venice over the next ten years. It may be that different options are proposed for art and architecture.

## **Response to Tender Specification & Criteria for assessment**

Proposals will be evaluated against the following criterion:

1. Proposed methodology, approach and capacity to deliver (to include desk research; stakeholder and sectoral consultation; international research)
2. Experience and key skill set (to include art and architecture)
3. Expertise of key personnel, in particular as it relates to the Venice Biennale
4. Cost and timeframe for delivery

## **Scope of Contract**

The project will be managed by Culture Ireland. It is envisaged that this contract will commence in Q1 2026 for a period of no longer than **five** months. The cost of the contract is estimated at no more than €20,000 ex. VAT.

Contract milestones:

- Pre-agreed project plan
- Mid-point presentation on key insights and findings
- First draft report for comment
- Final report

## **Submission of proposals**

Proposals to undertake this tender should be submitted by no later than 5pm on Wednesday February 11<sup>th</sup> 2026 to [IrelandAtVenice@cultureireland.gov.ie](mailto:IrelandAtVenice@cultureireland.gov.ie)

For any queries in relation to the tender please contact [IrelandAtVenice@cultureireland.gov.ie](mailto:IrelandAtVenice@cultureireland.gov.ie)

## APPENDICES

### 1. About Culture Ireland and the Arts Council

#### About Culture Ireland

Culture Ireland responsible for promoting Irish arts worldwide, creating and supporting opportunities for Irish artists and companies to present and promote their work at strategic international festivals and venues. Culture Ireland also develops platforms to present outstanding Irish creative work to international audiences through showcases at key global arts events, including the Edinburgh Festival and Venice Biennale. Culture Ireland supports sustainable careers in the arts in Ireland by helping Irish artists to realise their international ambitions and grow their global audiences. In 2024, Culture Ireland supported over 5,500 artistic presentations in over 50 countries to audiences of almost 7 million.

#### About the Arts Council

The Arts Council /An Chomhairle Ealaíon is the Irish government agency for developing the arts. We work in partnership with artists, arts organisations, public policy makers and others to build a central place for the arts in Irish life. The Arts Council is guided by its strategy, *Making Great Art Work*.

We set policy to ensure that all of our funding is spent strategically, that all of our actions reflect the long-term interests of the public and that all of our decisions are transparent and fair.

We aim to have policies which are current and relevant and which reflect our role as an expert agency in the arts.

In line with national and EU regulations, including the Employment Equality Acts and the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, we seek to embed inclusive practices that reflect public sector values and enhance the social impact of our procurement and aim to align the nine principles gender, civil status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, membership of the Traveller community of the Equal Status Act with sustainable procurement, as well as socio-economic background.

For further information on the Arts Council, please visit our website [www.artscouncil.ie](http://www.artscouncil.ie)

### 2. Background:

The Venice Biennale is one of the most prestigious international exhibitions in art and architecture. Offering a major platform for artists from participant countries to exhibit their work, the Biennale attracts an audience of international critics, peers and general publics. In 2024, the Irish pavilion (Eimear Walshe) attracted an audience of 727,926 with international press coverage and significant future opportunities for the career of the artist.

#### Visual Arts

Ireland's participation in the Venice Biennale has a considerable history, dating back to the 1950 art exhibition when Nano Reid and Norah McGuinness represented the country. Following a twenty-five-year gap, Dorothy Cross and Willie Doherty were invited to participate in the Biennale in 1993. Since then, the Arts Council has supported visual artists to exhibit at the event.

## *Architecture*

The first dedicated Architecture Biennale was held in 1980. Ireland has participated in the Architecture Biennale since 2000 when Tom de Paor first represented the country. The organisation of Ireland's representation at the Venice Biennale was for many years the responsibility of the Department of Foreign Affairs. This role was assumed by Culture Ireland following its establishment in 2005 and, since then, Culture Ireland and the Arts Council have jointly delivered Ireland's national representation at Venice.

Each organisation has a distinct but complementary remit. Specifically, Culture Ireland supports the presentation and promotion of Irish arts internationally. The Arts Council supports the professional development of artists, including architects, as they deepen and extend their practice through opportunities abroad. The Arts Council also supports a national tour of the exhibition to ensure that audiences in Ireland have the fullest opportunity to experience and engage with work that has represented Ireland on the world stage.