**Creative Ireland Open Call Memorandum of Understanding Guidelines**

**Description of Project**

This is a unique opportunity for your group to actively engage in a well resourced and innovative project being led by practitioners with experience of leading high quality collaborative projects. The commitment of everyone along with the knowledge of the group and the expertise of the practitioner are essential to get the maximum benefit from the programme and make a lasting, memorable and enriching project for everyone involved.

Your project may have originated from any number of starting points. Perhaps the practitioner approached the group with an idea or the group approached the practitioner. You may even have been introduced to each other by the Creative Ireland Team. The important thing is that both practitioner and group have the same view of what the project is, that both parties can agree on a description of what the project is and where it intends to go – even if everyone’s ideas are still vague at this stage, including the practitioners. A good question to ask is ‘to what extent is creativity evident in your plan?’ If you are excited and enthused by an idea, the chances are that other people will be too.

Here are a couple of considerations for elements that should be included in your project description…

1. Describe the project in one sentence.
2. What would you like to have achieved by the time the project is over? (It’s too soon to be able to determine what the project will look like in the end, and changes to that will happen anyway, but you should discuss what both parties want to get out of the project, and know what both you and everyone else would like to have achieved in the end.
3. What are the immediate practical or physical plans or steps you intend to take? (eg. A series of 4 dance workshops exploring ideas about the environment or a survey of games that children play in the local area.)

**Roles and Responsibilities**

This is the most constructive part of an MOU. This is an opportunity for both the group and the practitioner to sit down together and discuss what each party expects from each other. By writing it down, your plans will be better understood - you’ll also notice if anything has been left out. The Roles and Responsibilities should be based on the project description and written in tandem with the budget and schedule. Here are some considerations …

* Remember this is a collaborative project and the expertise of the practitioner and the context and knowledge of the group are essential to the success of the project. Both the practitioner and the group should feel ownership of the project and the best results will come when both parties are committed.
* It’s ok if only the early steps in your project are precise and detailed and the later ones more vague. However, even if vague, describe them as best you can and make sure to leave adequate time and budget for what might emerge. In the early steps, from a practical perspective – who will do what and when?
* How much contact time will the practitioner spend with the group and how much time may be spent working on the project away from the group on their own. While the facilitator may need to be carry out some tasks by themselves, a core purpose of the programme is the extent to which the group or community get to explore their own creativity so the focus should be on working together and not necessarily on the quality of an end product. (There’s no onus to have an end product at all.)
* Commitment and communication are key to the process. If meetings are arranged and tasks committed to, then they need to be followed through. If things change or issues are encountered, this should be communicated and shared as soon as possible so that plans can be altered accordingly.
* Remember nothing is set in stone. Even though you agree on a plan, once you get started you will probably discover new directions and possibilities. This is normal and to be welcomed. You just need to change your plans accordingly - but ensure that everyone is informed and everyone is on the same page.

**Contact hours**

The biggest line in your budget and most valuable aspect of your project is likely to be contact time you spend with your practitioner. While the group will have ideas about what they want to explore, it is the specialist knowledge and expertise of your professional practitioner that will guide the project. Therefore it is vital to have a clear understanding of how many contact hours the group will have with the practitioner. This also establishes the level of commitment the group expects from the practitioner. Contact hours simply means direct face-to-face meetings between the practitioner and the group. Non contact hours means the time the practitioner may need to spend on the project in between meetings.

**Budget**

Budgets can be complex, particularly if this is your first collaborative project in the culture/creativity sector. Both parties need to sit down together and by looking at the requirements you’ve identified and time available, discuss how the budget will be spent.

Creative Ireland projects are not like buying a standard product or service. While you may need materials and so on, most of the budget is likely to be spent on the services of the practitioner that will work with the group. The Creative Ireland team here can help you with this but the practitioner you’re working with is likely to have a good understanding of the different tasks, how long they are likely to take and much they are likely to cost.

As a guideline, a professional practitioner should expect to be paid €50 per hour for a two-hour workshop rising to €150 for a half-day and €250 for a full day. Non contact hours should be budgeted at about half those amounts.

Again, budgets may change as the project develops. If they do, how this impacts on other elements or requirements needs to be communicated clearly and understood and agreed by everyone involved.

**Schedule**

It is important to create a clear schedule before starting your project, particularly for the first few steps. Even though the latter stages of the project will be vague, you should have a rough schedule for this at the beginning too, even though it is likely to change. This allows everyone, but particularly the practitioner you’re working with, to know how much time they are likely to have to make available for the project in their own schedules.

As well as identifying when things happen, your schedule will also outline where things happen (and who is responsible for them). You may need to identify and secure an appropriate space for the project. Will you need other facilities or other expertise for different elements of the project?

The schedule and its requirements will evolve and become more defined as the project goes on. Any changes that are made should be agreed by both parties, allowing for some degree of flexibility if needed. Everyone involved can then be aware of what is happening and when.

**Further Information…**

**Evaluation**

As part of the programme each applicant is required to have an evaluation process. Rather than being a burden, this is an effective planning tool where the group and practitioner have the opportunity to review the MOU at a mid-point, making any changes deemed necessary, and to review and celebrate their project together at the end.

The mid-project report need only be one page long and briefly describe the initial plans and ideas that were developed and how the ideas have evolved in the interim.

The final project report should be no more than two pages long. It will briefly reiterate the initial ideas and starting points, how they evolved over the course of the programme and how they arrived at the end of the project. Based on group discussions, it will detail how the project impacted on the group and the practitioner (and the wider community if relevant).

It will be accompanied by a selection of images/video and any other documentation or publicity material developed during the programme.

**Documentation**

Creative Ireland has particular requirements such as documenting how many people were involved in each project and providing a photographic or video record of a project. While there has always been an obligation to ask parents and guardians of children to give consent to use images of their children, under GDPR, adults must now also give their consent to how their image and other personal data is used. The Creative Ireland team will provide you with guidance and templates that you can use for this.