



**imro**

**MUSIC:**

# **The Cornerstone of Irish Culture & Society**

# POLICY PROPOSALS



Music is more than just a form of entertainment; it is the cornerstone of our lives, deeply embedded in our culture, shaping our international reputation, and woven into the fabric of our society. It plays a vital role in sustaining local jobs, strengthening communities, and supporting Irish culture in the broadest sense. Our vision is for a country that recognises and values music as a critical element in planning and policy development. By unlocking the hidden potential of our towns, people, and communities, music can become central to the wellbeing of our nation. To achieve this vision, IMRO has identified several key opportunities to maximise the benefits of music, detailed below:



## **Strengthen Copyright Protections in AI Regulations.**

Building robust protections for copyrighted works within AI regulations is essential. AI platforms must be fully transparent to safeguard the intellectual property and copyrights of creators and performers, especially concerning works ingested for training programs and algorithms. It is crucial that the rights of music creators are fully respected. The full implementation of the EU AI Act, accompanied by a strong EU AI Office, is critical to ensuring a fair and orderly marketplace.



## **Amendment of Section 481 to include an additional tax credit for the use of Irish music.**

Section 481 of the Taxes Consolidation Act is a valuable taxation measure which has supported the significant growth of Ireland's film industry and has made Ireland an attractive location for film production. Ireland now has a reputation on the global stage as a hub for high-tech digital content and quality production, which can be attributed in part to the Section 481 tax relief. IMRO welcomes the extension of this scheme until the end of 2024. We also note that despite the unquestionable role of music in the development and success of the Irish film industry, there is no reference to music creation in Section 481, unlike in the UK. (<https://www.bfi.org/film-industry/british-certification-tax-relief/cultural-test-video-games/summary-points-cultural-test-film>)

IMRO is proposing Section 481 be amended such that the 'cultural test' for this relief includes reference to music in film and that value is attached to music creation as part of film production. In summary we are seeking:



1. A provision be inserted in the cultural test of Section 481 such that music creation as part of film production and development is recognised and value is attached to same.

2. The introduction of an additional 1% in tax relief for the use of Irish music creators in film and TV productions. This would incentivise the creative music sector in the same way as the regions are benefiting from the additional 2% tax relief from the Regional Uplift incentive. For Irish music creatives it would provide exposure to a wider audience thus increasing commercial opportunities and success both at home and overseas.



### **Create a Broadcasting Fund ring fenced for new programmes on Irish music.**

The Sound and Vision Broadcasting Funding Scheme is designed to assist in the production of television and radio programmes that would not otherwise be commercially viable. The Scheme is funded by 7% of the Television License Fee or roughly €10 million. The Scheme is always oversubscribed with more request for funding than there are funds available.

In 2022, Minister Catherine Martin instigated two Sound and Vision rounds which focused specifically on music. Both rounds produced programmes for television and radio of extremely high quality and provided additional broadcasting and performing opportunities, increased and enhanced commercial prospects and financial compensation for a significant number of Irish musicians and composers.

IMRO is proposing that this initiative is put on a permanent footing with guaranteed inclusion of a broadcasting funding round specifically focused on Irish music on an ongoing basis which includes ring fenced funding for Irish music programming.



### **Expand Cultural Spaces throughout Ireland.**

The expansion of cultural spaces is vital if arts, culture and music are to thrive in Ireland. As a country we have an abundance of creative talent but we are severely lacking in opportunities for people to develop and showcase their talents or for people to access cultural experiences. Increasing the cultural opportunities in towns and villages throughout Ireland will bring vibrancy and life back to urban areas, increase footfall and increase revenue for businesses.

There are a few options which can be explored to address this:

**1. Performance Spaces;** An increase in performance spaces throughout Ireland will give more options for musicians to share their music, exposing audiences in every part of the country to different genres and styles of performances while also removing the need for artists to reside in or close to urban centres which had traditionally been the performance hubs.



**2. Meanwhile Use Music Project; Meanwhile Use** is the temporary occupation of a vacant property or location that currently lacks long-term plans for permanent utilisation. It transforms vacant or derelict spaces into opportunities that benefit the local community. Providing access to the space to creative artists be they musicians, songwriters or performers will not only benefit the creative community but will also benefit local economy, have a positive impact on quality of life and bring vibrancy back to urban areas. Meanwhile Use should be made available for properties that are lying idle.

**3. Cultural Music Collaborative Spaces;** The inclusion of cultural spaces should be an automatic addition in all development plans, regardless of location, cost, size or project owner. Such a move would expand the potential creative and cultural spaces in every county in Ireland. It would enable both existing and emerging artists to have access not only to suitable working space but also to other people working within the same sphere thus increasing work collaboration, enabling networking and expanding cultural interactions.



### **Develop a National Music Strategy.**

The development of a National Music Strategy would bring together all stakeholders who promote, develop, and support the Irish music industry. This strategy should be comprehensive, productive, inclusive, practical, achievable, and fully costed, ensuring the continued growth and success of the Irish music industry.



### **Basic Income Scheme for the Arts.**

The Basic Income for the Arts pilot scheme has shown promising results to date. A permanent and expanded Scheme will provide financial security and creative freedom for artists and arts worker who enrich our culture.



### **Develop our cities as Music Tourism Hubs.**

A coordinated and supportive approach to music as an industry and a cultural asset in our cities will attract tourism and generate revenue. Taylor Swift's recent concerts in the Aviva generated €150 million for Dublin city and the 2024 All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil in Wexford boosted the local economy by €60 million. By recognising the economic value of music as an industry and prioritising music in planning, policies and initiatives, we can demonstrate its value for society, create a more vibrant and diverse musical landscape and provide an economic uplift for our urban centres.

# POLICY PROPOSALS



Music enriches our lives and our culture, enabling us to express our identities and connect with others. It generates employment, supports and strengthens communities and plays a vital role in societal development.

IMRO wants music to be prioritised in policy making, planning and development believing it can improve and enhance our country and make it a more appealing place to live, work and visit. IMRO has pinpointed some key opportunities to maximise the benefits of music and realise its full potential.



Strengthen AI regulations to protect copyright, ensure transparency and fully respect creators rights thus guaranteeing fair compensation with robust enforcement under the EU AI Act.



IMRO proposes amending Section 481 to include music creation within the cultural test and offer additional tax incentives for using Irish music in film and TV productions.



The Sound and Vision Funding Scheme supported by 7% of the Television License Fee funds the production of radio and television programmes. In 2022, funding rounds focusing specifically on Irish music produced high quality content and boosted opportunities for Irish music creators. IMRO seeks the inclusion of consistent dedicated funding rounds for Irish music programmes as an integral part of the Sound and Vision Scheme.



Expanding cultural spaces in Ireland is essential for nurturing arts and culture. More performance venues, temporary use of vacant properties, and integrating cultural spaces into development plans can revitalise communities, support artists, and boost local economies.



Create a National Music Strategy to unite stakeholders in promoting and supporting the Irish music industry. This comprehensive, practical and costed plan should drive the industry's growth and success.



The Basic Income for the Arts pilot scheme has successfully provided financial support to artists, fostering creativity without financial strain. Making the Scheme permanent and expanding it would further benefit both artists and the cultural landscape in Ireland.



Irish cities should leverage music tourism to boost revenue, as demonstrated by Taylor Swift's €150 million impact in Dublin and the €60 million boost for Wexford from the 2024 All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil. Prioritising music in urban planning and development can enhance cultural vibrancy and economic prosperity and growth.