

Gailearaí Ealaíne Crawford

Crawford Art Gallery

Shaping the Future Crawford Art Gallery Strategy 2024 - 2027

June 2024



Foreword

I am pleased to present our strategic plan, “*Shaping The Future Crawford Art Gallery: 2024-2027*”.

This strategic plan comes at an exciting time for the Crawford Art Gallery as it covers a period of major coordinated investment in the redevelopment of our buildings at Emmet Place in Cork. Within the timeframe of 2024 to 2027, we will see the complete closure and decanting of the buildings and the redevelopment and reopening of an expanded and enhanced Gallery with related facilities and public spaces.

As we considered our future in preparing this strategy, we reflected on how much the world has changed since the Covid pandemic and how the Crawford, its collection and its buildings have a new significance in this changed world. In the timeframe of this strategy, we will invest substantially in conserving and expanding this institution so that it can continue to be a source of inspiration for generations, and we are fortunate to be able to do this in collaboration with the Office of Public Works and with funding support through the Project Ireland 2040 program of the government.

With our master development plan in place, the Crawford Art Gallery is well positioned to contribute to the development of Cork city and the wider region in the coming years, and we look forward very much to making that contribution.

The preparation of this strategic plan has been a collaborative process involving the Board, staff, stakeholders and communities, and we are very grateful to everyone who gave their time and insights, all of which have shaped the strategic direction. We look forward to the future, and we know that the redeveloped and renewed Crawford Art Gallery will continue to play an important part in the cultural and civic life of Cork, Ireland and beyond.

Rose Mc Hugh,
Chair,
Crawford Art Gallery

Crawford Art Gallery is an organisation that is continually changing and adapting to external environmental factors. This strategy will cover a momentous time in our development.

As a team, we are excited to embrace the opportunities provided to us to advance Crawford Art Gallery. We are mindful to preserve our essence but expand on the opportunities we can create for our audiences and our creative communities. We are committed to building our structures so we can be best placed to deliver on our collective ambitions.

We are very grateful to the Department of Tourism Culture Arts Gaeltacht Sport and Media, The OPW, Fáilte Ireland and all our stakeholders and audiences who support us and inspire us to deliver.

Mary McCarthy,
Director,
Crawford Art Gallery



Rose McHugh
Chair, Crawford Art Gallery
Photo Credit: John Allen



Mary McCarthy
Director, Crawford Art Gallery
Photo Credit: Clare Keogh

Crawford Art Gallery today at a Glance

3

buildings on one
site in central Cork,
soon to be 4
buildings

4,000+

Visual artworks

Artworks spanning

7

Centuries

250,000+

Irish and
international
visitors welcomed
every year

Top 5

Visitor attraction in
Cork

7

Open 7 days a
week

Introduction and Context

Crawford Art Gallery is the only national cultural institution fully located outside of Dublin, housed in the former 18th Century Cork Customs House in Cork City. The Gallery has a distinctive collection that comprises a diverse range of almost 4,000 works from eighteenth-century Irish and European painting and sculpture through to contemporary installations. Crawford Art Gallery not only 'collects, safeguards, holds in trust, researches, develops and interprets collections' but also advances accessibility (seven days a week) of the national collection of visual arts through its facilities for exhibitions, performances, displays, lectures, tours and programmes such as 'Learn and Explore'.

The redevelopment of the Gallery, a National Development Plan Capital Project, delivered in partnership with OPW and the Government of Ireland, will begin in Autumn 2024. It will complement and enhance existing activities and experiences, creating an exciting, dynamic and inclusive experience that will transform the streetscape, cityscape and cultural landscape in Cork. Crawford Art Gallery will continue to be a creative and cultural hub, catalyst and contributor to Cork city centre and wider regional infrastructure and will be a leading cultural tourism offering for residents, visitors and the culture and heritage sector in Ireland.

The redevelopment, and related closure of the building, provides an opportunity for strategic reflection, innovative thinking, active planning, and implementation of a number of focused projects. Core areas of activity during the closure will include: protection of the collection; outreach, offsite and online initiatives to maintain communication and connection with artists, audiences, and the local community; and reshaping the organisation design and delivery model to fit the scale of offering that will be possible in the future.

This strategy covers the period to the end of 2027, with construction and move offsite taking place in late 2024 and the latter end of 2027 being the envisaged timeframe to move back and reopen. This strategy articulates the ambition for the reimagined future, expands the purpose of Crawford Art Gallery to fit the scale of ambition that the redevelopment makes possible and outlines the strategic priorities and actions that will steer Crawford Art Gallery towards the achievement of the vision and purpose and will ensuring the values are lived through Crawford Art Gallery and experienced by all stakeholders.

While the construction of the new building is the backdrop to this strategic plan, the focus of the strategy is to shape the reimagined future post redevelopment. This will include defining and designing the organisation, capacity, capability and resource base that will allow the Gallery to evolve as workplace that inspires employees and respects and protects employee wellbeing in a way matches the intention of the new organisation.

At the heart of the strategy is the desire to continue to share the national collection through exhibitions and programmes accessible to the diverse audiences of national and international visitors, learners and the local community in innovative and immersive ways. The plan aims to strengthen the Gallery's position as a national cultural institution through its building, people, and collection and its inspiring, progressive and thought-provoking series of visual arts programmes in an iconic arts space worthy of the national collection and fitting for diverse audiences.

While this is the high-level organisational strategy, there are several supporting strategies that are / will be part of the overall strategic structure to the end of 2027 and these documents should be considered as a whole e.g. the Relocation Strategy, Communications Strategy, Resource Management Strategy, Climate Action Roadmap. These documents will provide future detail on specific actions and tasks that will be vital to shaping the desired future and creating a smooth transition for employees and audiences following the reopening.

2024-2027 Vision

“To create an even more accessible vibrant public art Gallery that connects people, artworks and arts practice while engaging with diverse audiences in forward-thinking, inclusive, and imaginative ways”.

2024-2027 Purpose

Crawford Art Gallery through its Programming, Collection and Buildings, probes the future, contemplates the present and reveals the past, creating engaging conversations across timelines, by:

- conserving and expanding the collection of art works;
- interpreting the collection to enhance the visitor experience;
- providing a dynamic programme of immersive exhibitions, events, conversations and learning opportunities based on the interests of our diverse audiences and communities;
- developing and promoting the understanding and practice of visual art;
- enriching the cultural, social and civic life of Cork, the wider city, region and Ireland.

2024-2027 Strategic Imperative

“Crawford Art Gallery will continue to share and expand the national collection and promote art practice and learning during the redevelopment, using multiple channels of engagement and communication to maintain our connection with our audiences and artists”.

Our Values

Crawford are guided by a set of core values that shape our actions, decisions and interactions with of our stakeholders:

Open and Inclusive

We recognise our collection is public and we are committed to maximising the access we offer all those interested in engaging with the Collection, Exhibitions and Buildings. In doing so, we endeavour to reflect the diversity of our visitors, learners and community and to adhere to the highest standards of environmental stewardship, social responsibility and long-term sustainability.

Welcoming

We recognise the opportunity to be an organisation that welcomes people and are committed to delivering excellent standards of services to all our audiences. We commit to actively listen to and learn about what our visitors, learners and communities want from us.

Supportive and Collaborative

We passionately believe in supporting and valuing our employees and in the strength of working collaboratively with artists and building strong national and international partnerships and alliances.

Insightful and Responsive

We promote knowledge sharing in many diverse forms and promote the generation of new insights through exhibitions, publications and projects. We will create opportunities to have conversations, to listen, learn, and share, resulting in knowledge and insights that will guide us as an open and inclusive organisation.



Vision and Values 2024 - 2027

“To create an even more accessible vibrant public art Gallery that connects people, artworks and arts practice while engaging with diverse audiences in forward-thinking, inclusive, and imaginative ways”.

Open and Inclusive | Welcoming | Supportive and Collaborative | Insightful and Responsive



Purpose 2024 - 2027

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Strategic Imperative 2024 - 2027

“Crawford Art Gallery will continue to share and expand the national collection and promote art practice and learning during the redevelopment, using multiple channels of engagement and communication to maintain our connection with our audiences and artists”.



Innovation and Transformation



Communication and Connection



People



Collaboration and Community

Strategic Priorities

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Innovation and Transformation

Maximise the potential of the new space using digital channels and tools to provide immersive visitor experiences and engagement by embracing innovative ways of managing and presenting the collection and projects.



Strategic Priority

Collaboration and Community

Crawford Art Gallery will keep artists, audiences and communities needs at the centre of the building, brand and audience experience by building collaborative and supportive communities and strategic partnerships locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.



Strategic Priority

People

Deliver meaningful impact to our artists, audiences and the community as a cohesive team by maintaining a positive and inclusive culture where all employees enjoy rewarding careers, feel valued, have opportunities for personal development.



Strategic Priority

Communication and Connection

Build anticipation for the future scope and scale of the Crawford Art Gallery by maintaining open and inclusive multi-channel communication with stakeholders and employees.



Innovation and Transformation

The redevelopment of the building is an unprecedented and transformative opportunity for Crawford Art Gallery that brings with it a requisite opportunity and requirement for innovation and transformation in how the Gallery will be experienced as a place to work (also covered under People) and as a place to visit once reopened. The boundaries of what is possible in terms of presentation of the collection, use of space, innovative programming and events and immersive technology have expanded and continue to provide ever more dynamic and vibrant ways for sharing the Crawford Art Gallery experience in every more diverse ways.

Crawford Art Gallery are committed to being at the forefront of innovative design and delivery of multi-sensory and immersive audience experiences. This commitment is stronger than ever given the need to reflect the transformation of the building in a transformed experience and level of engagement with artists and audiences. Deeper and more diverse and inclusive ways of communicating and engaging will allow Crawford Art Gallery to be true to our values of actively listening and learning and responding to the needs of artists, audiences and partners.

Innovative ways of communicating, engaging and connecting will be explored and prioritised where they influence our commitment to creating a high-performance innovation culture and audience experience.

Strategic Objective

Maximise the potential of the new space using digital channels and tools to provide multi-sensory and immersive visitor and learner experiences and engagement by embracing innovative ways of managing and presenting the collection.

Goals:

- Use the closure period to prioritise the design of an incremental innovation “business model”, using employee feedback and market research to navigate the evolving working and operating environment, future-proof visitor and learner experiences and continuously innovate marketing and communications.
- Create a high-performance innovation culture where ways of working are consistently reviewed to ensure Crawford Art Gallery is achieving its vision and purpose and activity and programmes are designed with equality, diversity and inclusion in mind.

Key Strategic Actions:



Digitalisation and Digitisation

Devise a plan to digitise collections, archives and exhibitions to make them accessible during and after the closure period and to increase awareness and reach of Crawford Art Gallery to audiences nationally and internationally. Plan to include digitalise internal processes and procedures that can be streamlined and made more efficient / less time-consuming.



Immersive Tech

Define how immersive and emerging technology can be positively integrated into the employee, learner and visitor experience. Exploration of short-term ways of animating the collection and maintaining visibility during the building closure to be prioritised initially, with the longer-term focus being on tech integration and animation after reopening. Use cases and feasibility of AI, AR, VR, digital displays, multidimensional interpretation / presentation as well as circulation of the collection should be developed.



Sustainability

Define and implement environmentally sustainable practices throughout the institution and building (during the build and on reopening), promoting eco-friendly practices in exhibitions and operations, reducing energy consumption, waste management, environmentally friendly practices e.g. sustainable travel, using sustainable supply chains etc.



Accessibility

Ensure that the new space, workplace, collection, exhibitions and programmes adhere to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion by applying user/inclusive design thinking.



Research

Use the closure period to research trends in tech and in audience and funder preferences, needs and expectations. Incorporate appropriate responses to the identified trends on reopening. Communicate the learnings and plans to the team during closure with a view to embedding an innovation culture on reopening.



KPIs

Establish key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the impact and effectiveness of innovation and transformation, such as engagement metrics, increased audience reach community feedback and visitor and learner numbers (when appropriate).



Collaboration and Community

The reconstructed Crawford Art Gallery will have an ability to reach a wider, more diverse community of stakeholders: be that a wider range of artists being supported in their work; other cultural institutions and tourism businesses who can amplify the visibility of the Gallery during the redevelopment and with whom a clustered cultural experience can be created; diversified funders, sponsors and donors that enable growth of the collection and programmes, and, most importantly, expanding the community with whom the collection and programmes can be shared in the redeveloped space; when the Gallery will provide a place of enjoyment, engagement and learning for the local community and national and international audiences.

Creating and maintaining momentum via proactive and committed collaboration is vital, as is both sustaining and strengthening existing relationships and build new partnerships and collaborations, nationally and internationally.

Strategic Objective

Crawford Art Gallery will keep artists, audiences and communities needs at the centre of the building, brand and audience experience by building collaborative and supportive communities and strategic partnerships locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Goals:

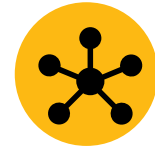
- Build a supportive stakeholder framework made up of strategic and constructive partnerships capable of contributing to the development of an internationally recognised visual arts Gallery.
- Ensure all of our people commit to and are supported to deliver the highest level of stakeholder service across all stakeholder interactions.
- Design a visitor experience model (including people, place, collection, programme, interpretation, technology, etc.), centered on the local community and local, national, and international visitors, to deliver the experience and welcome, amplified to fit the increased expectations of a larger place and space.

Key Strategic Actions:



Stakeholder Map

Create a stakeholder map to define key stakeholders Crawford Art Gallery should collaborate with, during and after the redevelopment, why they are important, why they would be interested in collaborating, their ask of Crawford Art Gallery, Crawford Art Gallery's ask of them, key messages, key communications channels, key influencers, planned actions and desired results.



Collaborative Marketing Plan

Create a collaborative marketing plan with key stakeholders to ensure augmented approach to communication in relation to the redevelopment, reopening and reconstructed Crawford Art Gallery. Plan the development and sharing of collaborative content to increase reach to more diverse audiences.



Outreach

Organise outreach programmes, or collaborative projects with appropriate public art projects, festivals, events, artists, schools, community groups, etc. to continue promoting Crawford Art Gallery's collection and programmes, maintaining brand visibility and spreading the positive message of the promise of the redevelopment and reopening.



Strategic Partnerships

Build and expand partnerships with other cultural institutions, universities, businesses, and community organisations to leverage resources, expertise, and networks for collaborative projects and initiatives.

Establish relationships with international contacts who may have an interest in funding, sponsoring or donating to the collection and /or future Crawford Art Gallery activities and initiatives.



Clustered cultural experiences

Strengthen the existing bond with fellow national cultural institutions and local and regional cultural tourism businesses during the period of closure with a view to planning a chain of national cultural experiences and a cluster of local and regional experiences.

People

A concerted effort has been made in recent years to build a positive and committed culture that was often referenced in the consultation process. It will be important to protect that culture and staff wellbeing in the context of working offsite as well as when the organisation and employee compliment grows to meet the resource levels required of the larger, redeveloped, more innovative space.

The closure period provides an opportunity for reflection and deliberation and to collectively define new ways of working both during the closure period and beyond. The timeframe of this strategy is ideal to build on the recently resourced HR function and to ensure that the policies and procedures are in place that will facilitate the attraction, development and retention of a larger team.

Change and transformation management will be key skills that will be required of all team members, particularly from the senior leadership team.

Building skills and capabilities to meet the evolving needs of increased audiences, learners and the local community and the opportunities of technology will ensure the skillsbase in the Crawford Art Gallery evolves in line with future requirements of functions and roles. Developing and investing in people and providing training and supports is a core requirement for long-term organisational sustainability.

Strategic Objective

Deliver meaningful impact to our artists, audiences and the community as a cohesive team by maintaining a positive and inclusive culture where all employees enjoy rewarding careers, feel valued, have opportunities for personal development.

Goals:

- Build an organisational framework that harnesses CAG's unique skills and capabilities to deliver impact for artists, audiences and learners that aligns with the expectations of a progressive national cultural institution.
- Prioritise wellbeing during and after the closure period to ensure our people are valued, rewarded, and motivated.
- Ensure that expectations are built for future promise of the reconstructed Gallery, while being honest open about what is possible during the closure period.

Key Strategic Actions:



Employee Engagement

Build an employee engagement and communication strategy that facilitates a people-first principle for the redevelopment period and beyond, ensuring an environment that is collaborative, diverse, agile, inspiring and rewarding.



Employee Value Proposition

Define what Crawford Art Gallery offers to attract and retain its people. Continue building our collaborative culture and offering interesting career pathways.



HR Strategy

Resource our HR Function to support the People objective. Develop a comprehensive HR Strategy which takes account of funder, audience and learner needs, incorporating talent acquisition and retention, training and development (to incorporate soft and hard skills).



HR Framework

Devise a central framework purposefully designed to attract, nurture and retain expertise and to ensure a skills and capability performance culture.



Progressive Approach

Implement progressive and innovative workplace policies on diversity and inclusion and hybrid working, integrated with CSR and social activities, in order to differentiate our employee offering.



Employer Brand

Promote a clearly defined people culture which is recognised as defining a progressive national cultural institution.

Communication and Connection

Both internal and external communications are vital during the closure period. The period of the build will have significant impact on employees who will have to move out of the building and work on a hybrid basis from home and a temporary office space. The role of internal communications during this time will be to protect the positive, committed culture that has developed and to ensure that all employees feel informed of impact on ways of working and progress of the redevelopment as milestones are reached.

For artists and audiences, it will be important to maintain connection and visibility and to find the right balance between communications related to the redevelopment and communicating the work that is continuing in relation to managing and growing the collection, touring exhibitions, outreach programmes and online content.

The closure period provides an opportunity to develop positive messages, highlighting increased opportunities to share and enjoy the national collection of visual arts digitally or in person at touring locations and to build expectations of the revamped place and space that will house the expanded collection from 2027.

Strategic Objective

Ensure awareness of outreach and ongoing work on the collection during the redevelopment, of progress of the redevelopment, and build anticipation for the future scope and scale of the Crawford Art Gallery by maintaining open and inclusive multi-channel communication with stakeholders and employees.

Goals:

- Embed the principles of openness and transparency in all communications.
- Maintain visibility of the Crawford Art Gallery brand during the closure.
- Ensure that employees are fully informed of adaptations to work practices and of opportunities to continue to work together.
- Work with stakeholders to amplify communications with new and existing audiences by sharing with their networks and on their channels.
- Ensure that expectations are built for future promise of the reconstructed Gallery, while being open about what is possible during the closure period.

Key Strategic Actions:



Internal Communications

Develop an internal communications strategy to maintain open lines of communication that ensure that employees are continuously aware of progress and milestones being reached in relation to strategy implementation, change management, HR, ways of working, professional development opportunities, ongoing work of colleagues in relation to the protection of the collection, programming, audience and stakeholder communication and engagement and construction progress updates.



External Communications

Develop a targeted, segmented external communications plan to maintain existing connections with artists, alumni, audiences and learners and to maintain or create visibility with existing and new audiences. Communications to be balanced between brand visibility and profile, ongoing access to the collection via touring exhibitions, outreach, and/or online, updates in relation to ongoing work “behind the scenes” and updates in relation to the redevelopment project and countdown to reopening.



Fundraising Strategy

Devise a fundraising strategy, to build connections and relationships with local, national, and international philanthropists, sponsors and donors.



Content Creation

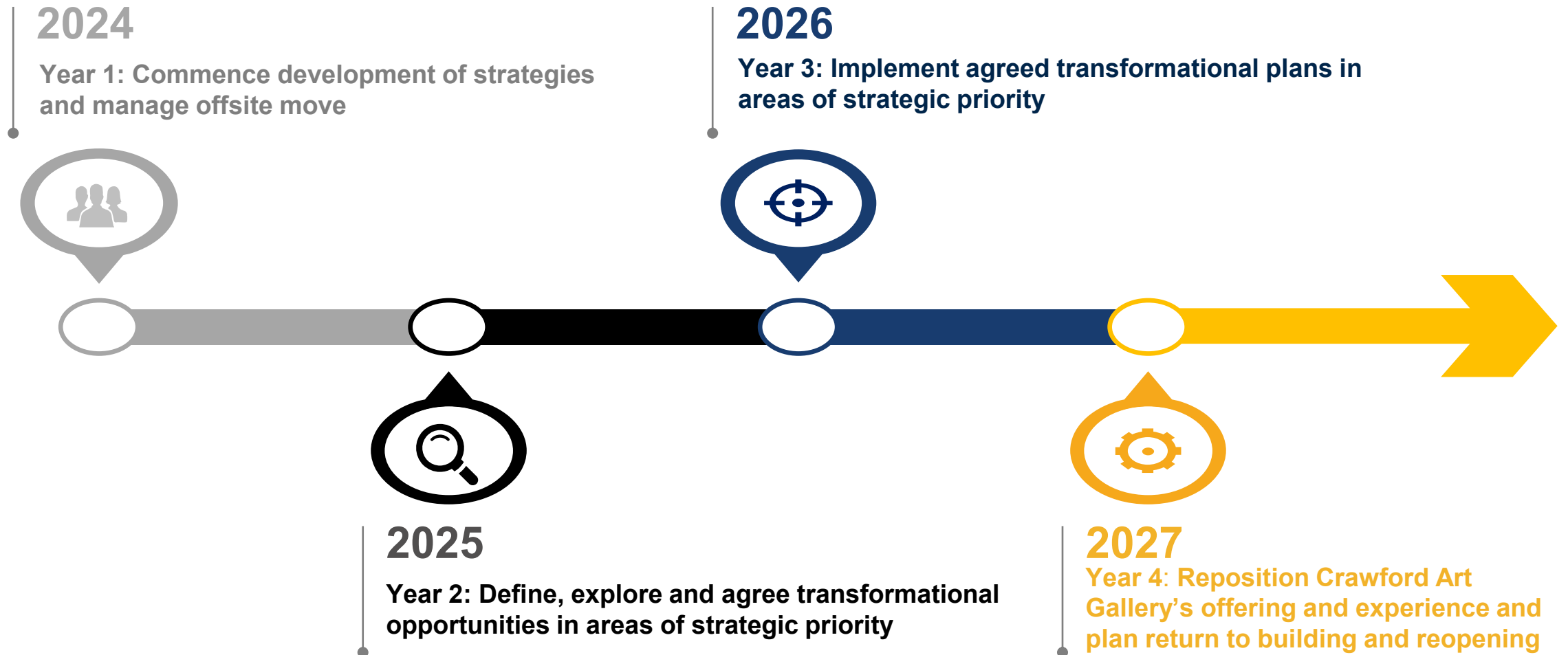
Create content across the organisation to be shared with colleagues, the Board and external audiences (topic dependent). Partner with artists, learners, other cultural institutions, tourism businesses, the local community and agencies and entities involved in the social and civic life of Cork and the region, to co-create and co-share content. Include digital storytelling campaigns.



Governance

Maintain the highest levels of governance in relation to oversight of the redevelopment, risk mitigation and management, progress of strategies and plans and transparency in reporting to funders on financial and operational performance and planning.

Annual Priorities





Smart decisions. Lasting value.

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