

# Building for a Creative Future 2024



**Fís Éireann**  
Screen Ireland

For the **Story Makers**



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## Foreword

### Chairperson

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**As the newly appointed Chair of the Board of Fís Éireann/ Screen Ireland, I am delighted to welcome the publication of the Building for a Creative Future 2024 which outlines how the organisation will support this important sector of the national economy for the next three years.**

Recent years have seen tremendous change in our lives, for reasons ranging from global to local. Over the course of the last 18 months, the global pandemic has meant that, in addition to the direct economic impact, everybody has to adapt to new ways of working, to new constraints in our daily lives, and we are not yet sure of what changes will be required long term. In addition, the reality of climate change is becoming evident everywhere through more frequent extreme weather events. Close to home, the disruption of Brexit has already had a significant effect on our economy. In light of these challenges, it is a testament to the resilience of our creative screen industry that during this period, the industry has continued to grow steadily, reflecting the talent and commitment of those working within it. We need to foster a wider understanding of the value of the industry as an important contributor to the economic and cultural well-being of the country.

Despite the current uncertainties, the very challenges which have catalysed so much change in our lives also open up new opportunities for this sector, as demand for creative entertainment increases. This offers opportunities for the industry to grow more viable businesses and sustainable rewarding careers.

We have all had an opportunity to reflect on the value of culture over the past eighteen months, and film, television, documentary and animation are key drivers and innovators in the cultural space. The creative screen industry showcases an imaginative and authentic Ireland. This vibrant, valuable industry needs to be more accessible to people from different backgrounds and regions, so that the full breadth of contemporary Ireland benefits and is represented.

Ireland is lucky to have exceptional creative resources, producers, directors, actors, crew, writers, animators, artists, musicians and more. These resources are the core of a sustainable indigenous industry. The intellectual property from Irish creativity is a valuable income source and Irish creatives should be supported in retaining it, monetising it and sharing it equitably among all the contributors.

Strong, innovative and efficient leadership is essential to deliver this strategy. It requires a dynamic and responsive state agency in Screen



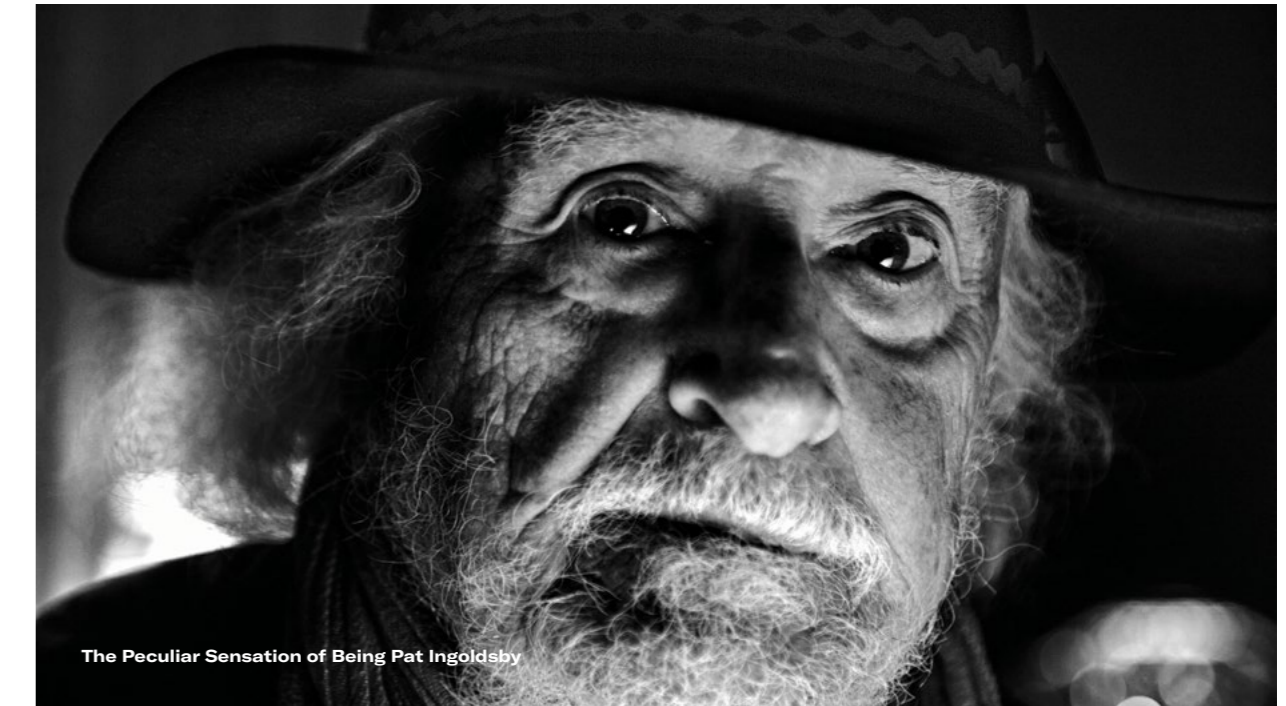
Aisha

Ireland, one ready and resourced to support the industry as it goes through this period of systematic transformation. Equipping industry professionals and businesses with the tools needed to reach the next level in their creative work and businesses will enable the development of an outward-looking industry, ready and capable of competing at the highest level.

As someone new to the creative screen industry, I see a sector that is innovative and quick to respond to whatever challenges are thrown in its direction. It is now time to ensure the bedrock for further success is firm. Steady, measurable progress is more necessary than ever before, in order to create a production ecosystem in Ireland as resilient as it is agile.

Screen Ireland is looking forward to implementing the strategic plan in partnership with the industry over the next three years.

**Susan Bergin**  
Chair, Fís Éireann/Screen Ireland



The Peculiar Sensation of Being Pat Ingoldsby



Two by Two: Overboard!

# 02

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## Introduction

### Chief Executive

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**The global screen industry is facing significant disruption and intense competition for audience attention but the demand for high-quality film and television has never been greater. The industry is at a pivotal moment of rapid transformation, driven by changes to regulatory environments, distribution models, consumption habits, technological innovations and the global Covid-19 pandemic.**

Heightened levels of expectation from audiences means that Screen Ireland must lead in championing talent that can deliver creative excellence and artistic vision on screen to compete globally. As a nation of creative originators, it means developing, retaining and exploiting Irish intellectual property to build for sustainable growth.

Ireland is well-positioned in talent, skill and ambition to take advantage of the evolving global landscape and the many opportunities it presents for Ireland. The industry has proven over the past decade that remarkable growth is possible with sustained investment and support. Despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, production activity is experiencing an outstanding recovery, reaching record-breaking levels this year, demonstrating the industry's dedication and resilience.

This extraordinary success requires a vision for the future that must accommodate new challenges and respond to opportunities as it strives to grow ambitiously and sustainably. In a rapidly evolving sector, staying ahead of future trends and embracing creative innovation will be fundamental to generating new approaches to creative screen storytelling for next generation audiences. Screen Ireland is committed to supporting creative voices and talent who can respond to these opportunities, delivering powerful, connected, and memorable Irish storytelling with a global reach.

In the coming years, the pursuit of creative excellence and sustainable growth will be the driving principles across our work. Our ambition is to inspire and support the industry to be consistently recognised for artistic excellence and to be economically resilient, socially inclusive and environmentally responsible. We believe in cultural diversity and Irish storytelling on screen that is accessible to all audiences.

For decades, the Screen Ireland team has shown consistent dedication and passion for the industry. We will continue to be a strategic partner, from concept development through audience engagement, empowering industry stakeholders to shape a vibrant creative future.

**Désirée Finnegan**  
**Chief Executive - Fís Éireann/Screen Ireland**



Normal People



Karma's World

## Executive Summary

### Introduction

Welcome to Fís Éireann/Screen Ireland's strategic plan, Building for a Creative Future 2024. After extensive consultation with stakeholders in the Irish screen industry, including workshops, interviews and over 170 public survey responses, this strategy was prepared to address key challenges and opportunities that we see as priority areas for the Irish screen sector. Implementing a five-pillar approach to align with the government and industry's ambition and potential for growth, the strategic plan will set out Screen Ireland's vision, mission and strategic objectives for the next three years.

In order to achieve this ambitious plan for the industry, Screen Ireland recognises that it will require a whole-of-industry approach. We believe in empowering the sector, supporting stakeholders working together collectively, to achieve the shared ambition of extensive growth for the creative screen industry.



# 03

## A Decade of Success

As 2020 marked the beginning of a new decade for the Irish screen industry, it left behind a decade of extraordinary growth and success. The result of sustained investment in creative talent and company development, as well as government support through Section 481, Ireland is now home to a dynamic and prolific animation sector and a live-action film and television sector that has produced award-winning critical and commercial successes around the world.



Vivarium



Brooklyn

## A Thriving and Sustainable Industry

Despite the global disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent production shutdowns, 2021 looks brighter than ever for the Irish screen industry, with production activity set to break records.

Opportunities abound for our sector, but careful planning is required, along with a commitment to sustainable growth in order to rise to the significant challenges the global screen industry faces, including Covid-19, rapidly changing distribution models and a hyper-competitive market. At the same time, the appetite for well-crafted stories made by passionate creatives for audiences looking for much-needed entertainment, escapism and connection has exceeded all expectations.



Herself



Fanacht (Waiting)



# Vision, Mission and Values

## Our Vision

To build consistent creative excellence in screen storytelling that captures the imagination of audiences globally.

## Our Mission – Set in the Irish Film Board Act 1980

Assist and encourage the making of films and the development of a film industry in the State

Encourage the expression of national culture through the medium of film-making

Promote participation in international collaborative projects

## Our Values

Our values as an organisation are to be creative, ambitious, inclusive, optimistic, sustainable and ethical.

# Strategic Objectives

Screen Ireland’s Strategic Plan is shaped around our role as the lead national agency, empowering and supporting the creative screen sector in Ireland. Our strategic objectives are as follows:

<p>Develop a global reputation for <b>INNOVATIVE</b> and <b>CREATIVE STORYTELLING</b> excellence across all genres and in all forms.</p>	<p>Invest in the <b>TALENT</b> and <b>SKILLS</b> required for the future success of the industry through supporting capacity development with <b>DIVERSITY, EQUITY</b> and <b>INCLUSION</b> at its core.</p>	<p>Create opportunities for global <b>AUDIENCES</b> to be able to enjoy culturally rich Irish screen stories through collaboration with strategic partners.</p>	<p>Champion <b>INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT</b> that is national and sustainable, supporting Irish companies, a competitive fiscal offering and an expanded workforce.</p>	<p>Ensure <b>SCREEN IRELAND</b> is appropriately resourced, agile and sustainable to effectively support the ambitious vision for the creative screen industry.</p>
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Screen Ireland is driven by a passion for representing Irish culture on screen, fostering creative excellence in screen production, and supporting a thriving, sustainable, and inclusive creative production industry in Ireland. An appropriately resourced, responsive and dynamic Screen Ireland will continue to strongly advocate for the sector and support stakeholders to achieve this ambitious vision.



# 04

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## About Us

Screen Ireland and the Irish Creative Screen Industry

**As the national agency for the Irish film, TV drama, animation and documentary industry, Fís Eireann/Screen Ireland is the creative partner to the sector, investing in talent, creativity and enterprise.**

We are inspired by original storytelling that will emotionally engage audiences at home and abroad. Through a wide range of practical funding supports across development, production, distribution, promotion and skills development, Screen Ireland supports the sector through every stage of the process. We support filmmakers in their creative pursuit to share valuable artistic, cultural and commercial stories onscreen.

## Building on Success

Irish talent and Irish production companies supported by Screen Ireland have achieved outstanding international success over the last decade. Irish originated films, TV drama, animation and documentaries have been enjoyed by audiences worldwide, premiered at major international festivals, sold in every territory around the world and received critical acclaim and awards recognition at the highest levels. Major successful international films



Phil Lynott: Songs for While I'm Away



Kin

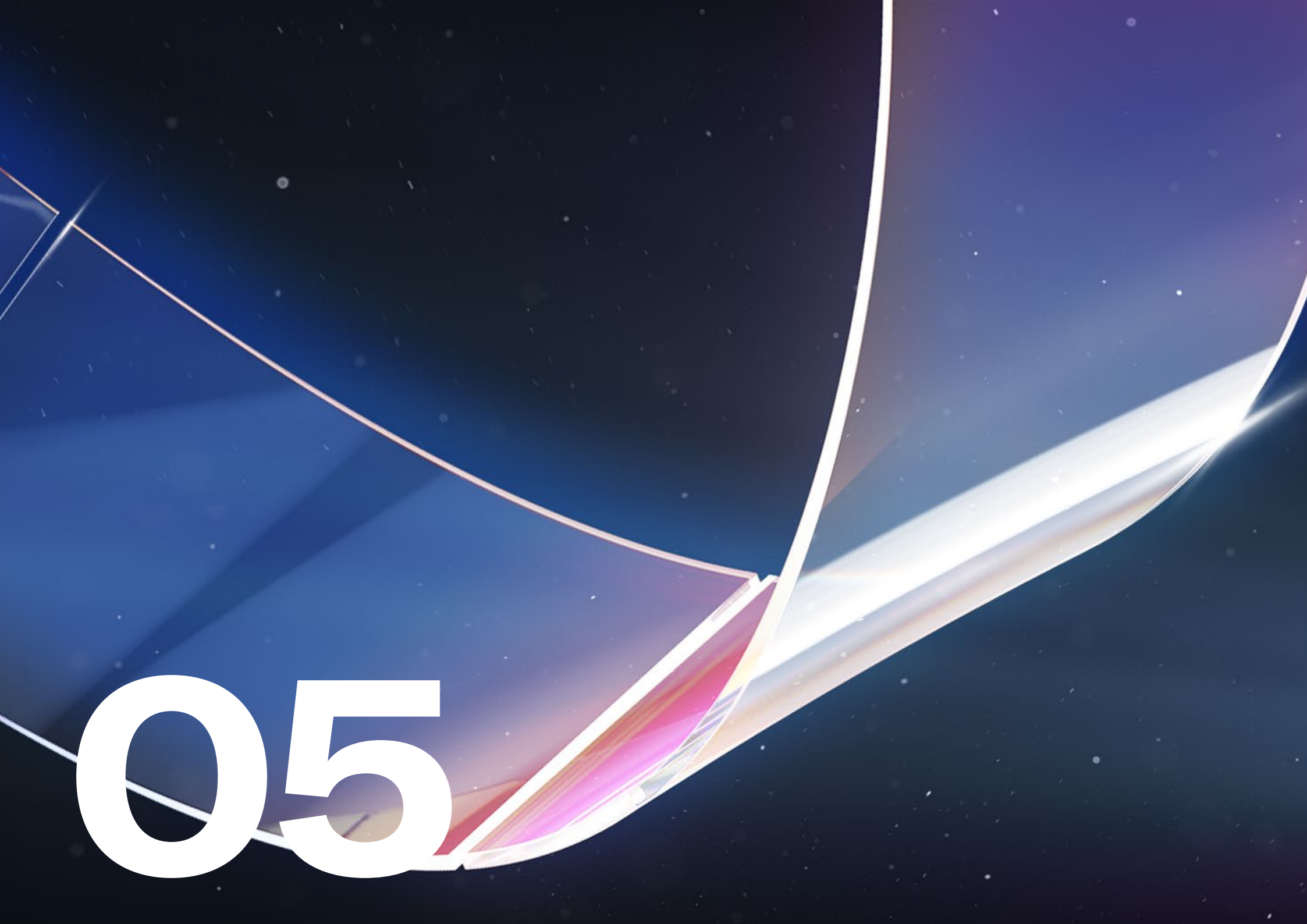
and TV drama series have also been produced across Ireland, generating a substantial contribution to the economy, providing significant employment and world-class skills development.

The highly skilled workforce across all aspects of creative screen production is a major asset both for local Irish production and in attracting international investment in inward production to Ireland. Ireland's unique position as an English-speaking European Union centre of excellence for screen production will continue to attract high-quality inward production activity, supported by the well-regarded Section 481 tax incentive.

Despite the challenges the industry has faced through the pandemic, production activity levels have recovered and are thriving. The industry has proved its resilience. Looking to the future we have high ambitions for the growth of the sector as an industry which will provide significant job opportunities and skills development right across Ireland.

## For the Story Makers

Screen Ireland works with and for the screen story makers throughout the incredible journey from career beginnings to the many achievements on the global stage. We support the story makers: all those whose creative skills, talent, and expertise are brought together to create high-quality film and television, animation and documentary productions and bring them to audiences in Ireland and internationally. The story makers are the people who make it happen, throughout the path from original creative concept ideas to the films, television, documentary and animation work enjoyed by audiences worldwide.



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## The Industry in Numbers

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**In 2020 screen production was adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.**

**Screen Ireland introduced 20 new funding initiatives to support the screen industries throughout the pandemic towards recovery.**

Yet even with the temporary shutdown of production 2020 spend is estimated to be

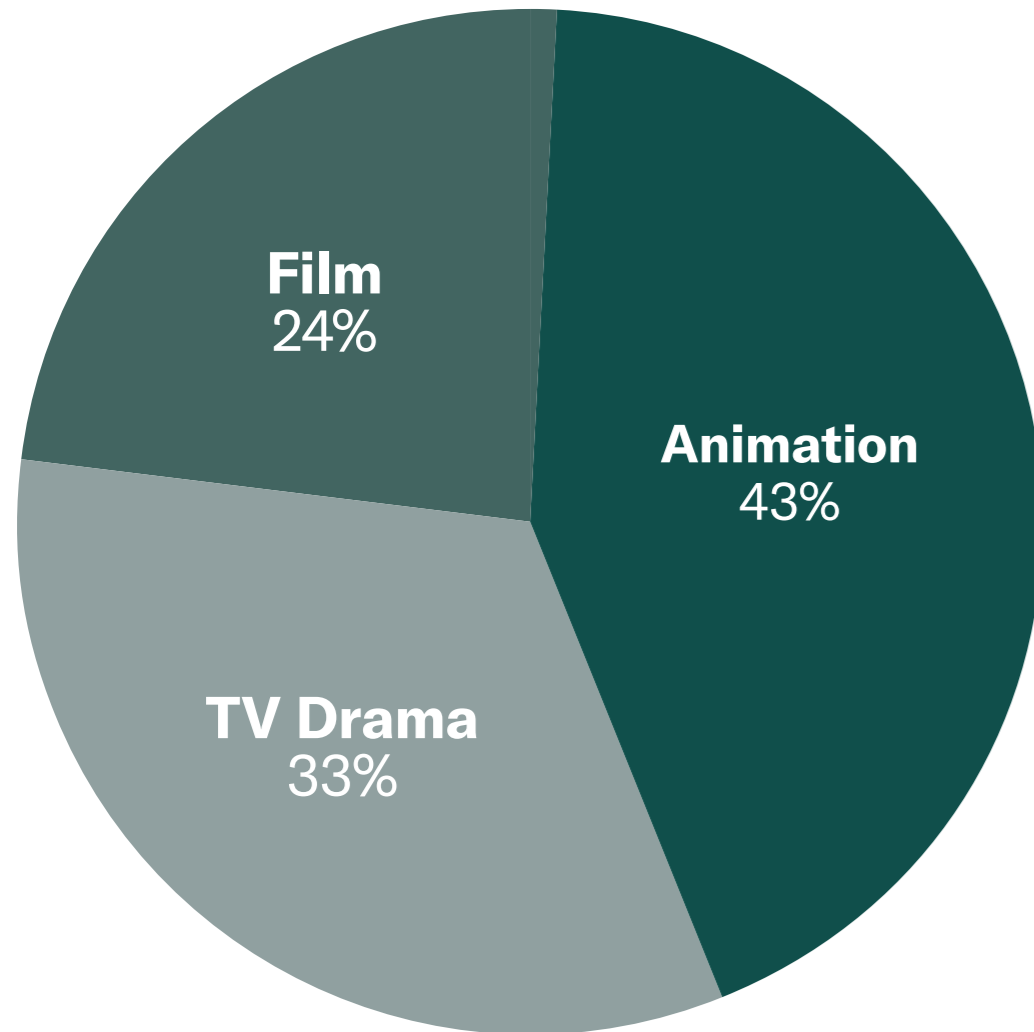
**€213m**

Early estimated figures indicate a strong recovery in production activity records, with an estimated

**€289m**

economic contribution recorded in the first 6 months of this year

**Breakdown % total spend 2020**



**Animation Industry**

Ireland has **34 animation studios**  
 Supporting over **2,000 jobs**  
 Animation production spend increased **x5.6 from €32M in 2010 to to €180M in 2019**

**TV**

**€3,000,000 in TV stimulus** funding alone generated an **Irish spend of €20,000,000 +** in Irish production.

In 2016 the sector supported  
**11,960 jobs**  
 via direct, indirect, induced employment.

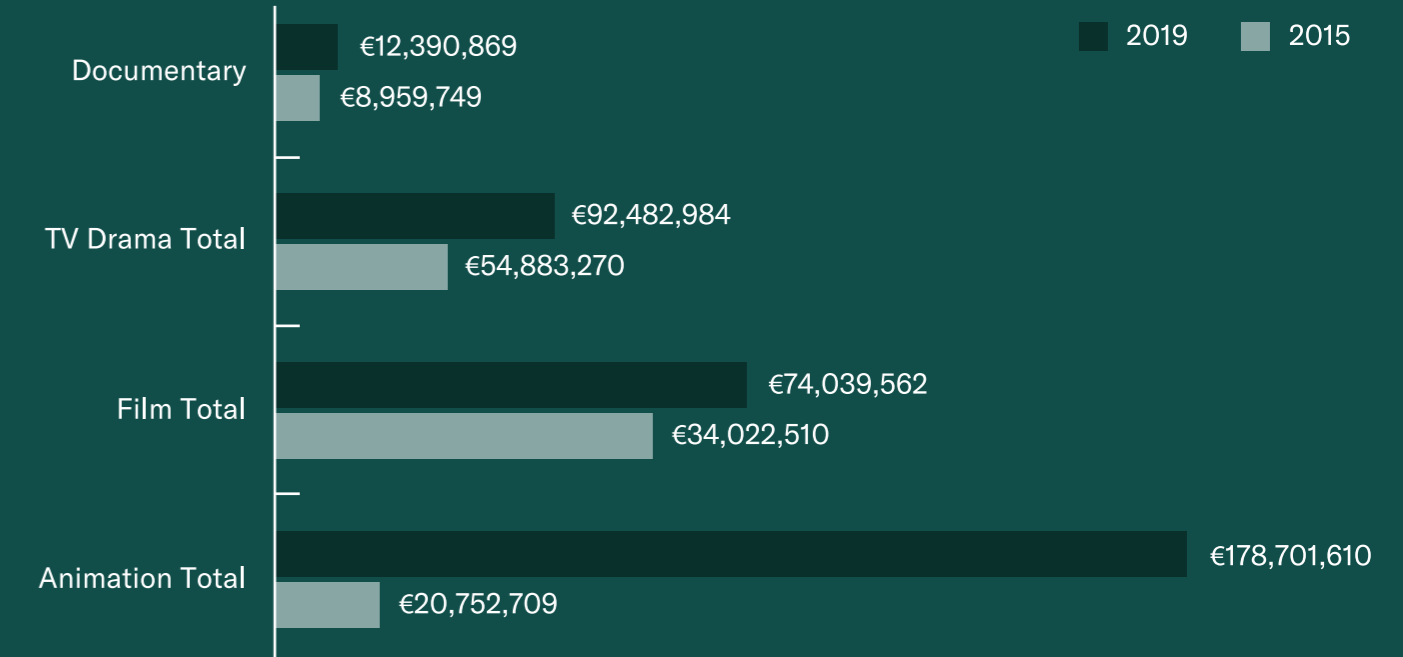
Irish films have received  
**31 Oscar Nominations**  
 Since 2010

Over the term of Screen Ireland's strategic plan Building on Success 2016 the spend of the sector grew by 200% across all categories of production, from **€118M** in 2015 to **€358M** in 2019.

**In 2019 Female Directors: 37%** of all funded projects **Female Writers: 43%** of all funded projects

While full gender equality is yet to be achieved, **the figures represent a consistent improvement up from 10% and 27%** respectively in 2015, when Screen Ireland first announced its **six-point plan on gender equality.**

**PRODUCTION ACTIVITY**





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## Global Landscape

A time of extraordinary change

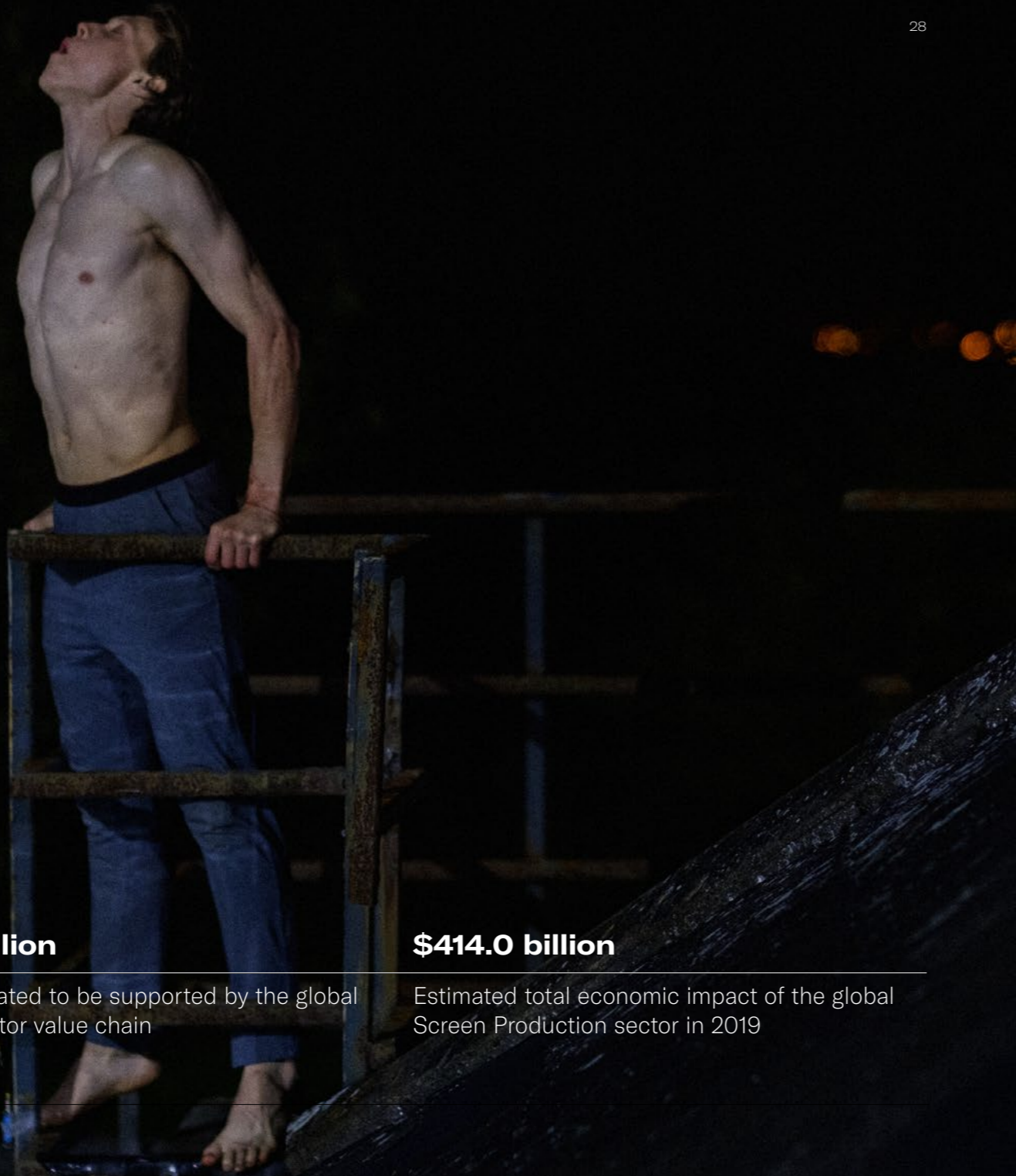
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### Global

**Driven by insatiable consumer appetite and significant investment, screen production of feature-length films and high-end television series has increased exponentially around the world in recent years. In 2019 global expenditure on screen production reached an estimated \$177 billion, according to Global Screen Production – The Impact of Film and Television Production on Economic Recovery from Covid-19 (Olsberg SPI 2020)**

This new high watermark would very likely have been exceeded in 2020 given that trends in rising production volume and value were ongoing, had the Covid-19 pandemic not dramatically impacted production worldwide. Screen production is now a key economic driver in a large number of countries and jurisdictions.

The economic impact of the screen sector globally cannot be overstated. The Olsberg SPI report highlights both the significant growth of screen content globally and the important role the industry can play in the global recovery. The capacity of the screen industry to drive economic recovery, as a “robust, resilient and fast-acting” sector, emphasises the importance of continued investment in and support of the screen industry as we continue to recover from the pandemic.



**\$177 billion**

2019 Estimated global expenditure on Screen Production

**14.2 million**

Jobs estimated to be supported by the global screen sector value chain

**\$414.0 billion**

Estimated total economic impact of the global Screen Production sector in 2019



The shift to on-demand streaming platforms was already impacting the industry in a significant way prior to the global disruption caused by the pandemic to production, distribution and consumption models. The pandemic has greatly accelerated the ongoing transformation in the industry and how that will resolve is not yet clear. This pace of change is difficult to navigate with many different national regulatory approaches being pursued in response to the issues that have arisen from global streaming competition. Nations are examining how to ensure cultural diversity is preserved and how local industries and cultural identity can be protected.

Digital disruption and the evolution of emerging entertainment technologies is also moving at pace globally. Although storytelling remains at the core, next generation audiences increasingly look to experience, interact and direct those stories. Recognising and responding to these developments remains a priority for global competitive advantage.

## Europe

The disruption across the European audio-visual landscape has highlighted the preservation of European cultural diversity as a key priority across member states. Significant developments include opportunities presented by the **Audiovisual Media Services Directive** (AVMSD) which includes potential new funding streams for European works and important obligations on on-demand media services to secure at least 30% share of European works in their catalogues, ensuring the prominence of the same. The EU Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market also presents significant opportunities to benefit the protection and exploitation of intellectual property derived through creative screen production in Ireland.

# 07

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## National Context

Creativity at the core of public policy

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**In 2018 the government launched the Audiovisual Action Plan, a €200m funding programme as part of the Department of Culture, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht's capital investment plan Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018–2027. The plan commits to additional capital funding in the sector, focusing primarily on film production, high-end television drama and animation. The plan is based on an ambition for Ireland to become a global centre of excellence, a leader in this area in line with the emphasis in the Global Ireland strategic initiative on the promotion of Irish culture.**

The Audiovisual Action Plan was published under Pillar 4 of the **Creative Ireland Programme**. The Action Plan addresses the recommendations of a key report, an



**Economic Analysis of the Audio-visual Sector in the Republic of Ireland (SPI Olsberg)** which was published in December 2017 to measure the current economic value of the Irish industry, and to propose policy changes to support its future growth.

In September 2020, Minister Catherine Martin T.D. established the Arts and Culture Recovery Taskforce. The Covid-19 pandemic policy response in relation to the creative sectors is set out in **Life Worth Living: the Report of the Arts and Culture Recovery Taskforce**, published in October 2020. Screen Ireland was part of this taskforce which recognised the impact of Covid-19 on all arts and culture including the screen sector, in terms of the cessation of activity and the additional costs and challenges of providing safe working environments as activity has resumed.

A key recommendation in the report is that the **Audiovisual Media Service Directive** should be transposed into Irish law immediately, because of its importance to the audiovisual and creative screen sectors. This, according to the taskforce, “presents a significant opportunity for Ireland ... implementing these provisions without delay will create new funding streams for the creation of original Irish content at a time when the global market for content is growing rapidly”. The report also calls for the transposition of the **EU Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market**, to benefit the protection and exploitation of intellectual property derived through creative screen production in Ireland.

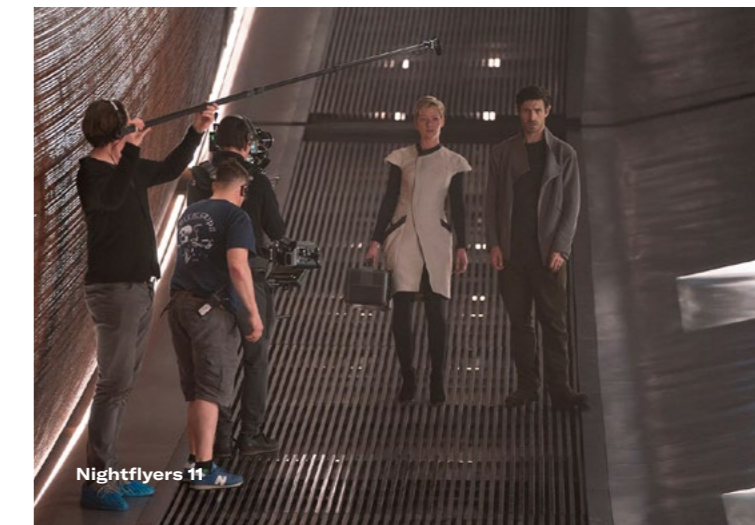


You Are Not My Mother

In September 2020, **The Future of Media Commission** was set up by the government to examine the future of media in Ireland. The commission is examining the challenges faced by public-service broadcasters, commercial broadcasters, print and online media platforms. Challenges these organisations face include sustainable funding sources, changes in audience behaviour and changes in technology. Screen Ireland strongly supports the role of Irish public-service media in promoting cultural diversity and Irish storytelling on screen that is accessible to audiences across Ireland. We believe that independent, well-resourced and balanced public-service media is fundamental to a democratic society.

The full impact of **Brexit** on the creative screen industry in Ireland still remains uncertain. This brings challenges and opportunities for the sector here, although many of the concerns of the industry have been addressed through the Trade and Co-operation Agreement (TCA) between the UK and the EU, and the continued participation of the UK in the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production, supporting future co-productions between the UK and Ireland.

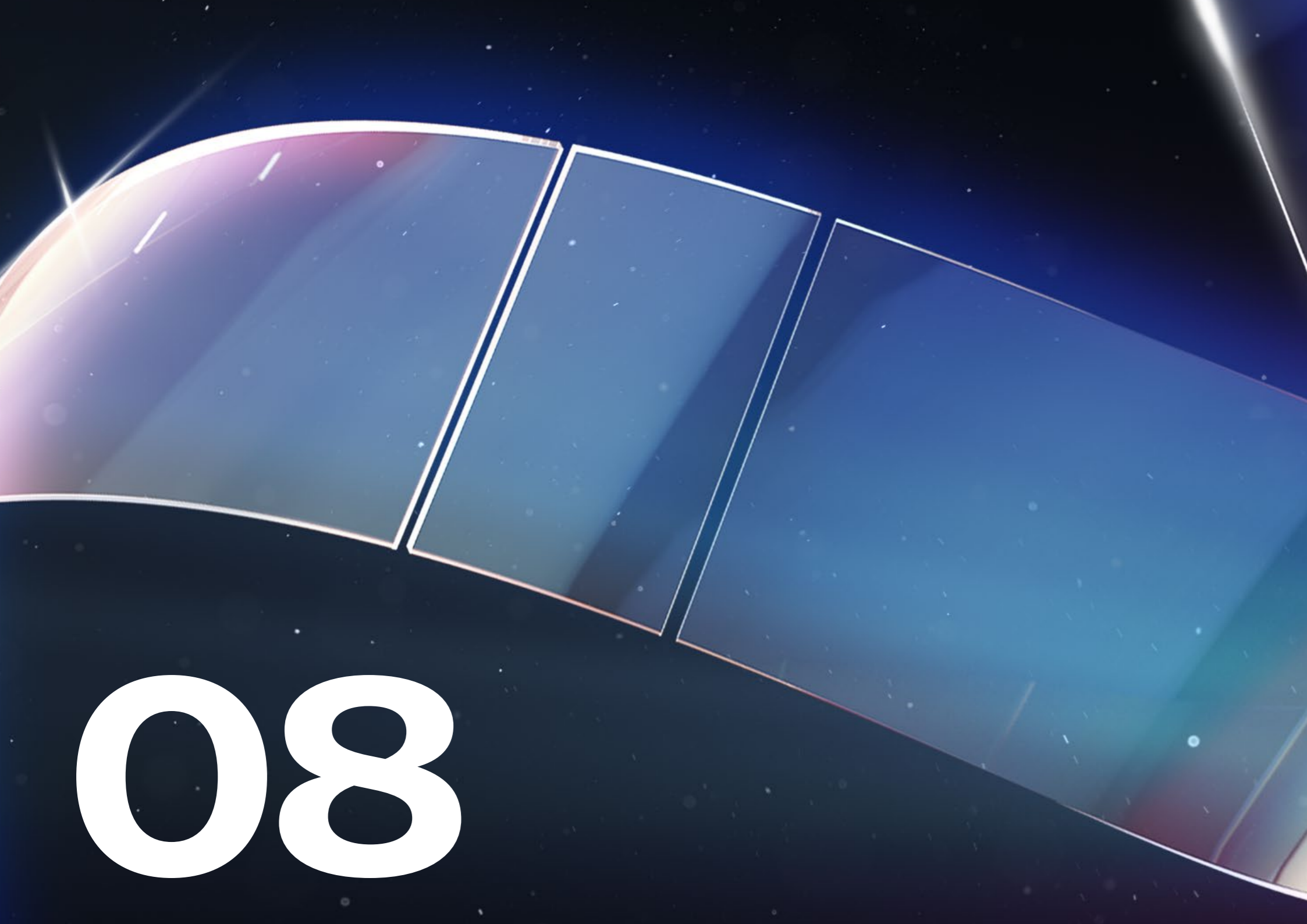
Current government policy on **education and skills**, particularly in relation to the National Training Fund, is focused on industry-relevant skills development, especially work-based learning through apprenticeships and traineeships, and the importance of lifelong learning and digital skills. This will lead to more opportunities for the certification of continuous professional development and the accreditation of work-based learning for the screen industry to support access routes into the sector. Progression opportunities will also be built around defined career pathways that will in turn support a more open, inclusive and structured sector in the future.



Nightflyers 11



Redemption



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## Stakeholder Feedback

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An extensive consultation was conducted from December 2020 to January 2021 with stakeholders across the Irish screen industry, including workshops, interviews and over 170 public survey responses.

The key messages from the stakeholder survey were as follows:

### **Investment in talent is critical to the future of the industry**

**Key areas that require investment:**

- > Talent development through training and skills development
- > Increased diversity and mentoring opportunities
- > Focus on regional development
- > Support to prepare for the post-Covid era
- > Further development and production funding



- > Increased promotion of Ireland internationally
- > Support for attending festivals and markets
- Screen Ireland responded to the pandemic with timely, effective supports and investment policies are clear to the majority of the industry.
- Screen Ireland plays a dynamic role in Section 481 skills development and training.

**Industry growth will be based on the animation sector, increased focus towards TV drama and reaching younger audiences**

- > A key dynamic driving change in the industry is the growth of the Irish animation sector.
- > Increased focus towards building TV drama and responding to the global audience appetite.
- > Reaching younger audiences with the appropriate content will be critical to industry growth.

- > The biggest challenges after Covid are keeping up with the evolving industry, supporting original productions and ensuring equity in how funds are distributed.
- > Shadowing/mentoring opportunities could help to leverage additional value from inward production
- > Screen Ireland is perceived as the quality brand for developing and funding home grown talent and productions.

**Epic locations, expanded studio facilities and crews will ensure Ireland remains an attractive location**

- > The main features that make the creative screen industry unique are the great crews and creative talent, epic locations and varied landscapes.
- > The availability of more studio space and an improved Section 481 incentive should be used to attract "Ireland as a location" aided by better infrastructure, especially in the regions.



The Rock of Cashel

**Supportive culture and values will be a solid platform for future development**

- > Sustainability, diversity, equity and inclusion criteria should be a prerequisite for future funding.
- > Providing a positive culture with supporting values that embrace fairness, sustainability, diversity, equity and inclusion will be important in attracting talent and investment.

**Partnerships**

- > More partnerships should be established with third-level institutions to ensure greater alignment between education provision and the ongoing and future needs of the industry.
- > Partnerships and collaborations encompassing streaming services should also be considered.



Star Wars: The Force Awakens



09

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## Strategic Context

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**The impact of the pandemic has made us at Screen Ireland reflect on the interconnectedness of our society, on how we do things as an organisation and as an industry going forward, and on the type of future we need to create as our sector emerges from the pandemic. There are even bigger sustainability crises facing the world in the coming decade. These global challenges, and the need to build a new and sustainable future for the creative screen industry and its role in society, are the backdrop against which our new strategy sits.**

Screen Ireland has developed a vision for the screen industry that has at its core the ambition for Ireland to demonstrate consistent excellence in the art of creative screen storytelling globally. We also want Ireland to be recognised as one of the most

sustainable places in the world for creative screen production, building on a reputation for excellence in production, and we are committed to playing our part to achieve that ambition.

Prioritising **creative talent development** on both an industrial and individual level, will help to provide clear talent pathways and opportunity for creative growth and developing artistic vision at all stages and levels. It entails an inclusive approach, seeking out new and diverse voices to provide open access and opportunity for all, to increase the quality of creative screen outputs across a more diverse slate, appealing to a wider audience base at home and abroad.

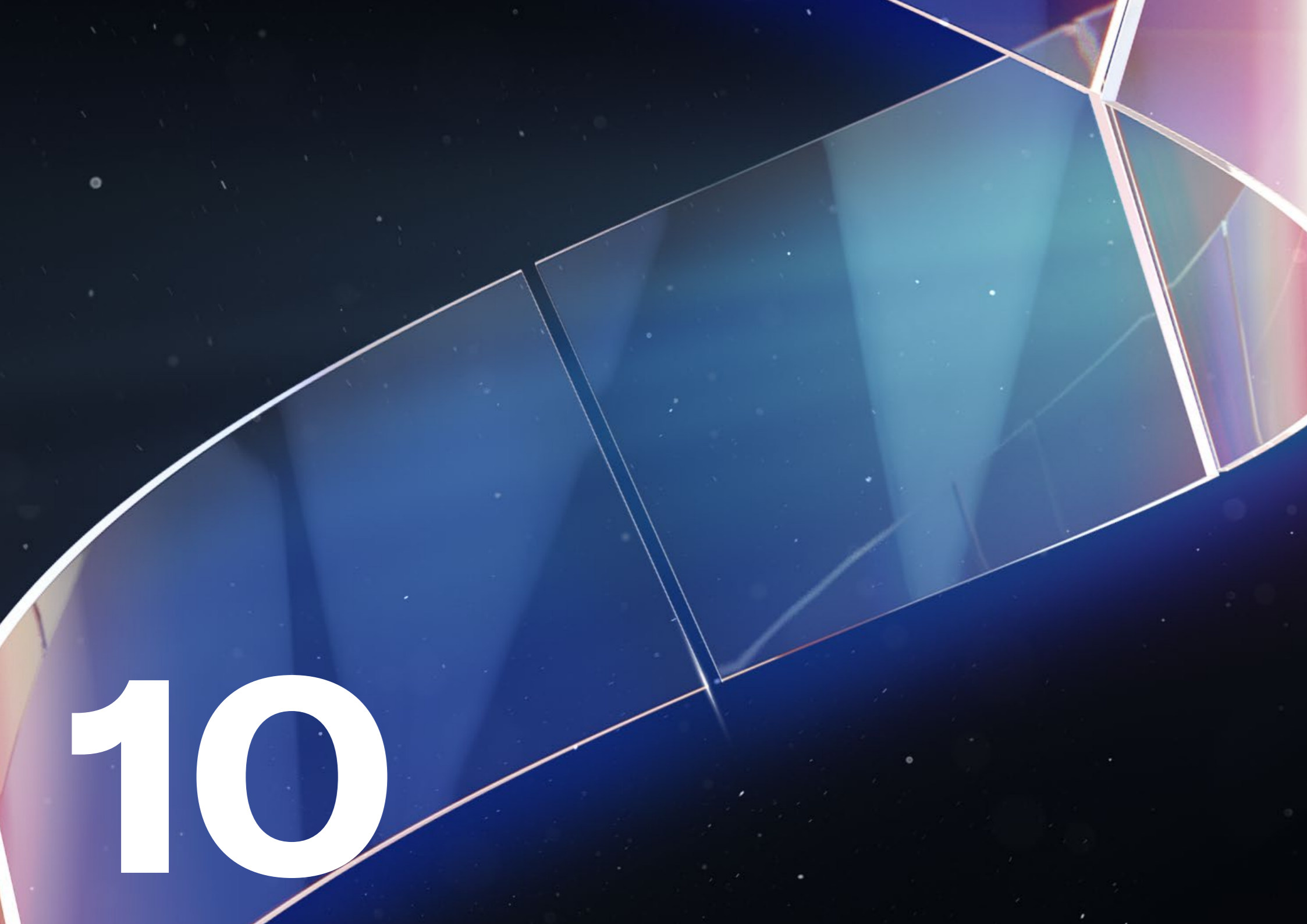
For Screen Ireland **sustainability** represents a holistic term that encapsulates our ambition to inspire and support our industry to be economically resilient, socially inclusive, and environmentally responsible. The approach is based on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, which provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries in a global partnership.



Shooting the Mafia



Arracht



## Mission And Vision

### Mission

#### Screen Ireland's mission is to:

Assist and encourage the making of films and the development of a film industry in the State

Encourage the expression of national culture through the medium of film-making

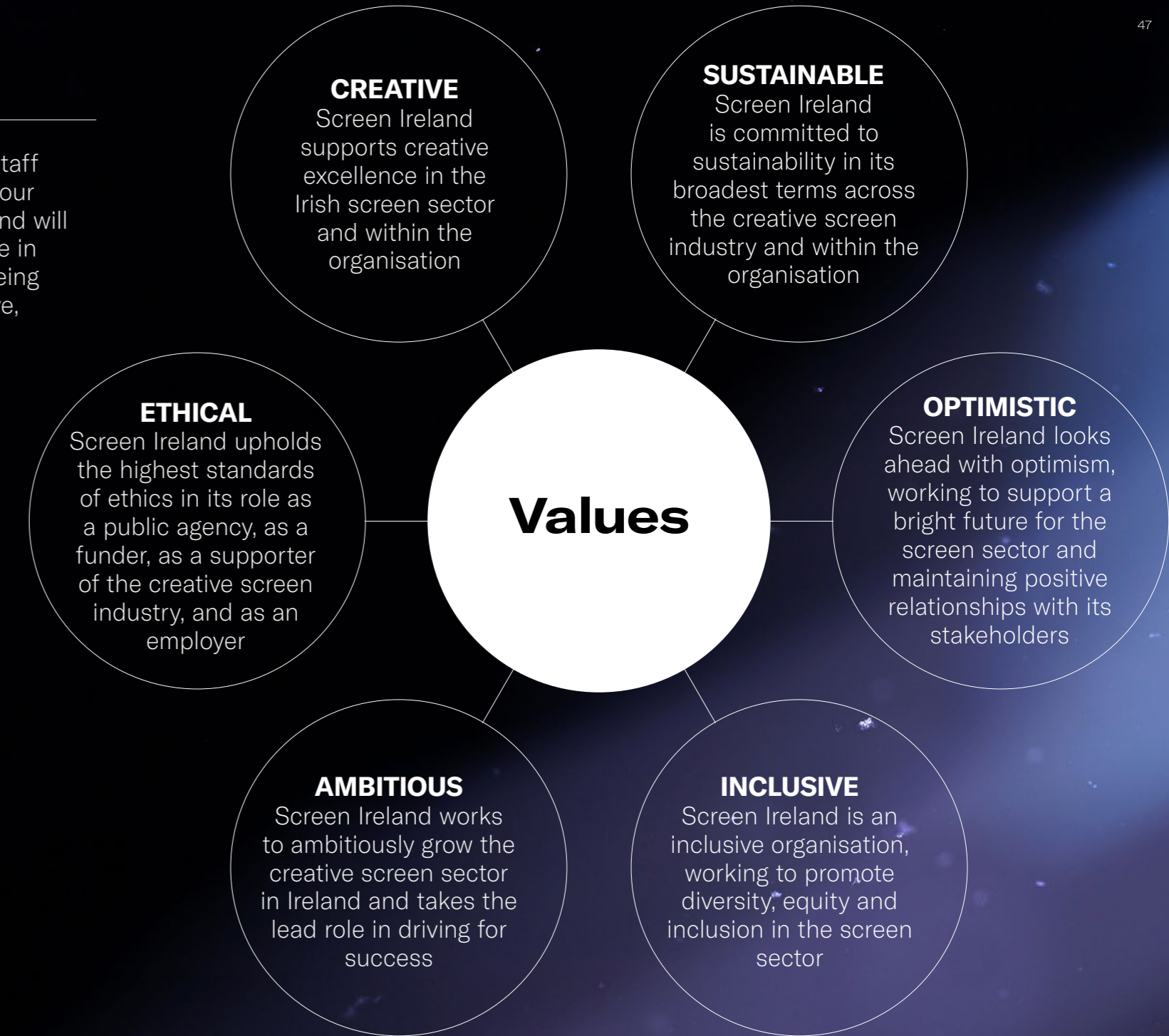
Promote participation in international collaborative projects

This mission statement is based on the Irish Film Board Act 1980.

### Vision

To build consistent creative excellence in screen storytelling that captures the imagination of audiences globally.

The Board, Executive and staff of Screen Ireland prioritise our values as an organisation and will always endeavour to engage in our work with a focus on being creative, ambitious, inclusive, optimistic, sustainable and ethical.








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## Strategic Objectives And Key Actions

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For each of the five strategic objectives we detail below why this strategic objective is important and the key supporting actions required to deliver on the shared industry ambition.

### Strategic Objective 1

Develop a global reputation for **INNOVATIVE** and **CREATIVE STORYTELLING** excellence across all genres and in all forms.

At Screen Ireland we believe in the art of **cinema**. Feature films that are made for the big screen and intended to be viewed as a shared audience experience is core to our vision. In 2019 Ireland had the highest cinema-going population per capita in Europe. Since then, the pandemic has had a devastating impact on cinemas in Ireland, accelerating the migration of audiences to on-demand platforms. However, we believe when it returns to full capacity it will remain a highly valued cultural experience for audiences across Ireland. Irish cinema has enjoyed a global reputation for decades, achieving 31 Academy Award nominations in the last ten years, and will continue to evolve and excel into the future.

Irish **animation** is a global force that has driven high-profile production, artistic vision, commercial success and awards recognition at the highest level worldwide. The sector

has grown exponentially and continues to engage new audiences, markets and partners, working with the most prominent international investors, platforms and commissioners. The advancement of new areas of animation, gaming, immersive and interactive storytelling present increased growth opportunities for the sector and encourages new talent pathways for the future. Key priorities for Screen Ireland include intellectual property incubation whilst maintaining an ambitious focus on content innovation.

Ireland has a strong and dynamic **documentary** sector, recognised for compelling and emotive creative feature documentaries. Screen Ireland supports continued investment in the sector, recognising the opportunity for multiple-episode TV documentaries and specials. Irish documentaries that are impactful and entertaining, explore national issues and that stimulate broader conversation and debate will resonate with audiences both at home and abroad. Screen Ireland recognises that to remain competitive, flexible and agile, windowing and distribution strategies will be required.

In 2018 Screen Ireland's remit broadened to include high-end **TV drama**. This represents a significant global opportunity for Ireland and recent increased investment and stimulus funding has resulted in strong growth in the Irish high-end TV drama slate. In collaboration with Irish public-service media and

broadcasters with international partners, further development and production funding will support a trajectory of experienced creative and production talent. Global appetite for local-language TV drama series also presents a strong opportunity for a pipeline of high-end Irish-language TV drama of international appeal and resonance.

**Visual effects** and post-production companies in Ireland are recognised in the international marketplace as companies capable of producing VFX at the highest level, having worked on award-winning international feature films, TV and SVOD series. Promoting digital visual effects expertise and other Irish post-production achievements and supporting these Irish companies to develop their business opportunities is essential for an expansive industry ecosystem.

**"Screen Ireland welcomed me, my cast, and my entire production team on The Last Duel with open arms and accommodated our every need. The spectacular locations and excellent local crew made our experience one of the best I've had."**

— Ridley Scott, The Last Duel



## Key actions

- > Support national cinema and Irish independent film culture through continued investment in development, production and promotion.
- > Ensure projects are fully developed prior to production and promote early engagement with distributors and the marketplace.
- > Invest in animation to stimulate innovation, encourage intellectual property retention and achieve further scale globally.
- > Expand our Irish-language strategy in response to audience appetite and ring-fence funding for film and TV as *Gaeilge*.
- > Respond to the global interest in multiple episode TV documentaries and specials.
- > Build and strengthen the capacity of Irish high-end TV drama for audiences globally.
- > Work with the post-production and VFX sector, creative talent and emerging technology innovations to generate new business opportunities.
- > Develop a fund for the optioning of high-value IP outside of regular development and production rounds.
- > Launch concept development TV drama pilot fund for creative talent.

## Strategic Objective 2

Invest in the **TALENT** and **SKILLS** required for the future success of the industry through supporting capacity development, with diversity, equity and inclusion at its core.

Talent and skills development are central to the ambition for sustained creative excellence in screen storytelling. Screen Ireland will provide continuous support to new, diverse and evolving industry talent in addition to established creative voices. Skills and **lifelong learning** will continue to be a major focus of the evolution of our industry to drive creative excellence, enable growth and ensure long-term sustainability. The ambition for the recently established National Talent Academies is to drive greater talent evolution at all levels whilst maintaining a constant discovery remit in finding new career access points to the industry.

The skills team will continue to engage with stakeholders to deliver a range of programmes that match production growth and are responsive to the sector's needs. The embedding of skills development within the Section 481 scheme has engendered a more **structured approach** to building the skills

base. The ambitious vision for industry requires skills development from new entrant programmes to advanced company development and everything in between.

Screen Ireland will strive to give voice to the full diversity of Irish cultural life. It is vitally important that we represent a contemporary Ireland with all of its uniqueness, originality of voice and **cultural diversity**. We aim to provide a breadth of storytelling and serve a wide range of audiences ensuring there are fair and authentic representations on screen and behind the camera. This will contribute to creative excellence and support industry sustainability as we encourage open access and opportunities for all.

Screen Ireland will be able to create the sustainable workplace environment it requires to succeed, by driving further progress on **dignity in the workplace**, with appropriate health, safety and well-being support.

**“POV allowed for a lot of creative freedom. The development process was really great, particularly having a script editor provided by Screen Ireland to help us work on the story in the year before we shot anything.”** — Kate Dolan, Director, *You Are Not My Mother*



## Key Actions

- > Work through the newly established National Talent Academies, crew hubs, industry and key community groups to evolve next generation talent.
- > Invest in, and deliver appropriate professional development programmes and initiatives, including the Section 481 skills development plans.
- > Continue to support direct talent relationships and provide a conceptual development funding pilot for creative talent.
- > Empower key stakeholders to deliver more targeted skills-development initiatives.
- > Build stronger links between industry and education to establish more structured and certified work-based learning programmes, at new entrant and senior career progression levels.
- > Work with industry to develop a national talent development and inclusion policy and provide a dedicated fund to support more access programmes.
- > Provide a digital platform to capture workforce data, supporting the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion in the industry.
- > In partnership with the wider arts and culture sector, develop policy and provide resources to improve well-being and dignity in the workplace.

### Strategic Objective 3

Create opportunities for global **AUDIENCES** to be able to enjoy culturally rich Irish screen stories through collaboration with strategic partners.

Screen Ireland's audience-engagement strategy prioritises the **next generation** of audiences as key to the sustainability and growth of the screen industry. We need to encourage cultural interest and highlight the value of Irish talent being empowered to tell Irish stories that resonate with audiences. The aim is to inspire interest in the industry as a viable and rewarding career option while encouraging audience loyalty for generations to come.

Screen Ireland also plays an important role in promoting Irish projects to the international marketplace, supporting paths to markets and audiences. It is vital that Screen Ireland continues to build the international **market reputation** and audience awareness for Ireland as global leader in animation in addition to film, TV drama and documentary. We recognise that every project needs a defined and tailored distribution strategy to enable it to find its audience, whether locally or internationally.

Screen Ireland will work with partners to ensure that all audiences have the opportunity to enjoy culturally rich Irish stories, whether in cinema or on demand, in the way each project was intended by the filmmaker to be experienced. We recognise the devastating impact the pandemic has had on **cinema operators** as they work to remain operational in the face of closures, content delays, reduced capacity and restrictions on re-opening. We will continue to support cinemas through audience development, marketing, promotion and will continue our engagement with their recovery.

Screen Ireland also recognises the exceptionally difficult period being experienced by the Irish distribution industry with release-date shifts and the current battle for exhibition space in reduced-capacity cinemas. We believe that Irish **distribution** companies form a vital part of the life of Irish film and TV and acknowledge the exceptional work carried out by this sector in making the link between the films, the exhibitors and the Irish audiences. A strong and successful release in Ireland is an imperative springboard to wider success for filmmakers as they continue their journey from Irish theatrical to international exhibition and digital exploitation worldwide.

Due to the rapid changes in **audience consumption habits**, to grow a sustainable audience for Irish stories, it is essential for Screen Ireland and the screen sector



to understand these changing preferences in terms of what, where, and how screen content is consumed now and in the future. This understanding will ensure decision-making remains focused on audiences.

### KEY ACTIONS

- > Build next generation audiences through schools network outreach, marketing and communications campaigns and key events.
- > Enhance the marketing and sales of Irish screen content to international audiences, including the Irish diaspora globally.
- > Explore opportunities for enhanced visibility and prominence of Irish film and TV nationally and internationally, working closely with public-service media, broadcasters and Irish video-on-demand platforms.
- > Launch and promote a new digital Where to Watch platform helping Irish and international audiences access Irish film, documentaries, animation and TV drama in cinemas or online.

- > Monitor the outcomes of the Cinema Stimulus Fund to build back audiences and continue engagement with cinema operators.
- > Provide marketing support to encourage Irish audiences to return to the cinema, highlighting the unique experience of the big screen.
- > Provide a dedicated fund to empower Irish distribution companies to strengthen the release support for Irish film and TV across cinemas, platforms and broadcast.
- > Commission research on audiences in Ireland to determine behaviours and attitudes in relation to independent Irish film and TV.



The Young Offenders

**“We just stuck to what we thought was true and hoped that that would translate to an audience anywhere.”**

— Lenny Abrahamson, Director, Normal People



Angela's Christmas

## Strategic Objective 4

Champion **INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT** that is national and sustainable, supporting Irish companies, a competitive fiscal offering and an expanded workforce.

Screen Ireland is committed to the principles of **sustainability** in our industry development, responsible economic growth, environmental protection and social equality, and is dedicated to championing best practice, both within our own operations and across the screen industry.

As we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic, we want to support the recovery and continued development of the industry and at the same time encourage the widespread adoption of **environmental responsibility** and socially sustainable practices. Screen Ireland's Sustainability Plan 2024 sets out a clear framework and ambitious goals that we will work to achieve over the coming years. Reducing carbon impact and other green initiatives is a business imperative for the industry and will also attract the highest calibre of international productions to Ireland, strengthening relationships with studios and commissioners.

Supporting the building of **strong production companies** to ensure that they have the right skills, knowledge, capacity and business capabilities is fundamental to growing successful production companies that can compete globally. To succeed these companies must have good governance and financial sustainability. To ensure we are strong originators of content, the industry must have the ability to generate, retain and exploit intellectual property to the highest possible extent.

Currently there are over 100 film tax incentives available globally. Section 481, the Irish **fiscal incentive** for film and TV production, must remain stable, competitive and provide clarity for the user. The Economic Analysis of the Audiovisual Sector (SPI Olsberg 2017) measured the current economic value of the Irish screen industry and proposed key policy changes to enable its future growth. Important existing policy initiatives include the regional uplift designed to stimulate activity and to develop skills in the regions.

To build on the pipeline of large-scale **international projects** filming in Ireland that provide significant Irish employment with inherent skills/talent development opportunities, generate a considerable contribution to the economy and create valuable screen tourism, Section 481 must remain fit for purpose and competitive with other territories. Screen Ireland wants to ensure large-scale mobile productions are enabled to complete their full project in Ireland, including



valuable animation, post-production and VFX work.

To achieve ambitious growth, a national approach to **regional production** and promotion will be required, coordinating a cohesive set of supports and development opportunities. Screen Ireland is also committed to working with all local authority film offices to identify opportunities to expand screen production regionally.

Screen Ireland recognises the importance of the **Irish language** on screen as a reflection and promotion of Irish culture to audiences at home and abroad. Irish-language projects in animation, film, TV, documentary and animated series represent an opportunity with the increase in global popularity of high-end local language productions.

Expansion and investment in studio facility **infrastructure** across the country is also critical to building a sustainable future for the Irish screen industry. The demand for expanded infrastructure leads to an increased need for a depth of highly-skilled crew to support the large-scale production of high-quality screen output, providing best-in-class skills development opportunities.

In addition to the strong relationships that exist across the UK and Europe, to support further internationalisation of Irish screen stories, Screen

Ireland recently established an office presence alongside the new Consulate General in Los Angeles. Key to this endeavour will be strengthening US relationships for the benefit of Irish production companies and talent. The **US office** will also collaborate with world-class skills partners, generate market intel, attract international productions to Ireland and promote the country as a centre of excellence for filmmaking.



Nova Jones

**“What is noticeable about many of those films is how central female characters are to them. We are drawn to stories that speak to us. The more women making films, the greater the variety of stories we will get to watch.”**

— Una Mullaly, Irish Times

## KEY ACTIONS

- > Implement the Sustainability Strategy 2024 based on the principles of environmental sustainability and protection.
- > Support the building of strong production companies to achieve scale and compete on a global basis through company development and slate funding.
- > Champion a national approach to industry development, including dedicated support for regional production and promotion.
- > Support the implementation of all Section 481 recommendations made in the Audiovisual action plan, to ensure the fiscal incentive remains competitive.
- > Establish crew development hubs which will allow scale to build a diverse crew base across the country, to meet anticipated demand from infrastructure development.
- > Support the Capacity Building and Upskilling Scheme recommendation from the Arts & Culture Recovery Taskforce Report.
- > Increase Ireland's international profile and develop new US-Ireland industry relationships through our LA office, in collaboration with Enterprise Ireland, IDA, Tourism Ireland and the Consulate General of Los Angeles.



Kin



Boy Girl Dog Cat Mouse Cheese

### Strategic Objective 5

Ensure **SCREEN IRELAND** is appropriately resourced, agile and sustainable to effectively support the ambitious vision for the creative screen industry.

Screen Ireland will continue to support and advocate for the creative screen sector in Ireland. We will build strong, collaborative partnerships, driving strategy through **empowering industry stakeholders** to deliver, ensuring approaches to develop the sector are coordinated and collaborative rather than fragmented. We will work to bring together the resources available to strengthen and develop creative excellence, build sustainability and support a thriving and inclusive screen industry driven by the best in creativity and skill.

Screen Ireland's Sustainability Plan 2024 will set out ambitious goals and actions for Screen Ireland itself that we will work to achieve over the coming years, including reaching **net-zero carbon** across our operations.

We will commission and deliver key **research, data and statistics** to inform and support strategy and policy for the creative screen sector. Screen Ireland will improve the articulation of the economic, social, and cultural impact of the industry to support advocacy and evidence-based decision-making. We will track sector growth and development, identifying opportunities for innovation and new potential for growth and measuring progress in relation to core aims for the sector.

In order to do this, Screen Ireland will continue to be an agency that is **transparent, effective, and responsive**, embracing the key themes of creative excellence and sustainability for itself as an organisation as much as for the sector.



### KEY ACTIONS

- > Deliver on the Screen Ireland commitments in the Sustainability Strategy 2024 based on the principles of environmental sustainability and protection.
- > Actively promote and support innovation and creative ideas within the organisation, being open to doing things differently in order to better fulfil our national remit.
- > Improve how we communicate research and data with the sector through the Screen Ireland website and platforms.
- > Establish a research fund to enable external industry partners to build audience insights, data and increase engagement.
- > Continue to foster a positive organisational culture: Screen Ireland will be a modern and progressive working environment.
- > Reduce administrative challenges through the implementation of a robust digital strategy.
- > Launch a new application and project management system to streamline processes.
- > Promote and encourage staff well-being, professional learning, and development within a culture of continuous improvement.



## IN CLOSING

The five pillars set out in Building for a Creative Future 2024 are intended as building blocks for the future: strategic objectives that will act as a guide for this new phase of transformation for the sector. This strategic plan will be overseen by the Board and implemented by the Executive, management and staff of Screen Ireland. Annual progress reports will be published to ensure clear communication and accountability to all stakeholders.

As set out in this strategic plan, Screen Ireland's commitment to support, sustain and grow the Irish screen industry in the coming years is a testament to the people who make it happen - creatives and crew, across film, television, animation and documentary. We remain partners and advocates for the screen story makers in Ireland.



# For the Story Makers



**Fís Éireann**  
Screen Ireland