

# Seeding Potential

**WATERFORD  
SPRAOI**

2021-2024



SPRAOI



# Seeding Potential

## Waterford Spraoi 2021-2024

### Background:

In Autumn 2020 the Chairman and Director of Waterford Spraoi presented outline proposals to the company's board that aimed at initiating a reflection on the company's situation at that time. Their proposal aimed to propel a conversation which imagined Spraoi's development between 2021 and 2024.

### Notes:

COVID-19 induced uncertainties discouraged designing a plan that extended into the distant future. It was more realistic to scope three years ahead with an emphasis on pragmatic goals.

The plan's timeframe encompasses the thirtieth Spraoi Festival (2022) and twenty years since Spraoi Studios opened (2023). Both offer Spraoi and its stakeholders emotional connections to the future.

*"The best way to predict your future is to create it."*

Peter Drucker





## INTRODUCTION:

Waterford Spraoi was founded in 1993. It was conceived as a street arts festival and followed two experimental foundation-events promoted by partners Red Kettle Theatre Company and Macnas in 1991 and 1992.

Since then Spraoi has grown to become a successful presence in local, national and international street arts and spectacle. The original festival has proven to be sustainable, attracts large audiences and international artists and professionals. Spraoi International Street Arts Festival is integrated and valued within Waterford's cultural, social, community and economic landscapes. Spraoi has diversified and is commissioned to create bespoke productions nationally, e.g. it officially opened European Capital of Culture, the World Fire and Police Games and The Tall Ships Race. Spraoi Studios remain Ireland's only purpose-built street arts facility. The studios cater for Spraoi productions and host residencies for emerging and established Irish street artists. In 2023 Spraoi Studios will celebrate twenty years in existence and production.



## CARPE DIEM:

The company's pending anniversaries and other pragmatic factors are deemed by the company's board as appropriate launch-points for the creation of a strategic vision for sustainable development beyond 2024.

The company's growth and development since 1993 has been organic in the sense that Spraoi was fortunate to attract and retain "the right people at the right time". As this process happened over time it created a stable staffing structure. This formative phase cannot be replicated organically. A different approach is required when integrating next-generation artistic and management talent. Spraoi's annual creation and artistic output also evolved into a predictable pattern. In 2020/21 COVID-19 disrupted this cycle. Responding positively Spraoi undertook fresh artistic projects that involved new artists and partnerships. Disruption has been embraced to enterprisingly alter the company's operational model and vision. Board members and management participating in this process recognised the value of learning from recent experiences to create a strategic plan that seizes future opportunities as distinct from honouring past achievements and "the way we always did things".

# Values



## Duty of Care:

Spraoi has a duty of care to all its stakeholders.



## Communities:

Spraoi creates and connects diverse communities.



## Learning:

Spraoi cherishes learning and creates learning environments.



## Links:

Spraoi makes novel links between artists, audiences and business communities.



## Collectivism:

Spraoi enables collective creativity in public spaces.



## Standards:

Spraoi crafts high-quality imaginative experiences for artists and communities.



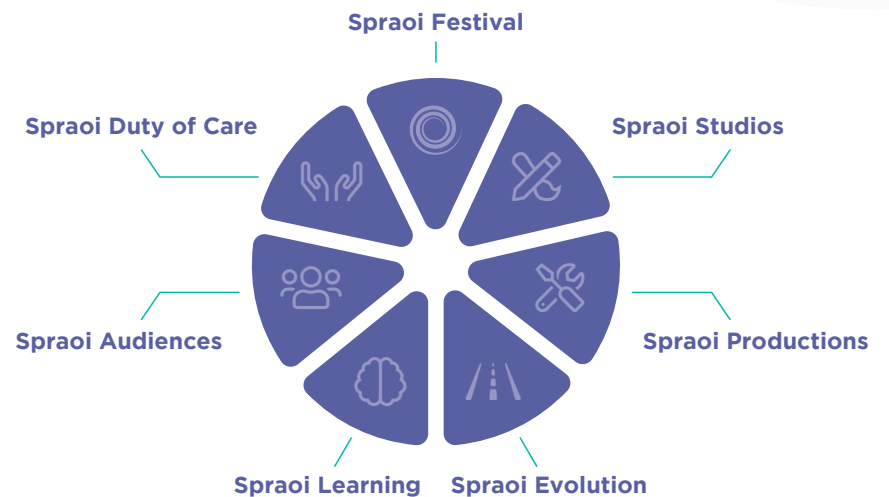
## Place:

Spraoi proactively identifies with Waterford and its people.

## Three Year Goal: 2021 – 2024

Efficiently manage and use all Spraoi resources to provide artists, audiences and stakeholders with the means of creating and enjoying the arts at outdoor settings which contribute to creating shared community memories of cultural experiences.

## Strategic Activation Areas:





# Spraoi Festival

## DESCRIPTION

To consolidate Spraoi's position as Ireland's premiere street arts festival underpinned by authentic connectivity between event, people and place.

## AMBITIONS

Identify exciting artists of local, national and international standing and invite them to co-create elements of Spraoi Festival.

Grow audiences to a level that positively impacts exposure for artists and that enhances the broader wellbeing of Waterford.

Annually produce and resource at least one performance by Irish artists who have not previously performed at Spraoi Festival.

## ACTIONS

In early 2022 devise and deliver a consultation forum to ensure all layers of the company share a vision for the first post-COVID-19 festival, its motivation, methodology and meaning for both artists and audiences.

Convene an annual curated 'festival opportunities' convention each September to harvest ideas, re-focus on festival values and create an action-list for activating the following year's festival.

Proactively seek and create local, regional, national and international partnerships with individuals and organisations that enable creation of vibrant new works that exceeds audiences' expectations.

Create an internal forum where programming, marketing, participation, sponsorship, volunteering and other 'event shapers' share ideas and notes to create an integrated approach that strengthens the whole event.



*To boost Spraoi Studios' capability as a venue where original street arts and spectacle productions are conceived, designed and created.*

# Spraoi Studios



## DESCRIPTION

To boost Spraoi Studios' capability as a venue where original street arts and spectacle productions are conceived, designed and created. They will be an Irish Street Arts Creation Centre, facilitate visiting artists and be a standard-setting home to the company's creative team.



## AMBITIONS

Provide a stimulating working environment for artists and technicians.

Complete a capital development programme at Spraoi Studios that equips it to be an international standard creation centre and credibly presents Spraoi to potential artistic partners and financial funders.



## ACTIONS

Commission qualitative-research and establish artists' actual needs in terms of mentoring and facilities before committing capital resources.

Research and design an annual work and resources programme that allow Spraoi Studios to facilitate visitors whilst enabling Spraoi's own work.

Establish a working-group of board representatives, management and external specialists to conceive and drive a studios capital development programme and manage their transformation to Creation Centre by 2024.

Establish how this aspect of Spraoi Studio's working life is managed and resourced day-to-day, including consideration of staffing requirements.

Initiate short-term inexpensive actions that make Spraoi Studios a more attractive place to visit and a safety-compliant place to work. Enhance Spraoi Studios site as an environmentally friendly zone.



# Spraoi Productions

*Provide support programmes, finance and facilities for established and emerging artists that enable their exploration of artistic ideas*

## DESCRIPTION

To regularly reinvigorate Spraoi's creative energy by resourcing in-house artists and partnering artists working at Spraoi Studios to originate street arts performances and installations that premier to audiences at Spraoi Festival and at other national and international events.

## AMBITIONS

Provide support programmes, finance and facilities for established and emerging artists that enable their exploration of artistic ideas and their production of audience-engaging street performances and installations. Invest time, thought and resources from early in a production's cycle of development and engage with artists from concept to performance.

## ACTIONS

Create a bespoke plan to progress projects between resident and guest artists that unites Spraoi's human and financial resources and delivers performances that engage audiences and breaks new artistic ground.

Maintain ongoing contacts with established and emerging artists and stay abreast of local, national and international developments that may present mutually beneficial partnership and co-production opportunities.

Research the viability and mutual benefit of creating an Associate Artist category to enable Spraoi to attract the best talent. Align Spraoi's annual budget to incorporate and enable these new initiatives, projects and processes.



# Spraoi Evolution



## DESCRIPTION

Following thirty years of successful creation, spectacle and community engagement

Spraoi will evolve throughout the duration of this plan so that its programme, management, staffing and resourcing are aligned to meet future opportunities and challenges with confidence in all its practices.



## AMBITIONS

Make pathways for new artistic and management voices to be embraced.

Establish partnerships outside Waterford that contribute to raising the company's national and international profile as a quality producer.

Deliver significant changes in leadership personnel and leadership practices at all levels of Spraoi within the plan's delivery window.



## ACTIONS

Provide training for senior Spraoi managers and artists that equip them to better mentor and welcome new artists and managers to Spraoi.

Commission a study that encourages Spraoi management, other senior personnel and board members to address current planning and work cycles and identify if they create physiological or practical barriers to shaping new partnerships with external artists and companies.

Commission a study from a reputable practitioner, familiar with the Irish arts environment, that evaluates financial implications of staff transitioning.

Task and resource a dedicated board and staff team and resource them to monitor strategic transition actions adopted by the board and establish an external transition implementation audit.

*Make pathways for new artistic and management voices to be embraced.*



# Spraoi Learning

*Providing robust support for artists creating a new generation of Irish street arts shows.*

## DESCRIPTION

Spraoi will adapt and expand its research and development programmes relating to creation of new work by established and emerging artists. Spraoi will have a particular focus on providing robust support for artists creating a new generation of Irish street arts shows. Spraoi too will adopt a learning posture as it acquires skills to transition its operations.

## AMBITIONS

Establish an understanding with an arts orientated third-level institution that provides its students with applied learning opportunities and affords Spraoi access to new management and creative talent.

Spraoi Studios will become a recognised learning environment where the company learns from visiting artists and managers and visa-versa.

## ACTIONS

Designate Spraoi Studios as a place of street arts learning. Tabulate the protocols and required actions resulting from this description and role.

Incorporate high-level internships arising from third-level college links. Seek support from international networks and partners to acquire best-practice knowledge, techniques and methodologies of creation spaces.

Promote company transition-learning by commissioning professional advice on effective transfer of companies to next-generation teams.

Identify needs and provide bespoke training for individuals or groups within Spraoi to enhance their ability to think strategically and act guided by company values and needs.





# Spraoi Audiences



## DESCRIPTION

Audiences are the raison d'être of Spraoi. Audiences inspire our artists to create memory-making cultural experiences. Audiences generate the momentum, sense of occasion and success that empowers Spraoi.



## AMBITIONS

Responding to altering attendance patterns, generate new audiences for Spraoi Festival with focused online promotion to south-eastern towns.

Integrate Spraoi Festival into broader Waterford tourism messaging to attract increasing national visitors.

Partner with other organisations to ensure one original Spraoi production is delivered at a significant national venue at least on a bi-annual basis.

Undertake integrated actions and productions that maintain Spraoi's capacity to build audience loyalty through community participation.



## ACTIONS

Research and understand key audiences for Spraoi Festival.

Host an annual one-day facilitated seminar for board, management, staff and key contractors that assists in knowing and understanding our audiences so well that the festival and its programme sell themselves.

When selecting acts and attractions; strike a pragmatic balance between challenging cutting-edge work and arresting performances that are readily accessible to non-arts audiences.

Seek feedback from people of different backgrounds, genders, races and ages to review and comment on the Spraoi artistic experience.

*Audiences inspire our artists to create memory-making cultural experiences.*



# Spraoi Duty of Care

*Embrace a Spraoi culture of inclusivity to provide a working environment where diverse people and ideas combine and make great art together.*

## DESCRIPTION

Spraoi leadership commits to evolving from its organic operational model towards delivering company objectives through verifiable goals achieved by creating and sharing knowledge with key creatives and stakeholders.

## AMBITIONS

Create an environment where all our team and our partners know in advance what each project is aiming to achieve artistically and socially.

Embrace a Spraoi culture of inclusivity to provide a working environment where diverse people and ideas combine to make great art together.

## ACTIONS

Commit to fair remuneration for all artists and professional employed by Spraoi.

Embrace excellent accountable governance and operational structures that value the central contribution of professional artists, volunteers, community artists, partners and funders in achieving Spraoi's mission.

At least twice a year train management and Spraoi leaders, individually or as groups on relevant topics including inclusivity and leadership.

Develop bi-annual planning timelines that enables early development of partnerships and funding models for ambitious new projects that allow professional and non-professional participants early project-involvement.

Host regular informally structured team gatherings where people from different areas of company activities share information, ideas and create a mutually supportive environment where peoples' ideas are valued.





# Epilogue

The board and management of Waterford Spraoi Ltd. are inspired by the wonder, amazement and joy Waterford audiences have experienced for so many years at Spraoi Festival; be it from watching the world's smallest disco or performers playing bells and drums 60ft in the air, weird Shakespeare interpretations, fireworks-finales or magical, mystical parades along the streets and quays of the city we love. Spraoi festivals and parades have allowed anybody be they accountant, postwoman, child, student, undertaker, tech or pharma worker, journalist or jobseeker to create a unique community with professional artists to change the face of their home place. A generation has grown with Spraoi. A generation has fashioned Spraoi with its own hands. With Spraoi a generation created a unique and authentic cultural expression of Waterford. A generation had the craic at Spraoi. The next generation will too.