

Dear Chief Executive,

I am writing to you in relation to Ireland 2016, a major national initiative to mark the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Rising, when we will reflect on our past, celebrate our achievements and aspire to the future. I want local authorities to play a central role in co-ordinating and developing projects and events in each county across the country.

Ireland 2016 will include national and international events, based on five intersecting themes, drawing inspiration from the ideals of 1916 and the events of that time:

- *Remember* – imaginatively recalling our shared history on the island of Ireland;
- *Reconcile* – honouring all who have built peace and brought people together;
- *Imagine* – releasing the creativity of our people, in particular our young people, as we anticipate a better future for all;
- *Present* – creatively showing our achievements to the world;
- *Celebrate* – using our wealth of artistic talent to celebrate and be inspired by the 1916 Proclamation ideals.

I have established a dedicated Ireland 2016 Project Team in my Department. In addition a Cabinet Sub-Committee and an Inter-Departmental Working Group have been set up to enable cross government collaboration. A lot of work is already underway; for example, a rich schools programme is being developed in conjunction with the Department of Education and Skills.

As well as the national and international elements of the programme, I want to develop a rich diversity of events and initiatives at local level, to run throughout 2016. These programmes and events will be inspired by communities and individuals – by young and old, by our people here and abroad, by our new citizens – by all who would like to be involved. Achieving the greatest possible inclusivity is a core objective of Ireland 2016.

In order to facilitate the greatest possible level of engagement at local level, I am asking each County CEO to appoint a dedicated ‘Ireland 2016’ **co-ordinator** to be the central point of contact and co-ordination, and put in place a **steering group** to help shape and drive the county programme. I would hope that the co-ordinator be in place at the end of January with each county steering committee in place in February 2015.

To enable and maximise engagement, I am proposing that a series of public meetings be undertaken in each county where members of the public can come together to hear about Ireland 2016, meet those involved in their community, explore and learn about how they can get involved. Input, advice and support for these meetings will be supplied by the Ireland 2016 project team as appropriate, working with your local Ireland 2016 co-ordinator.

- Key Milestones for Local Authority Partnership:
 - Ministerial Briefing of CCMA: January 2015
 - Co-ordinator in place: End January 2015
 - Meeting of all National Co-ordinators: Feb 2015
 - 2016 Steering group in place: February 2015
 - Public Consultations by County: March 2015

- 1st Draft of 2016 County Programme: April 2015
- Final 2016 programme submitted and agreed September/October 2015

I am allocating €1m in funding across all local authorities in 2015 to support this engagement and facilitation, and so that plans for 2016 can be put in place in the year ahead. The Ireland 2016 Project Office will be in touch with you directly regarding specific allocations in due course.

I would ask that you send the name and contact details of the proposed co-ordinator to Medbh Killilea at the 2016 Project Office at the following address: 2016Projectoffice@ahg.gov.ie

I would like to thank you for your support in this important national initiative and look forward to working with you and your team.

Yours Sincerely,

Minster Heather Humphreys TD
Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht