



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Ireland's Diaspora Strategy 2026-2030

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES AND
DEEPENING CONNECTIONS

Diaspora Diplomacy in Action

“I want to acknowledge our large and growing diaspora. There is hardly a family on this island that does not have a personal experience of migration. On every continent our emigrants have put their ingenuity and hard work at the service of new homelands. Yet they have kept their love of Ireland and its culture deep in their hearts.”

President Catherine Connolly
Inaugural Speech
Dublin Castle, 11 November 2025

Cover Page photos

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Foreword

The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Helen McEntee TD



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Ireland is a small island with a huge reach.

Our voice, values and culture are represented around the world by our diaspora.

This is Ireland's third Diaspora Strategy and it shares the same commitment as its predecessors to deepen the ties and bonds between Ireland and the Irish abroad.

In delivering on the commitment made in the Programme for Government to develop a new Diaspora Strategy, we were very clear that this strategy would only succeed through a genuine and broad consultation with a wide and varied range of Irish citizens, Irish-connected people and Irish communities worldwide.

Based on nine months of consultations and the first ever online consultation of the Irish abroad, this strategy sets out 23 commitments across five key threads:

- Wellbeing & Advocacy
- Identity & Culture
- Connection & Contribution
- Departure & Return
- Sharing Our Experience

These commitments and threads arose out of thousands of conversations that took place around the world. They are underpinned by the stories shared with us by long-time emigrants, those who are newly arrived, those who have recently returned home, and by old and young alike across first, second and later generations.

This strategy recognises that the Irish diaspora is not a homogeneous group but rather that each community is a mosaic formed by its own history and the experiences of its people.

We chose the thread motif specifically because it reflects this diversity and allows the Irish abroad to weave their own story in support of their particular interests, needs and priorities, and to address the challenges they face.

Once again, we placed the wellbeing of Irish people at the centre of our approach. We will continue to ensure that the most vulnerable and marginalised are protected while recognising vulnerability has many causes.

Each of the threads is important in its own right, but when brought together they all make a real contribution to the overall wellbeing of individuals and communities.

The Government is committed to an ambitious approach to strengthening Ireland's place in the world, and diaspora diplomacy plays a valuable role in support of advancing Ireland's interests and values globally.

Our experience over many years means we understand the value and benefits that arise from diaspora engagement. We have witnessed first-hand the real contributions that Irish emigrants have made in their new homes by enhancing cultural diversity, supporting vulnerable members of their communities, promoting Irish values, strengthening local skill bases and deepening economic links.

In the complex international environment, I am pleased to see that this strategy commits to sharing our knowledge and experience with others interested in engaging with their own diaspora. Mobilising this unique diplomatic capital will allow us to foster valuable international relationships as envisaged in the Global Ireland 2025 strategy.

We also commit to putting the resources in place to deliver on the commitments set out in this strategy. When we launched our last diaspora strategy in 2020, our budget for supporting the diaspora was just under €13.2 million. In 2026, it stands at €17.5 million, the highest allocation to date. The Emigrant

Support Programme (ESP) will remain at the core of our engagement and continue to focus on supporting the most elderly and most vulnerable. We will also enhance the capacity of our Embassies and Consulates to engage with our diaspora communities across this strategy.

It is important that this strategy is not considered in isolation. It forms part of a broader commitment to engage with our diaspora as outlined in the Action Plan for Market Diversification, the recent International Sports Diplomacy Strategy and as a key pillar of the Government's forthcoming Global Ireland 2040 strategy and its regional strategies.

The diaspora are a hugely important part of our past, present, and future and I am proud to deliver this strategy that over the next 5 years will ensure our relationship with our global Irish communities remains a dynamic and mutually beneficial one.

Foreword

Minister of State for International Development and Diaspora, Neale Richmond TD



The Minister of State for International Development and Diaspora, Neale Richmond TD

I am proud to launch the Government's Diaspora Strategy 2026 – 2030, which will shape how we engage with our communities overseas over the next five years.

Article 2 of our Constitution (Bunreacht na hÉireann) pledges to cherish the special affinity with people of Irish ancestry living abroad who share our cultural identity and heritage. That spirit is reflected in this strategy as we strive to deepen the connection between the diaspora and Ireland and strengthen the bonds between communities on our island and the growing number of Irish communities abroad.

This strategy grew out of an extensive programme of engagements with Irish communities overseas during my first 12 months as Minister with responsibility for the diaspora, including 27 formal in-person consultations in 17 countries. These consultations were complemented by the Global Irish Survey, which ran online throughout the summer of 2025.

My goal across the consultations was to listen and understand the concerns and opportunities in Irish communities around the world.

Ireland's approach to our diaspora has always been, and will continue to be, focused on supporting the most vulnerable members of the global Irish community and those that support them. I heard first-hand how the concept of vulnerability has broadened and how any person at any stage of their emigration journey can become vulnerable for a range of reasons often compounded by isolation, limited access to local support or the lack of social networks.

Supporting cultural programmes, sporting events, Irish language classes, storytelling and creating inclusive spaces for gathering and networking are central to the delivery of this strategy. They offer an opportunity to connect with home and attract new and younger generations of the diaspora while showcasing the best of Ireland's values and culture. They also provide powerful connection points that can forge friendships, address isolation and build cross-community connections that are the foundation of sustainable and vibrant communities.

The diaspora's contribution to Ireland's economic development is a source of great pride. Across this strategy, we will work to write the next chapters of this trade and investment story by investing further in the vital relationships and harnessing the invaluable connections, expertise and insights that can promote Ireland's advantages for foreign direct investment, support Irish business access new markets and drive job creation and innovation.

Across the consultations, I met many people who are considering returning home. I appreciate that this can be a complex process and I am committed to working across Government to facilitate an easier return to Ireland. However, it is important to recognise that some of the issues raised such as access to housing, school places for children and broader cost of living concerns are of course, not unique to the diaspora but also affect people living in Ireland too. Addressing them is a key priority for the Government and this work is ongoing outside of this strategy.

I want to thank all those who contributed to the consultation process overseas and at home. I hope that the vision and actions set out in this document reflect some of the issues that are important to you.

I look forward to working with the Irish abroad, our networks of Irish organisations and other engaged parties at home and overseas on the implementation of the commitments within this strategy and further deepening the relationship between Ireland and the Irish abroad.



Minister of State for International Development and Diaspora Neale Richmond TD launches the "On the Move - A Century of the Irish Passport" Exhibition at the Passport Office in Balbriggan, the exhibition was a partnership with EPIC - The Museum of Irish Emigration to commemorate the stories of how the Irish Passport has facilitated connections across the globe over the last 100 Years © DFAT

Why Diaspora Engagement Matters

Our definition of diaspora is broad and inclusive and continues to encompass citizens whether born on the island or abroad, those with Irish ancestry, and those who hold a strong affinity to Ireland, including a growing number who have spent time in Ireland and returned to their country of birth.

Much has been written on the Irish emigration experience. Its arc is long and layered. For many years, the prevailing narrative often focused, rightly, on noting that economic challenges and social exclusion meant that, for many, emigration was seen as the only viable option. However, for others, particularly in more recent years, emigration was a choice made under more positive circumstances.

Deepening the bonds between the Irish diaspora and Ireland matters for many reasons.

Firstly, the Government recognises the duty of care we have to all Irish people abroad. For this reason, a people-centred approach remains the cornerstone of our diaspora engagement. As we have in our previous two strategies, we remain conscious that, for some, the

emigration experience was neither voluntary nor rewarding which, in turn, can bring the risk of marginalisation.

Beyond that, as we saw across our consultation on this strategy, many Irish and Irish-connected individuals living abroad remain deeply connected to Ireland through familial, personal, cultural and economic ties. This connection manifests itself in many ways, not least through their promotion of our values and identity, telling our story in their new homes and seeking to develop political and business links. Having heard the real appetite for engagement, it would be remiss of Government not to embrace these influential networks and vital experiences and perspectives in a mutually beneficial way.

Furthermore, supporting our communities overseas provides a platform that allows younger generations to maintain a connection to their heritage, and opens doors for those from underrepresented groups and our affinity diaspora to engage with Ireland. In a world where the nature of migration is changing, fostering a sense of belonging in newer generations and less visible groups is vital.



The Patriotes de Québec elite Gaelic Football men's team, Canada © Patriotes de Québec

Executive Summary

VISION

Strengthened partnerships with the Irish diaspora across the world to nurture vibrant and inclusive global Irish communities, where the most vulnerable are supported, our values and culture thrive, connections are deepened and collaboration is maximised to the benefit of all.

This strategy has been developed following a genuine and broad consultation process across the world and in Ireland.

Its 23 commitments are informed by hundreds of meetings, thousands of conversations, the first ever online consultations of the Irish abroad, as well as by the experience gained through the previous two diaspora strategies and delivery of the Emigrant Support Programme (ESP) since 2004. This unique programme has provided over €265 million in grants to over 900 organisations in 53 countries and remains a flagship programme for supporting the delivery of the commitments set out here.

Given the scale of the consultations, it is heartening to note that overall it was a very positive process.

That is not to say that, at times, challenging and difficult issues were not discussed, that agreement was reached on every issue or that every request we heard can be met. It is, however, a reflection on the approach taken by all participants, the willingness to listen and debate, the desire to contribute to finding solutions and recognition that delivering on the priorities of communities requires a partnership approach.

In distilling the many stories and ideas we heard, a number of shared themes emerged including:

- Maintaining an enduring relationship with the diaspora is as significant as ever to our national identity.

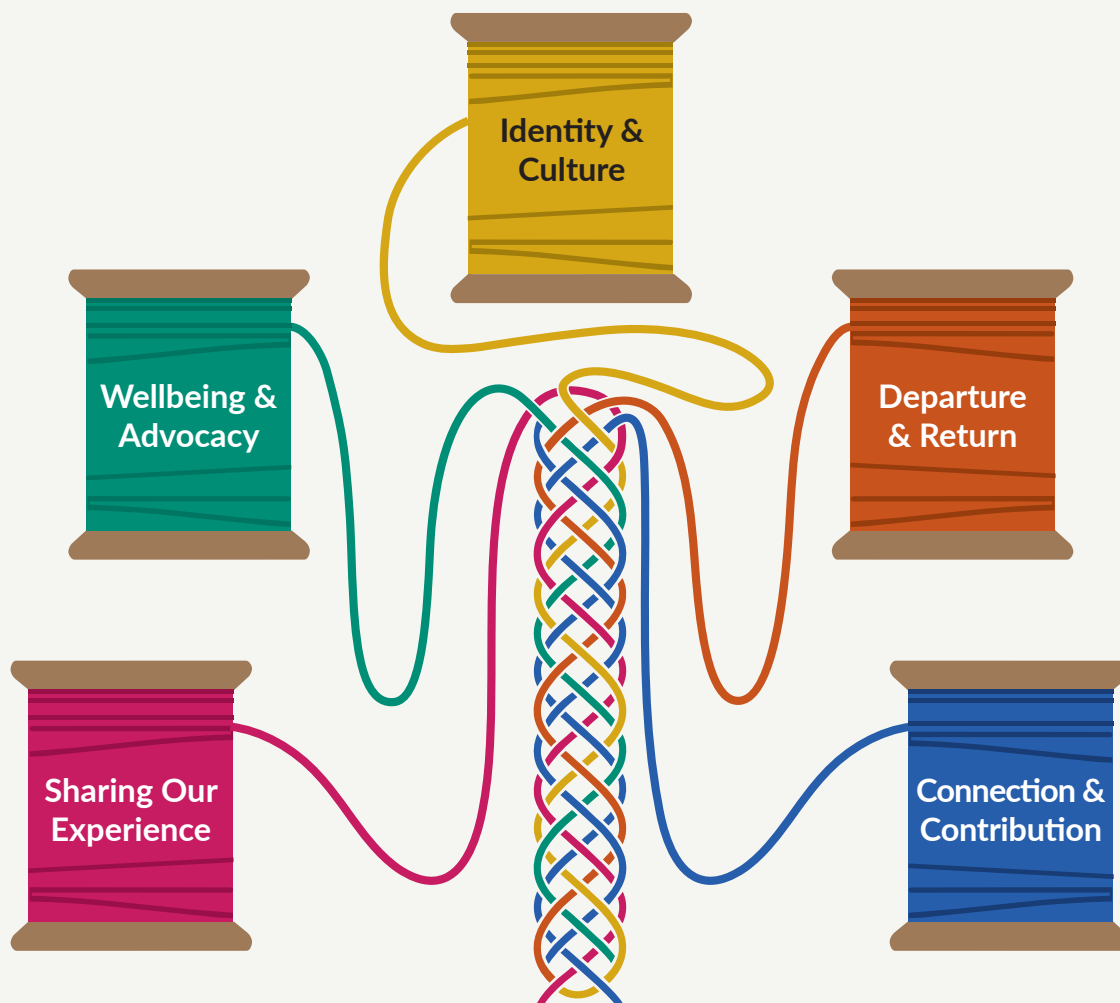
- The benefits of building greater connections and strengthening collaboration across diaspora communities both within the same locality and globally.
- The strong attachment to Irish values and the importance of these values continuing to underpin our shared goals.
- The continued importance of not considering the diaspora a homogeneous grouping. While an attachment to Ireland was often the catalyst for connecting and engaging, each of our global Irish communities is its own rich mosaic formed by its unique environment and history as well as the journeys, needs and interests of the many individuals who make up each community.
- The changing nature of emigration, impacted by geopolitics, globalisation and technology. It is important to understand the impact of this and how it may evolve.
- While Government support, funding and advocacy is important, building and sustaining vibrant communities is rooted in the community itself. Government alone cannot implement all the actions in this strategy. Delivery will require substantial engagement and cooperation among all stakeholders.

Delivering the Vision

Delivering on the strategy's vision requires a multifaceted approach, drawing together a number of threads that came through our many conversations and the Global Irish Survey. Our approach is rooted in the advice that we should continue to embrace the layered nature of our overseas communities and recognise that each is a unique tapestry woven in response to their own story, interests and needs.

This strategy will therefore comprise of an **overarching commitment** and **five interconnected threads** based around the key themes that came out of the consultation process.

Over the course of this strategy, we will work with our partners and stakeholders to weave these threads together to support the particular needs and priorities of their communities.



Stronger Communities & Deeper Connections

Our Overarching Commitment sets out the foundation on which this strategy is built. Its actions will underpin delivery across all of the threads to ensure our relationship with the global Irish communities is a dynamic one that meets their needs and can adapt to evolving circumstances.

Wellbeing & Advocacy addresses the strong message we heard on the ongoing need to work with our network of community and cultural organisations to protect and support the elderly, the most vulnerable and those who find themselves isolated, marginalised or at risk of social exclusion. As our work in this area evolves, there is a clear commitment to recognising that vulnerability has many causes and is not particular to any cohort or demographic. We have retained our specific commitment to support survivors of institutional abuse living overseas while also enhancing our approach to diversity and inclusion and encouraging stronger and more proactive engagement with underrepresented and marginalised groups. We will work to respond to the calls we heard for advocacy on behalf of the diaspora and Irish communities across a range of areas.

Identity & Culture responds to the clear interest in, and passion for, cultural activities and Irish values, and their role in deepening a sense of identity and belonging. Sport, culture and language are central to Irish community life overseas, both gathering people together and bringing new people into the fold. We remain committed to supporting these activities and recognising their broader impact on wellbeing. During the consultations, we heard calls for a greater range of information about Ireland, our heritage and our values. We will enhance the provision of such information through the refreshed *Global Irish Hub* as well as other educational platforms, online resources and archival projects.

Connection & Contribution reflects the desire among different Irish diaspora groups to connect with others and to contribute their skills, time and expertise. We will launch a reinvigorated *Diaspora Directory* providing a platform for community groups to promote their work. For those already involved in community organisations, we will facilitate closer collaboration with other groups by building out networks, with our Embassies and Consulates playing a coordinating role. We will enhance our own communications capacity so that we can better tell the stories of the diaspora and work to build greater links between the diaspora and the island of Ireland, including through the Shared Home Place Diaspora Voices programme as part of the Government's Shared Island Initiative.

Having heard the strong interest in engagement, we commit to enhancing opportunities for the diaspora to contribute their experiences and perspectives to the Government's trade, investment, education, research and tourism priorities. We will build strategic relationships with the philanthropic sector to support vibrant communities in the diaspora and in Ireland.

The possibility of expanding the right to vote in Presidential elections to Irish citizens outside the state was raised in some of our engagements, although not in a significant way. How we can deliver on this wish will remain under review.

Departure & Return recognises that additional supports are required for those in the process of emigrating as well as considering a return home. It was evident from our consultations that more information on the practical realities of moving country would be welcome. This thread aims to close that information gap, to link new emigrants into their local communities on arrival. This strategy is the fulcrum for delivering on the commitments made in the Programme for Government to ease the administrative hurdles facing people who seek to move home.

Sharing Our Experience aims to establish Ireland as a world leader in the field of diaspora engagement by building on our work over the last two strategies in sharing our expertise with the world. In Ireland, the Government, along with civil society, academia and the private sector has built up a knowledge and experience base that places us in a unique position to share our experiences with others interested in deepening ties with their diaspora. Our openness to sharing our story provides an opportunity to place Ireland at the forefront of a growing global focus on diaspora engagement and mobilisation and contributes to the promotion of our values and the deepening of bilateral and multilateral relationships.

ISSUES OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THIS STRATEGY

During the in-person and online consultations, there were some issues raised that fall beyond the scope of this strategy including housing and the cost of living.

While it is not feasible to address such issues in this strategy, we will ensure that the views of the diaspora are shared with those charged with overseeing the delivery of these priorities. This will include sharing the Global Irish Position Papers that addressed these matters.

We will enhance our engagement with those outside government in sectoral representative bodies and the private sector to seek their consideration of issues raised.



Participants at the Diaspora Consultation in London, July 2025 © DFAT

Development and Implementation of the Strategy

DEVELOPMENT

The Programme for Government 2025, *Securing Ireland's Future*, commits to delivering a new Diaspora Strategy.

Development of this strategy was led by the Minister of State for International Development and Diaspora, Neale Richmond TD, supported by the Irish Abroad Unit of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and Ireland's Embassy and Consulate network.

Recognising that the Irish diaspora is diverse, and communities vary considerably both in their needs and priorities and the challenges that they face, it was important the consultation process that informed this strategy engaged with a wide and varied range of voices worldwide to ensure that the commitments reflect their needs.

Consultations were undertaken in a number of formats.

In-person Consultations

Throughout 2025, Minister Richmond and DFAT officials, held a series of face-to-face and online meetings with Irish organisations and individuals all over the world.

The centrepiece of the process was a series of formal consultations led by the Minister in 27 cities across 17 countries including in Ireland. These consultations, organised in conjunction with our Embassies and Consulates, took the form of facilitated roundtable discussions with members of the diaspora and organisations who support and engage with the diaspora. Just under 500 individuals attended these discussions, with over 250 organisations represented.

In addition to the formal public consultations, the strategy was informed by engagements with a range of stakeholders from civil society, NGOs, community and cultural groups, business networks and academic institutions at home and abroad as well as Government departments and state agencies.



Minister of State Richmond meeting with Irish based community, culture and sports bodies as part of the Diaspora Consultations
© DFAT

In preparing for the consultation process, Minister Richmond set five broad criteria, which formed the basis of all the engagements undertaken.

- Conversations should be entered into with no fixed outcome in mind. The aim was to better understand our diaspora communities and what they see as their opportunities and challenges.
- The delivery of priorities over the course of this strategy would only work when rooted in the needs of communities with Government as a facilitator and supporter. Discussions were underpinned by three broad questions: What are your priorities? How can they be delivered? How can Government help?
- It was necessary to speak to a wide range of people and groups: from long-time emigrants to those only weeks arrived; across all ages and genders; and across Irish community groups, welfare providers, NGOs, business networks, the arts and many more.
- Keeping in mind the diverse and complex nature of the diaspora, the strategy would need to cover a broad range of priorities. This meant that the strategy could not, and should not, focus on any specific region, sector or community, but should ensure that our relationship with our global Irish communities is dynamic and supports are targeted where needs are greatest.

- The strategy and the ESP should also be able to adapt to evolving circumstances, as was the case during the COVID crisis when the relationships built over many years facilitated real partnerships between DFAT and diaspora organisations to deliver COVID supports to Irish communities overseas.

Global Irish Survey

The in-person consultations were supplemented by the Global Irish Survey, our first ever online survey of the Irish abroad. The consultation launched on 7 July 2025 and ran for seven weeks throughout the summer of 2025.

The survey was designed in partnership with The Diaspora Institute with the aim of collecting data about who our diaspora are, how they experience their Irishness, and what issues are important to them. The survey contained multiple choice questions as well as open questions to provide an opportunity for in-depth consideration of key issues.

The Global Irish Survey was hosted on Ireland.ie, and was advertised on the social media channels of DFAT and across our Embassy and Consulate network.

Two versions of the survey were developed: one for individuals, and one for organisations. In total, there were 10,186 responses from 9,898 individuals and 288 organisations.

Further details of the survey and its findings are set out in Appendix 2.



Irish Dancers from UCD Dance Society celebrating Tourism Ireland's 'Semana de Irlanda' in Madrid © Sergio Albert

Position Papers

Alongside the Global Irish Survey, position papers were accepted throughout the summer of 2025. These submissions were an opportunity to discuss specific issues in greater detail, including issues that were not covered by the survey. This allowed organisations and individuals to highlight issues of importance to them, whether they were specific to a particular community or relevant to the diaspora as a whole.

In total, 40 position papers were received from organisations and individuals based in over 10 countries.

Response to Outreach and Engagement

The overall response to this open and expansive approach in person and online has been very positive and this strategy reflects the discussions that took place and the many stories we heard.

No two stories were the same. Each was as individual as the person telling it. We heard heart-breaking and heart-warming stories from people who left Ireland decades ago, from recent emigrants and from individuals and families who plan to return someday.

We listened to those for whom the experience has been rewarding and successful and those who continue to face hardship and struggle. We met those who provide daily lifesaving welfare services to the most vulnerable and with the leaders and supporters of the many Irish clubs and societies. We heard from teachers, doctors, community care workers, volunteers, artists, musicians, journalists, politicians, CEOs and entrepreneurs. We spoke to Irish-born and those whose connection is through their parents, grandparents or even further back. We also met many of the affinity diaspora, those who have no heredity or familial link, but who, through an interest in our culture or having experienced working or studying in Ireland, have sought to continue the connection even after returning to their homeland.

It would be remiss not to recognise the importance that people in Ireland continue to place on supporting our diaspora. Across our meetings with Irish-based businesses, NGOs, sporting and cultural groups as well as with Oireachtas members, there was a consistent message on the need to deepen the ties between Ireland and our diaspora.

IMPLEMENTATION

A detailed implementation plan for all 23 commitments set out in the strategy will be developed in the period ahead and shared with stakeholders.

Over the course of the Strategy, the Minister of State for International Development and Diaspora will chair an annual briefing to update stakeholders on delivery of the strategy. The meeting will also facilitate input from representatives of the diaspora, diaspora organisations and Government departments and agencies on implementation of the commitments and the wider goal of deepening ties between Ireland and the Irish abroad.

We will seek to build on the positive response to the engagement that took place around this strategy. Across the period to 2030, we will host two Global Irish Civic Forums, the first in April 2026 to launch this strategy and a second in late 2028 or early 2029 as part of celebration of the 25th anniversary of the ESP.

We will also support a rolling series of regional engagements overseas and in Ireland to enhance knowledge-sharing and networking opportunities for our partner organisations around the world.

This work will be complemented by a second Global Irish Survey, at the midpoint of the strategy, to measure our progress in achieving the commitments as well as giving direction for future initiatives.

The ESP will remain the core tool for the implementation of the commitments above. We will continue to review and update the priorities and administration of the programme to ensure it best meets the needs of Irish communities and the organisations who support them, particularly those who provide frontline services.

As we consider the implementation of the commitments set out in the following pages, it is also important for this strategy to be a living document that can be adapted to reflect global challenges and opportunities.



Children enjoying the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Utah, 2024 © Hibernian Society of Utah

Our Overarching Commitment

Our Overarching Commitment: Over the course of this strategy, we will work with the diaspora to ensure our relationship with the global Irish communities is a dynamic one that meets their needs and can adapt to evolving circumstances.

- 1.1 Continue to take a broad and inclusive definition of our diaspora that encompasses its many strands, reflective of the spirit of Article 2 of the Constitution.
- 1.2 Ensure ESP funding remains focused on supporting the elderly and most vulnerable of our overseas community.
- 1.3 Ensure that deepened engagement with the diaspora remains central to the Government's *Global Ireland 2040* strategy and to our regional strategies.
- 1.4 Support the development of sustainable Irish organisations and networks across the world, recognising the role technology can play as an enabler of engagement and delivery.
- 1.5 Enhance the capacity across our Embassy and Consulate network to support the delivery of this strategy, including through leveraging the Ireland House model to enhance collaboration with the diaspora.
- 1.6 Engage with academics, researchers and policy developers to deepen our understanding of Irish communities abroad, to underpin data-driven decision-making that responds to their needs.
- 1.7 Publish an Action Plan for Implementation and a calendar of engagements with stakeholders to support the delivery of the strategy.

Wellbeing & Advocacy



Members of the Irish Pensioners Choir in London © Damien Grainger

People are at the heart of this strategy.

Since the establishment of the Emigrant Support Programme (ESP) in 2004, and the publication of the Government's first diaspora strategy in 2015, ensuring the wellbeing of Irish people overseas has been the cornerstone of our diaspora engagement.

When we launched our last diaspora strategy in 2020, our budget for supporting the diaspora was just under €13.2 million. In 2026, it stands at €17.5 million, the highest amount to date. As our diaspora engagement deepens and broadens across this strategy, we will continue to fund the ESP through the Government's annual budget process.

With more Irish people travelling and the geographic spread of Irish communities growing, our consular assistance systems are being enhanced to ensure the safety of Irish citizens overseas who find themselves impacted by conflict, natural disasters or otherwise in difficult circumstances while visiting or travelling abroad.

We will continue to invest in our teams, systems and community organisations to ensure we deliver consistent, accessible and effective services and supports to Irish citizens around the world.

Across the consultation process, we heard of the crucial work undertaken on the ground in support of Irish communities overseas. We will ensure the ESP remains focused on supporting culturally sensitive frontline programmes for the most vulnerable, offering counselling services, homeless services, outreach and home visits, and social interaction, as well as advice and guidance including on immigration matters and status.

Many of our discussions also considered the value of having a more holistic understanding of wellbeing, one that reflects the material, emotional and social circumstances of the individual and community. We will use available data to ensure ESP grants recognise regional priorities and are allocated appropriately across all life stages, supporting younger members of the community through to elder supports and end-of-life care.

Recognising and addressing mental health issues and isolation was a theme that arose in a number of locations. Participants spoke of challenges arising from relocation and adjustment in unfamiliar settings and with limited networks. Others noted that distance, both physical and social, from family and support systems at times of change and disruption adds to stress and uncertainty.

We will work with communities and our partner organisations to address these challenges, directly through the ESP but also across the various threads of this strategy. Vibrant, connected communities that facilitate people building social connections and a sense of belonging can help to combat the loneliness and isolation many emigrants face. Core to this is facilitating inclusive spaces, where people-to-people connections can flourish.

Our consultations also highlighted that the emerging needs in some of our overseas communities around patterns of vulnerability

and supporting the elderly and isolated may mirror those that have been experienced in other communities, particularly in Britain and the US. The lessons learned from our long standing ESP partners in this area will be valuable in informing best practice into the future.

Another strong message that came through the consultations and the survey was a wish for the Government to promote and celebrate Irish communities abroad. Over the course of this strategy, we will continue to advocate for the needs of our diaspora, wherever they are in the world.

Whether it be the promotion of LGBTQ+ rights, advancing gender equality, supporting members of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller population, welcoming those of multiple heritage, or working to reduce barriers for those with disabilities, supporting marginalised and underrepresented groups is central to building diverse, thriving communities.



The Emerald Walkers set out on another adventure exploring Leicester © Sunil Cohan

Commitment 2. Ensure the ESP is allocated across all threads of this strategy and continues to respond to the needs of our communities abroad in line with best practice and the highest governance standards.

- 2.1 Use available data to ensure ESP grants are targeted to support those most in need and allocated appropriately in line with specific regional needs across all life stages, from children and younger members of the community through to elder supports and end of life care.
- 2.2 Support ESP initiatives which encourage collaboration for the benefit of the wider community across key areas, including initiatives which have the potential to be replicated.
- 2.3 Continue to support grass roots organisations to access small amounts of funding, including time limited seed funding through the Small Grants Scheme.
- 2.4 Consider how a stronger Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility focus can be embedded into the ESP, initially piloting this in Britain with the input of the Emigrant Services Advisory Committee (ESAC).
- 2.5 Following a successful pilot, expand our multiannual funding scheme to partners where needs arise and as budget allows.
- 2.6 Facilitate peer-to-peer learning, lesson-sharing sessions and capacity building for ESP-funded organisations including at board level.
- 2.7 Move the ESP funding round from its current July to June funding year to a calendar year.
- 2.8 In advance of the 25th anniversary of the ESP, provide an ESP allocation to tell the story of the programme and the impact it has made.



Irish Community Participation at the New York Pride Parade, June 2025 © DFAT

Commitment 3. Promote the wellbeing of Irish people overseas.

- 3.1 Continue to support Irish community groups working with vulnerable Irish diaspora in their communities, recognising that vulnerability can stem from a range of factors including isolation, age, location, immigration status, physical and mental health challenges, and social exclusion.
- 3.2 Work with our Embassies and Consulates as well as other stakeholders to enhance engagement between community groups and local service providers.
- 3.3 Work with partner organisations to enhance their capacity to deliver services and measure their impact, including building on the innovative work carried out by Irish in Britain.
- 3.4 Build strategic relationships with philanthropic sector to support vibrant communities in the diaspora and in Ireland.
- 3.5 Encourage greater cross-sectoral engagement between the voluntary, community care and cultural sectors and the diaspora business community to facilitate access to a broader range of technical and professional skills and expertise.

Commitment 4. Continue to support survivors of institutional abuse living overseas, recognising the difficult circumstances that may have caused them to leave Ireland and their specific needs.

- 4.1 Continue funding for essential counselling and support services, for the many survivors living abroad.
- 4.2 Support and engage with organisations working with, and advocating for, survivors and affected people abroad including continued support of collaborative initiatives.
- 4.3 Continue to work across relevant Government departments, as well as with the Special Advocate for Survivors, through our Embassy and Consulate network to promote awareness of supports for survivors and initiatives in the Government Action Plan, including the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme.
- 4.4 Provide training and advice for our Embassies, Consulates and other partners in engaging with and supporting survivors living abroad.

Commitment 5. Advocate for our diaspora.

- 5.1 Continue to support and advocate on behalf of the Irish in the US, including those who are undocumented. Work to forge new legal pathways for people to work, study and live in the US in order to underpin sustainable, diverse and vibrant communities.
- 5.2 Seek opportunities to highlight the contributions Irish communities have made in their homelands and support appropriate efforts to promote their work and priorities to local authorities and others who can provide advice and assistance.
- 5.3 Keep our suite of Working Holiday Agreements (WHA) under review and seek to enhance programmes where possible, while continuing to promote WHA opportunities in Ireland.
- 5.4 Encourage and support Irish media engagement with our diaspora.

Commitment 6. Support diversity and inclusion within Irish community organisations and encourage stronger engagement with underrepresented and marginalised groups.

- 6.1 Continue to ensure that grants made under the ESP reflect Irish values by supporting projects and events that address the needs of underrepresented groups, recognise the ever-changing nature of Irish identity and promote cross-community engagement.
- 6.2 Establish an Inclusion Innovation Fund under the ESP to support projects that promote the inclusion of underrepresented groups. Allocate £50,000 in 2026 on a pilot basis to support projects under the auspices of the Embassy of Ireland in London and ESAC.
- 6.3 Support initiatives that recognise the stories and contributions of Irish women in our diaspora, including St Brigid's Day celebrations held across our network of Embassies and Consulates.
- 6.4 Encourage engagement with and celebrate the stories of members of underrepresented groups within the Irish diaspora such as those of multiple heritage, those who identify as LGBTQ+, Travellers, and those with disabilities.
- 6.5 Recognise the need for sustainable and experienced support to address the unique needs of Irish prisoners around the world and ensure appropriate information and assistance for their families.
- 6.6 Engage with our Embassy and Consulate network and partner organisations to provide information on supports in a way that is accessible to those with low literacy and low digital literacy.

Commitment 7. Continue to provide high quality and responsive consular assistance to citizens in need.

7.1 Introduce an enhanced Citizens Registration System.

7.2 Recognise the experience and expertise available within the diaspora, particularly in locations where we do not have a resident Embassy to support a consular response, including when preparing Embassy and Consulate contingency plans.

7.3 Establish an Emergency Assistance Grant process under the ESP to meet the immediate emergency needs of Irish citizens and the wider Irish community impacted by a crisis.

7.4 Support our partner organisations working with those unable to access online consular services.



Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Helen McEntee TD visits the Irish Cultural Centre in greater Boston during her St. Patrick's Day visit in 2026 © Ryan Roddick/Silverline Productions Inc

CASE STUDY: THE ESP IN ACTION

The London Irish Centre: 70 Years of Irish Culture and Community

The London Irish Centre (LIC) was founded in 1955 as a “house of welcome” for Irish immigrants to Britain. Today it is a major Irish community organisation, and the largest Irish welfare charity outside Ireland.

The Centre's work is supported by the ESP and is driven by three core values of community, creativity and compassion. In 2025, the London Irish Centre became the first organisation to receive annual ESP core funding in excess of €1 million.

The Centre provides extensive support services to the most vulnerable and isolated in the diaspora community, both from its hub in Camden Square and across London. This includes a Survivors' Integrated Service, providing tailored, compassionate and trauma-informed support and advocacy to former residents of Irish institutions living in London and the South of England.

In addition to its community supports, it is also a hub for Irish arts and education in London, sharing an ambitious, inclusive and multi-disciplinary programme of live music, theatre, Irish language classes, literary events and exhibitions.

In 2025, over 3,000 individuals were helped with casework, £4.4m in benefits were secured, 10,000 meals were served, and 55,000 visitors were welcomed to the Centre. The LIC also works with 79 other organisations to deliver their community and cultural programmes.

Supported by the Irish Government, the LIC will soon undergo an ambitious redevelopment of its site on Camden Square, transforming the Centre into a world-class destination for Irish culture and community and securing its future for generations to come. The February 2026 announcement of €3.4 million in funding is the largest single investment the Government has made in an Irish diaspora organisation and reflects the Government's commitment to strengthen its engagement with Irish communities overseas. This grant brings the total Irish Government funding for the Centre's redevelopment to €6.75 million.



Event celebrating 70 years of the London Irish Centre in Camden, September 2025 © CutLeaf Productions

Identity & Culture

As we know, there is no one Irish diaspora. Our overseas communities mirror the Ireland of today, thriving on diversity and representing the multiple strands of an inclusive and modern world.

As Ireland has evolved, so too has the idea of “Irishness”. Irishness intersects with other identities and there are now many ways to be or feel Irish. This is why our definition of diaspora remains broad and inclusive.

Irish culture, which encompasses the arts, sport, language and history, provides an opportunity to deeply connect with home. As modern communication changes with the rise of social media and enhanced connectivity, cultural

activities and events continue to be a powerful pathway to bring people together in person. They can forge the friendships that become the bedrock of sustainable and vibrant communities.

Through the ESP, we have provided grants to large-scale festivals and to smaller community-focused cultural events. We will continue to support our Irish community partners overseas to promote the best of Ireland’s contemporary and traditional culture. Our annual St Patrick’s Day and St Brigid’s Day celebrations around the globe will remain a central feature of our outreach.



Participants practicing their cúpla focal at a Pop- Up Gaeltacht in Embassy London © DFAT

CULTURE, COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING

A clear theme that emerged during our consultations was the link between culture, wellbeing and vibrant communities and these synergies are captured across the strategy's threads.

Cultural activities can be an outlet for artistic expression, as well as a source of intellectual stimulation or social connection, making them an excellent tool for maintaining good mental health. This is why it is invaluable to see so many of our ESP-supported community wellbeing programmes also providing a cultural strand in their work. We have witnessed the positive reaction to the sing-alongs, storytelling and crafts, as well as activities such as chair-based exercises at seniors' lunches. We will continue to support this work.

Sport is a powerful point of connection for Irish people overseas. As a means of engaging, sports and physical activities are often an early anchor point for new arrivals, offering a welcoming environment and a social network. Through providing physical activity as well as a means to volunteer or simply gather to watch, sports clubs and societies make meaningful contributions to the broader wellbeing of the community.

With more than 500 clubs across six continents, Gaelic Games continue to thrive around the world. GAA clubs are often a home away from home for many of the diaspora, a point of connection for those of Irish descent and, with a growing cohort of non-Irish connected players in almost every club, a platform to showcase our culture, sporting and community values. The Global Games Development Fund (GGDF), a jointly funded partnership between DFAT and the GAA will remain a centrepiece of support for GAA clubs around the world over the course of this strategy.



Fêtes Consulaires in Lyon © Geoffrey Reynard Photographie

Beyond the GAA, diaspora led walking, running and cycling clubs along with underage and adult sports teams are flourishing. It is positive to see such an Irish influence in team sports at both elite and participatory level be that with FC Irlande in Brussels, London Irish Amateur RFC in London or Markham Irish Rugby Club in Toronto as well as in the Premier League, the AFL, the NFL, collegiate athletics and sports administration and technology.

The sporting-related inputs we received during consultations on this strategy also informed the Government's International Sports Diplomacy Strategy, which rightly recognises how sport can deepen the diaspora's connection to Ireland. The commitments set out in both strategies in areas such as engagement, public diplomacy, entrepreneurship and innovation are fully aligned.



Musicians at Pittsburgh Irish Fest © Tim Branscum

IDENTITY AND VALUES

Across the consultations the strong attachment of the diaspora to Irish values was striking, as was their pride in Ireland's approach to equality, diversity and human rights in the face of uncertainty.

For second and later generations and those who have never been to Ireland, cultural heritage is often the cornerstone of their sense of belonging, while an understanding of Irish history is key to understanding modern Irish values.

Colonisation and famine, civil war, conflict and reconciliation, economics and mass migration, globalisation, societal change and the global recognition of the Irish arts have all shaped the Ireland of today. The study of history, as well as literature, political science, geography, film studies, technology, innovation and beyond, gives us an insight into unique and nuanced identities. Over the course of this strategy, we will therefore consider how to enhance supports for the field of Irish Studies in academic institutions abroad.

The resurgence of interest in the Irish language was reflected back to us during the consultation process. Demand for opportunities to learn and use the language is growing. This demand, combined with the digital tools now available, mean that we are uniquely positioned to provide resources to members of the diaspora who previously had limited access to the language.

We also heard the requests during consultations, from grandparents and Irish teachers working overseas, for online resources that could be used to inform children and young adults about Ireland.

The Government has a role in capturing and signposting the wealth of cultural material online in a central hub. DFAT will work with Culture Ireland, Screen Ireland, our National Cultural Institutions and Foras na Gaeilge, along with other partners, to develop the *Global Irish Hub* as such a platform.

Commemorating the history of the Irish abroad is another strand of this reflection. We are delivering programmes to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and the history of Irish and Irish-American people in the US, as well as Canada 180, marking 180 years since 1847, when thousands of Irish people migrated to Canada during the Great Famine. In 2027, we will celebrate 250 years since the birth of William Brown, County Mayo native and founder of the Argentinian Navy.

Anniversaries such as these provide a platform to celebrate the contributions of Irish women and men in their adopted homelands. Building on the success of Zeitgeist Irland 24, a yearlong programme of Irish arts and culture across Germany, these initiatives also provide the opportunity to showcase the richness of talent in Ireland's contemporary creative diaspora.

The Irish abroad have shaped Irish contemporary culture across the realms of sport, music, dance, literature, visual arts and film, among many others. We will look to tell this story and to better recognise these contributions.

CASE STUDY: ST BRIGID'S DAY

Since 2017, Irish Embassies and Consulates around the world have marked St Brigid's Day by celebrating the creativity of Irish women, in the areas of culture, science, finance, entrepreneurship and beyond.

In facilitating these events overseas, DFAT ensures that St Brigid's legacy is celebrated amongst the Irish diaspora and that the next generation remains connected to the traditions of Ireland's matron saint and by association Irish culture, heritage and traditions.

St Brigid is widely associated with Irish crafts and the arts, with many events focusing on the promotion of Irish dancing, music and literature. Other events have focused on celebrating Irish women in science and medicine, tying in with St Brigid's association with healing.

Among the projects supported over the last number of years were the production of a manga comic detailing the stories of St Brigid in Tokyo, a show fusing Irish and Egyptian dancing traditions in Cairo and an event celebrating women in aviation in New York.



St Brigid's Day Celebrations, Embassy Cairo 2024 © DFAT

Commitment 8. Revitalise the Global Irish Hub as a trusted platform for online resources for the diaspora, bringing together Irish media, film, visual arts, and archival and educational materials available overseas, as well as links to supports and practical advice for living abroad or returning home.

Commitment 9. Nurture a strong identity and sense of belonging among young people and newer generations of the Irish diaspora.

- 9.1 Enhance our use of online and technology platforms to engage with a broader base of Irish and Irish-connected individuals and communities overseas.
- 9.2 Support projects that promote youth engagement, foster youth leadership in Irish communities worldwide and encourage intergenerational connections, including with those from underrepresented parts of the diaspora.

Commitment 10. Strengthen and advance Irish arts overseas, recognising the central role they play in building identity, belonging and community.

- 10.1 Support Irish cultural organisations, associations and festivals around the world that celebrate our shared culture and heritage.
- 10.2 Strengthen and promote Irish traditional and contemporary arts, particularly among the next generation and affinity diaspora.
- 10.3 Nurture community arts to promote good mental health, tackle isolation, and support individual and community wellbeing more generally among the diaspora.
- 10.4 Support Irish cultural and creative industries overseas, in partnership with Culture Ireland and Screen Ireland, to provide opportunities to the next generation and affinity diaspora to connect with Irish culture.

Commitment 11. Recognise the growing commitment to the Irish language among the diaspora by providing opportunities to learn and use the language.

- 11.1 Support, develop and promote awareness of online Irish-language resources available overseas.
- 11.2 Support and promote groups that provide learning opportunities and Irish-language events and initiatives overseas.
- 11.3 Support Irish-language initiatives in locations with a high concentration of speakers, such as in Brussels.

Commitment 12. Support the interest among the diaspora for learning about and understanding Ireland.

- 12.1 Support the sharing of resources about Ireland aimed at children and young adults that can be used by parents and teachers overseas.
- 12.2 Consider, in the context of Global Ireland 2040, how to enhance the field of Irish studies in academic institutions abroad.
- 12.3 Continue to support networking, teaching and research in the field of Irish studies in higher education institutions overseas, including in non-Anglophone countries.

Commitment 13. Preserve and commemorate the history of the Irish diaspora.

- 13.1 Enhance our capacity to support projects that archive the stories, culture and history of the Irish diaspora.
- 13.2 Continue the Historian in Residence Programme to tell the story of Irish emigrants, including the difficult history and circumstances that led to many emigrating.
- 13.3 Recognise important anniversaries in other countries and celebrate the historical contributions of Irish women and men where relevant.
- 13.4 Support the work of the National Famine Commemoration Committee in marking the annual International Famine Commemoration overseas.
- 13.5 Work with the National Archives, National Library, National Museum, County Councils and other partners to promote publicly available resources, including genealogical and cultural resources.

Commitment 14. Recognise the role sport can play in engaging people, strengthening communities and deepening the diaspora's connection to Ireland as envisaged in the Government's International Sports Diplomacy Strategy.

14.1 Support diaspora led sports initiatives that promote mental health and inclusion and/or seek to grow participation in sport, particularly among women, youth and people with disabilities.

14.2 Establish a more structured engagement with the Irish and Irish-connected sports clubs and the sporting diaspora to build connections to Ireland and to celebrate their work and achievements.

14.3 Work with World GAA in GAA HQ to refresh the Global Games Development Fund to ensure it continues to meet the development needs of GAA clubs overseas, supporting meaningful games opportunities and facilitating clubs acting as a touchstone for the diaspora and for those interested in engaging with Ireland.

14.4 Deepen engagement between DFAT HQ, GAA HQ, regional Boards and our Embassy and Consulate network to ensure a coordinated approach to development and promotion of Gaelic Games among the diaspora and local communities overseas.

14.5 Work with Irish communities overseas (particularly in the education sector) to promote the introduction of Gaelic Games into Physical Education modules in schools overseas, particularly those with an Irish heritage or in countries with a strong GAA community.

CASE STUDY: THE HURLING CLUB, BUENOS AIRES

The Hurling Club in Buenos Aires has been an institution within the Irish-Argentine community for over 100 years and can trace its roots all the way back to 1922 and the founding of the Irish Hurling Federation of Argentina. Hurling was played regularly by Club members up until the outbreak of the Second World War, when it became impossible to import hurleys from Ireland.

Today the Club is successful in a variety of sports but its Irish origins remain central to its identity, and it is a central hub for the roughly 500,000 Argentines who have Irish ancestry. It has active men's and women's Gaelic Football teams and has sent groups to participate in four GAA World Games competitions to date. The Gaelic Games traditions in Argentina more broadly, have helped support developments across the region with new GAA clubs emerging in Chile, Colombia and Paraguay in recent years.



Members of The Hurling Club Buenos Aires

Connection & Contribution

Communities thrive on connection. Those connections come alive through contributing to a shared goal.

In our consultations, we picked up real interest among participants in seeking out opportunities to collaborate with each other, to connect with home, and to contribute their time, skills and expertise to their communities and to support Irish businesses and job creation.

With the nature of Irish emigration changing and the diaspora dispersing more widely around the world, it is increasingly necessary to find ways to link up our communities.

We want to facilitate the diaspora in working together and learning from each other, whether they are involved in community care,

culture, sport, business or academia. Increased collaboration and knowledge-sharing will allow the Irish abroad to maximise resources, enhance capacity and build resilience.

Our Embassies and Consulates working in conjunction with the Irish Abroad Unit of DFAT will continue to play an important role by signposting, coordinating and building self-sustaining networks.

The refreshed *Diaspora Directory* will be a hub for the diaspora to engage with community groups in their region but we also hope it will be a platform for organisations to connect directly with others around the world doing similar work.



Members of the Irish Graduates Association of Singapore (IGAS) at the organisation's Book Launch in 2023 © IGAS



Minister of State for International Development and Diaspora Neale Richmond TD meets Sr. Teresa McKeon, recipient of a 2024 Presidential Distinguished Service Award for the Irish Overseas, for her contribution to Charitable Works & Advocacy © DFAT

RECOGNITION

One important takeaway from the consultation process is that connecting to home is not solely the responsibility of the diaspora. Ireland has a role to play in reaching out to engage and recognise our overseas communities and the amazing work being done on the ground by thousands of volunteers who regularly give their time and energy to support their fellow Irish community members overseas and to promote what is best about Ireland.

Diaspora connections can be found across this island in every county, city, parish, town and village. The continued development of diaspora engagement strategies among local authorities and agencies in Ireland is welcome and we will consider with them how we can support their priorities.

We will continue to ensure that visits overseas by the President, Taoiseach and Ministers include opportunities to engage with Irish communities.

In addition to the Presidential Distinguished Service Award, we will consider how best to mark outstanding local contributions and welcome new citizens.

We will also enhance our capability to inform the diaspora of developments of interest, provide information on the supports available to them and share their stories and successes in Ireland and beyond. In particular, we will consider how to celebrate the achievements of Irish communities in the context of the 25th anniversary of the ESP.

CONTRIBUTION

Another notable outcome of our consultations was the continued appetite to support the Government's trade and economic agenda.

The diaspora plays an important role in Ireland's international engagement, as key partners in delivering on the Government's trade, tourism and investment objectives in priority markets. Since our last strategy, we have seen growing recognition of this role. The valuable expertise and insights of Irish and Irish-connected people overseas has been acknowledged across several key Government strategies, including the Action Plan for Market Diversification and the International Sports Diplomacy Strategy.

In the context of a more challenging global economy, it is important that we build on previous successful engagements with Ireland's business diaspora and continue to invest in our international business networks.

Ireland's strategic approach to trade and investment is overseen by the Government Trade Forum, which is chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade. Consideration will be given to how Ireland's most senior people working in business internationally can support the work of the Forum, recognising the unique and valuable perspective they can bring.

This will be complemented by more regular and focused in-market engagement through Ireland's Local and Regional Market Teams in key priority and emerging markets, and by encouraging the development of senior business advisory groups in strategic locations, building on the successes of the US-based Strategic Economic Advisory Panel and the Ireland-India Economic Advisory Panel.

These initiatives will enhance the existing engagement by Team Ireland partners¹ who work with a wide range of seasoned professionals and high-level decision makers with connections to Ireland on an individual basis or as part of regional advisory groups. Such focused engagements that are built on real in-market experience and respond to specific needs are particularly valuable.

Over the course of this strategy and in line with the commitments in the Action Plan on Market Diversification, we will look to engage with new executives in key markets or sectors and continue to maximise these networks in support of our objectives.

Irish business and sectoral networks overseas play an important role in bringing together people with an interest in trade and business development and we will continue to support the growth of business groups. These networks also act as an important point of contact for business people who have recently arrived in a new country and are seeking to make connections. We will work with representative bodies in Ireland to strengthen the links between Ireland and the overseas business networks for those who have the capacity and interest in such engagement.

Tourism also plays a major role in linking the diaspora with Ireland, converting emotional connection into lived memories. Building on the success of The Gathering, the Year of the Invitation initiative led by our tourism agencies will extend a global invitation for visitors to reconnect with Ireland.

¹ Team Ireland is the network of Irish diplomatic missions and State agencies collaborating overseas to promote Ireland's trade, investment, tourism, education and research priorities. Partners include Embassies, Consulates, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Bord Bia, Tourism Ireland, Culture Ireland, Screen Ireland and Research Ireland.

There is a growing community of Irish and Irish-connected academics and researchers working around the world undertaking cutting-edge research, innovation and showcasing Ireland's contributions across many disciplines. We will continue to support and recognise the work of this community in line with Global Citizens 2030, Ireland's International Talent and Innovation Strategy.

Likewise, a number of initiatives are underway aimed at providing information to the diaspora on vacancies in key sectors in Ireland such as in the healthcare and construction sectors.

Irish and Irish-connected people abroad are also engaged in public life at all levels where they live. Groups such as the bipartisan American Irish State Legislators Caucus along with the growing number of parliamentary friendship groups across the world provide platforms

for fostering and strengthening political and economic relationships. We will continue to support the development of Irish networks at national and sub-national levels as well as in the EU, UN and other multilateral organisations of which Ireland is a member.

As is clear across this strategy, strong communities are underpinned by a sharing of skills and broad engagement. Our diaspora possess a range of technical and professional skills and expertise that is invaluable to groups in the voluntary, community care and cultural sectors. Over the course of this strategy, we will encourage greater cross-sectoral engagement that will benefit all parties.



Participants at the Club Cúltur 2026 St. Patrick's Day event in Hanoi © DFAT

CASE STUDY: EMBASSIES AND CONSULATES CONNECTING DIASPORA

Across the world Irish Embassies and Consulates provide a forum for local diaspora communities to come together on an ongoing basis to facilitate information-sharing, networking and peer-to-peer learning. This work will continue during the period of this strategy and will be enhanced by the ongoing expansion of the Ireland House model across the world. While there are many examples of this in action, the two below highlight the value of our diplomatic network providing a regular space for bringing networks together.

Established by the Consulate General in Sydney in 2018, **Le Chéile** brings together representatives from over 35 different community organisations in New South Wales. It provides a platform for community leaders to connect and collaborate and discuss issues of interest to the community. The group is currently working on the development of a shared Irish Community Calendar to provide a central, accessible online platform where

members can share their organisations' planned activities throughout the year, supporting greater coordination, visibility and cross-promotion within the Irish community locally.

San Francisco's **Sí Sessions** is a women-led initiative bringing together leaders across tech, business, the public sector, media and the arts, as well as emerging female leaders at earlier stages of their careers. The network was established in 2023 by the Consulate General in San Francisco as a female-led event series targeting Irish and Irish-connected female entrepreneurs and professionals in the Bay Area, California, where approximately 10% of residents identify as being of Irish descent. The Network hosts events that engage Irish women in the diaspora on policy and programmes, showcase Irish women's leadership globally in multiple sectors, facilitate peer-to-peer learning and support as well as empower the next generation of Irish business leaders on the West Coast.



San Francisco District Attorney Brooke Jenkins attends a Sí Sessions event © DFAT



Le Chéile 2025 Christmas event in Sydney © DFAT

Commitment 15. Enhance our capacity to engage with communities overseas and facilitate collaboration between diaspora organisations.

- 15.1 Launch the refreshed *Diaspora Directory*, as a resource for sharing information on Irish cultural, sporting, heritage, community, business and welfare organisations around the world.
- 15.2 Appoint a dedicated communications role within the Irish Abroad Unit of DFAT to strengthen our communications capacity with a focus on providing information on supports available and on highlighting the contributions being made by Irish communities abroad.
- 15.3 Host two Global Irish Civic Forums over the course of the strategy, one in April 2026 to launch this strategy and a second in late 2028 or early 2029 as part of the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Emigrant Support Programme.
- 15.4 Work with our Embassies and Consulates to support initiatives that facilitate greater regional networking opportunities between community organisations to enhance information-sharing, peer-to-peer learning and allow greater collaboration and promotion of events across their respective communities.
- 15.5 Launch a second Global Irish Survey, which will measure our progress in achieving the commitments set out in the strategy as well as giving direction for future initiatives.

Commitment 16. Maintain and strengthen connections to Ireland among the diaspora.

- 16.1 Implement the *Diaspora Voices* initiative, as part of the Government's Shared Home Place programme under the Government's Shared Island Initiative, to promote dialogue and exploration of the meaning of a shared home place for all of the diaspora.
- 16.2 Forge and strengthen connections with members of the diaspora involved in public life overseas.
- 16.3 Establish Irish Networks within the EU, UN and other multilateral organisations of which Ireland is a member.
- 16.4 Building on the success of The Gathering, extend a global invitation for the diaspora to reconnect with Ireland during the Year of the Invitation.
- 16.5 Deliver workshops for local authorities who have (or are interested in developing) diaspora engagement strategies to facilitate knowledge exchange between DFAT, local authorities and other groups working with the diaspora at home and abroad.
- 16.6 Encourage Government departments and state agencies to consider seeking input from experts within the diaspora when establishing advisory panels and committees for domestic policy development.
- 16.7 Support Údarás na Gaeltachta in the implementation of their diaspora strategy.

Commitment 17. Recognise the outstanding work of volunteers and community organisations to ensure the wellbeing of the Irish diaspora.

17.1 The Presidential Distinguished Service Award will continue to recognise exemplary service given to this country or to Irish communities abroad by those who live outside of Ireland.

17.2 Introduce a new Embassy/Consulate programme of recognition to mark those who have made a significant local contribution to the Irish community in their region.

17.3. Support our Embassies and Consulates to recognise those receiving their new Irish citizenship while living abroad through the Foreign Birth Registration process.

17.4 Continue to recognise Irish centenarians overseas through the Centenarian Bounty.

Commitment 18. Invest strategically in Ireland's business diaspora in line with the priorities of the Action Plan on Market Diversification and Business Events 2030.

18.1 Undertake a mapping exercise of Irish business groups around the world and work with their Irish based counterparts to strengthen links between Ireland and the overseas groups.

18.2 Review how ESP funding is allocated to business groups overseas to ensure it aligns with, and supports delivery of the Government's strategic priorities.

18.3 Support capacity-building in Irish networks in strategic sectors and locations to engage with and provide advice to new arrivals.

18.4 Encourage the development of diaspora networks in multinational companies with connections to Ireland.

18.5 Work with diaspora organisations and business groups to promote Ireland as a destination for leisure, business and conference-related tourism.

Commitment 19. Engage the valuable expertise and insights of the diaspora to support delivery of the Government's trade and investment priorities.

19.1 Consider the establishment of a small number of high-level advisory panels in strategically important locations to engage with Team Ireland in market, building on the experience of the Ireland-US Strategic Economic Advisory Panel and the Ireland-India Economic Advisory Panel.

19.2 Consider as part of the work of the Trade Forum opportunities for engagement with selected business diaspora voices.

Commitment 20. Deepen our engagement with our academic and research communities overseas.

20.1 Enhance our networks of Irish academics overseas along lines of the Network of Academics for Irish and Scottish Engagement launched in 2025.

20.2 Strengthen our engagement with Irish and Irish-connected researchers overseas in line with Global Citizens 2030, Ireland's International Talent and Innovation Strategy.

20.3 Support Irish Higher Education Institutions in expanding and strengthen alumni networks.

20.4 Strengthen the Ireland Fellows Alumni network (formerly Irish Aid Fellows) both online and in-country through our Embassies and Consulates.



Supporting the WB Yeats Irish Studies Chair in the University of São Paulo © Onze Produtora

Departure & Return

Migration and mobility is a part of daily life in Ireland. According to figures from the CSO, the number of Irish citizens emigrating is increasing year on year, but so is the number returning to Ireland. In the same way there is no one Irish diaspora, there is no single reason why people decide to leave Ireland or to return.

| Year (to April) | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Irish Citizens Emigrating | 25,000 | 21,400 | 25,600 | 30,500 | 34,700 | 35,000 |
| Irish Citizens Returning | 33,600 | 36,400 | 28,900 | 29,600 | 30,000 | 31,500 |

Source: Central Statistics Office 2026

This section recognises that, whatever their reason, those considering emigrating, those who are newly arrived abroad and those who are looking to return face particular challenges.

Throughout our in-person meetings and responses to the Global Irish Survey, there was an emphasis on the need for accurate, accessible information to allow people to make well-informed decisions and guide them through what can often be complicated processes.

For those considering moving abroad, we will build on DFAT's *Know Before You Go* programme for Irish tourists and work with partners to provide factual and relevant pre-departure information and guidance from those who have experience of moving to and living in key destinations.

Our network of Embassies and Consulates and the *Diaspora Directory* will be central to providing information on Irish network and community groups in cities across the world who can provide advice and assistance to those considering moving or newly arrived.

We will continue to support the fantastic work being done by Irish community organisations, immigration centres, cultural organisations, charities, sporting clubs and many others who provide a welcome for new arrivals.

Our in-person and online consultations demonstrated the desire among many in the diaspora to return. The data from the Global Irish Survey 2025 indicates that 34.7% of respondents wish to return, with 24.7% not considering returning and a further 40.7% unsure.

The Programme for Government recognises this interest and commits to facilitating an easier return.

Across the consultations, accessing clear and up-to-date information on public services and employment opportunities was of real interest to those considering returning.

The Returning to Ireland (RTI) portal on citizensinformation.ie remains the key hub for information on administrative issues such as accessing PPS numbers, welfare supports, taxation, education and visas, as well as signposting for commercial and private sector-led matters such as banking and insurance.

Since 2022, over 700,000 people have used the RTI portal to get information and advice with the information pages viewed over 1.5 million times. Given its success, we will work with the Citizens Information Board to ensure it remains up to date and responsive to needs of those seeking information.

DFAT will continue to engage with Government departments with responsibility for issues such as PPS numbers, habitual residence, matters relating to non-EEA spouses and the recognition of qualifications with a focus on sharing the views of the diaspora.

We will also enhance our engagement with professional representative bodies and commercial and private sector organisations to share the views we heard across the consultation process.

Furthermore, recognising the particular challenges facing those returning, we will strengthen our engagement with those who advocate on their behalf and work with them to oversee the commitments in this section.

A number of initiatives are underway that are aimed at providing information to the diaspora on vacancies in key sectors in Ireland such as in healthcare and construction. The HSE Career Hub has a section for returning healthcare workers. We will continue to ensure these are communicated to those who may be interested.

The substantial interest among the diaspora in attending university or college in Ireland is very welcome. Facilitating this will allow a new generation to develop ties with Ireland. The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, in line with commitments set out in the Programme for Government, will review the three-year residency requirement for citizens residing overseas who want to study full-time in Ireland.

Ireland currently has 21 reciprocal driving license agreements with other jurisdictions, including Australia and seven Canadian provinces. Work is underway to conclude agreements with US States. As this requires a state-by-state approach, our initial focus will remain on those states with a significant Irish population.

We recognise members of marginalised communities, as well as vulnerable people, often have specific needs on their return. We will continue to support the work of organisations such as Safe Home and Crosscare to ensure appropriate supports are in place.

We also recognise that returning emigrants bring with them new skills and perspectives. We will continue to facilitate our Back for Business programme which provides mentorship to early stage entrepreneurs who have returned, or are in the process of returning, to Ireland.

Commitment 21. Provide accessible pre-departure information for those leaving Ireland and ensure emigrants are supported on arrival in a new country.

21.1 Work with our Embassies, Consulates and local partners to develop a *Know Before You Go* information suite on practical, cultural, administrative and employment matters for key destinations.

21.2 Use the *Global Irish Hub* to provide pre-departure advice and signposting to supports for issues such as combatting isolation and remaining connected to home.

21.3 Connect newly-arrived emigrants to local community organisations and sports clubs, by promoting the *Diaspora Directory* and working with Embassies and Consulates to provide opportunities to build their personal and professional networks.

Commitment 22. Facilitate the transition for those who are moving home to Ireland.

22.1 Expand the Returning to Ireland portal to provide accessible and relevant information for those returning to Ireland, including those considering retiring here.

22.2 Continue to promote the voice of the diaspora across government departments and agencies on issues of key concern (including access to PPS numbers and matters relating to non-EEA spouses and civil partners) and with non-governmental and commercial/private sector actors.

22.3 Review the three-year residency requirement for younger citizens residing overseas who want to undertake full time study in third-level institutions in Ireland.

22.4 Conclude reciprocal driving licence exchange agreements with US States, initially focusing on those states with a significant Irish population.

22.5 Support those working with the vulnerable and marginalised to address the specific return related needs that arise.

22.6 Work with our Embassies and Consulates and the Returning to Ireland portal to support government initiatives aimed at providing information to the diaspora on vacancies in key sectors in Ireland.

22.7 Continue to deliver the Back for Business programme to mentor returning emigrants who start a business.

CASE STUDY: BACK FOR BUSINESS

Back for Business is an initiative to foster and support entrepreneurial activity among emigrants who have returned, or who plan to, and who wish to start a new business in Ireland. Piloted in 2017, it is funded by DFAT and works on a model of peer support, where Lead Entrepreneurs volunteer their time to work with participants to develop their businesses for sustainability and growth. It is structured around monthly roundtable sessions that address obstacles faced by those who have lived abroad for a time, including building support networks

and overcoming administrative burdens. The programme has been very successful, with approximately 250 individuals completing it since it began. During the 2025 cycle, the 31 participants gained valuable insight into overcoming barriers and by the conclusion of the programme there were a total of 51 new employees working in their firms, with a 39% increase in exports for their companies compared to before their completion of the programme.



Participants from the 2025 Back for Business Programme Further Development Programme with lead entrepreneur Paul Duggan
© Orla Murray, Coalesce

Sharing Our Experience



Irish Community Reception in Embassy London, launching ESP funding in Britain, October 2025 © DFAT

Global Ireland 2025 recognised that enhancing Ireland's place in the world would be a critical enabler of building more opportunities for Irish people and communities at home and abroad. Growing our global footprint including through the expansion of the Ireland House model provided a new arena to showcase Ireland's values and our arts, industry innovation and sports. The previous diaspora strategy formed an integral part of the Global Ireland 2025 suite of strategies.

Over recent years, Ireland's world-leading diaspora engagement ecosystem has grown and now includes Government departments and agencies (in particular DFAT's Irish Abroad Unit), academia, policy development organisations such as The Diaspora Institute, private sector companies (particularly in the technology field) and a range of community and civil society organisations.

There is an existing appreciation of Ireland's effectiveness in diaspora engagement, both within the EU and beyond. Leveraging our combined expertise provides a unique opportunity to further enhance Ireland's leadership in this field.

Sharing our experience is a high-impact foreign policy tool for Ireland that can be a strategic gateway to enhancing our reputation globally and accessing international decision-makers and thought leaders. With recent academic analysis noting diaspora diplomacy as an emerging and increasingly important dimension of international relations, embracing the soft power of diaspora diplomacy can bring political, diplomatic and economic opportunities that support our bilateral and multilateral priorities.

Previous diaspora strategies made important progress in formalising how Ireland does this. This strategy will work to strengthen our diaspora engagement ecosystem to shape a more coordinated offering to share our experience at a time when many countries, international organisations and others are seeking to enhance their relationship with their respective diaspora or develop policies to empower diasporas to contribute to sustainable development in both their countries of origin and new homeland.

Over the course of this strategy, DFAT will convene a network of Irish diaspora engagement practitioners interested in contributing to the development of diaspora policy in response to ongoing approaches from abroad for advice, exchanges and knowledge sharing.

At the multilateral level, we will engage through the Global Diaspora Policy Alliance to enhance diaspora engagement around the world as well as continuing to support the empowerment of diasporas to contribute to development, as called for in Objective 19 of the Global Compact for Migration and the Dublin Declaration.

A range of regional strategies were developed under the Global Ireland 2025 strategy. As these strategies are refreshed under its successor, we will also consider where opportunities exist for a deeper and more sustained engagement with partner governments and multilateral institutions on developing their diaspora policy.

Commitment 23. Promote Ireland as a hub of expertise in diaspora engagement on a global level.

23.1 Convene a network of Irish diaspora engagement practitioners to develop a broad platform for sharing Ireland's experience with other countries.

23.2 Host a meeting of Government-level diaspora engagement practitioners in 2027.

23.3 Seek opportunities to engage with governments, international organisations and other interested parties interested in the development of their own diaspora strategies.

23.4 Continue to recognise the contributions of global diasporas and ensure our engagement is in line with the Dublin Declaration and Objective 19 of the Global Compact for Migration.

CASE STUDY: AFFINITY DIASPORA - IRELAND FELLOWS PROGRAMME

Ireland believes that education is central to creating a better world. Since 1974, almost 4,000 people from around the world have studied at Master's level as part of the Ireland Fellows Programme, one of Ireland's most longstanding development aid programmes. This highly competitive Fellowship supports participants to study at Ireland's top class third level institutions, gaining skills to contribute to their countries and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals on their return home.

The Fellowship alumni represent a strong affinity diaspora, and we will continue to strengthen that alumni network through our Embassies and online.

The scheme was expanded in recent years to include students from Latin America and the Caribbean, in line with Ireland's Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean. This has seen 37 Fellows from thirteen countries in the region benefit from the programme since the academic year 2023/24.



The 2025/26 Fellows from Latin America & the Caribbean at the IFP Orientation Day, September 2025 © Con O'Donoghue

Appendix 1: Map of Key Consultations



Appendix 2: Overview of the Global Irish Survey – Dr Martin Russell, Chief Research & Strategy Officer, The Diaspora Institute

The digital consultations with the global Irish diaspora had three main strands: the Global Irish Survey for Individuals, the Global Irish Survey for Organisations and the Global Irish Position Papers.

The results shared in the strategy relate to the Global Irish Survey for Individuals given it has the most extensive dataset. Beginning with a total of 9,898 responses, 6,503 eligible responses were identified for analysis after an extensive data cleaning process. This process involved assessing surveys flagged for various data quality issues, as well as removing responses from respondents who did not permit the use of their survey data.

QUANTITATIVE DATA RESULTS

Demographic & Geographic Profile

The Global Irish Survey for Individuals delivered a strong gender balance with 49.7% female respondents and 49.5% male respondents. Approximately 0.5% of respondents identified as non-binary with 0.3% of respondents preferring not to indicate their gender.

The age profile of respondents was as follows: 18 – 24-year-olds comprised 2.7% of respondents, 25 – 34 years represented 15%, 35 – 44 represented 21.2%, 45 – 54 represented 22.4%, 55 – 64 represented 22.3% and 65+ represented 16.4%.

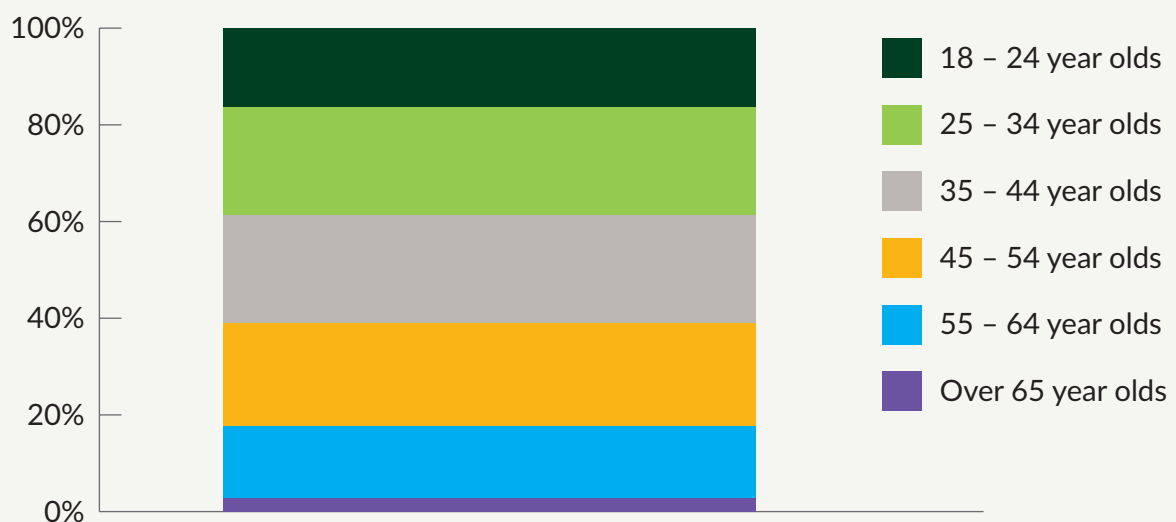


Figure 1 Age Profile of Respondents to Global Irish Survey for Individuals

In terms of how respondents identified within the diaspora, first-generation (67%) and ancestral diaspora (30.5%) were by far the most prevalent with the rest comprising affinity or reverse diaspora. 81.8% of respondents were passport holders.

The top ten countries for responses in ranked order were the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, France, New Zealand, Germany, UAE, Spain and China.

Intention to Return to Ireland

The data from the question on return shows the depth of the diaspora opportunity for Ireland. Only 24.7% of respondents indicated that they did not want to return. 34.7% indicated that they wanted to return and 40.7% were unsure.

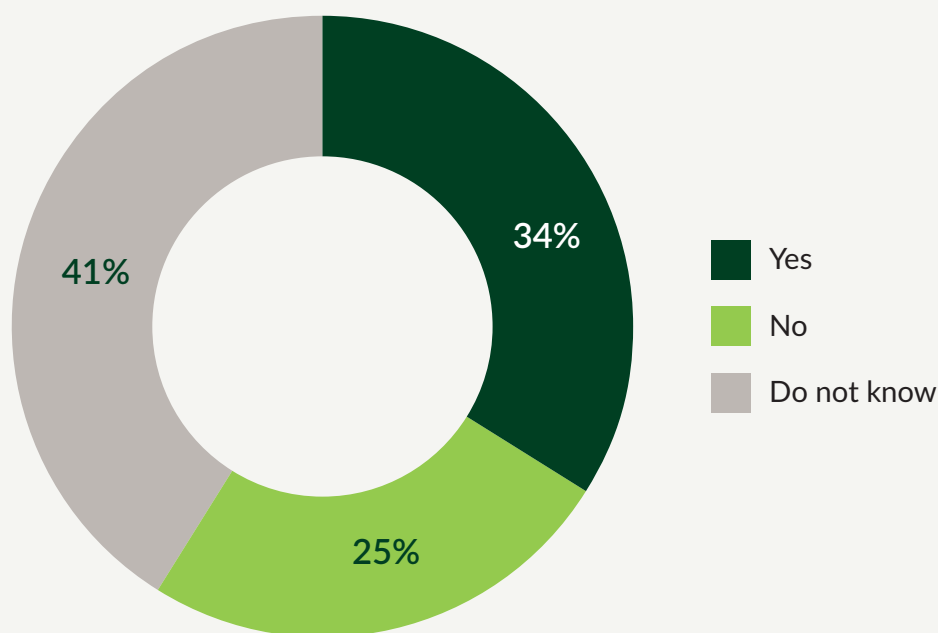


Figure 2 Breakdown of Intention to Return to Ireland (as per Global Irish Survey for Individuals)

Barriers to Return

Respondents ranked 4 options in order of which they consider to be the most significant barriers to return. To collate these answers, each was assigned a score, with first place ranking equal to 4 in this instance and last place equal to 1. The average rankings and scores are as follows:

1. Information about employment opportunities and workplace activation programmes (2.83)
2. Access to information regarding public service (e.g. education and healthcare) (2.80)
3. Access to relevant authorities in Ireland (2.74), and
4. Social integration back in Ireland (1.63).

Ranking of Supports To Address Barriers to Return to Ireland

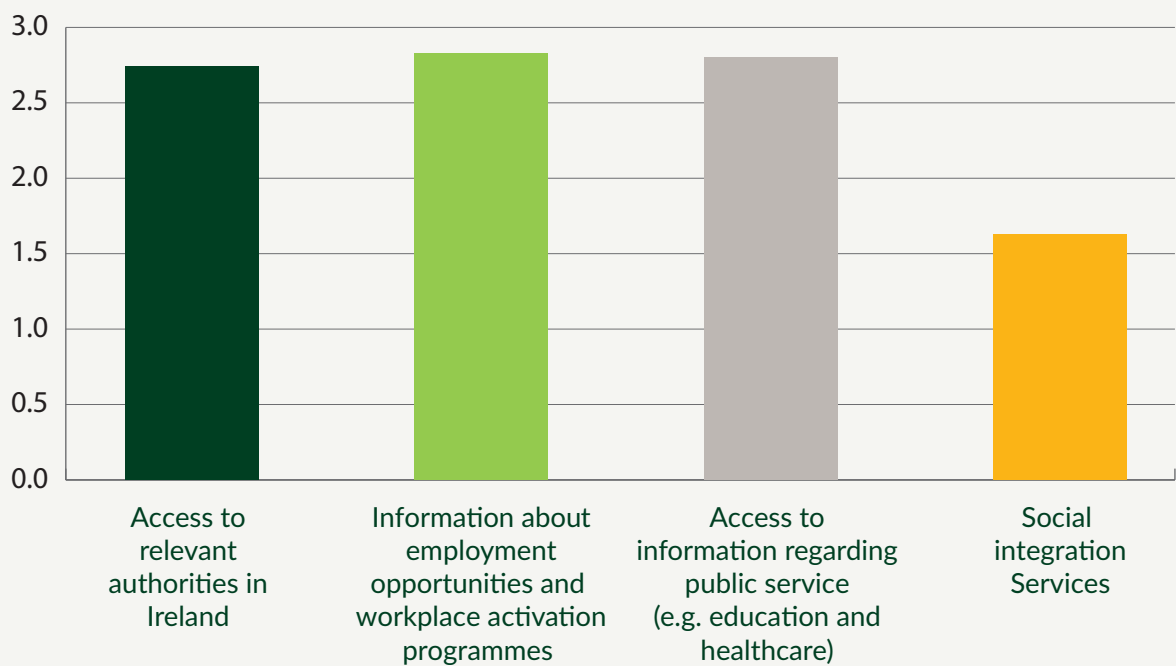


Figure 3 Ranking of Supports to Address Barriers to Return to Ireland (as per Global Irish Survey for Individuals)

Challenges Faced by the Diaspora

Respondents ranked key challenges as follows:

1. Access to reliable information (2.96)
2. Advancing access to community networks and support (2.58)
3. Developing inter-generational relationships (2.41), and
4. Immigration status (2.05).

The qualitative data analysis provides additional insight into specific challenges noted.

Ranking of Challenges Faced by the Irish Diaspora

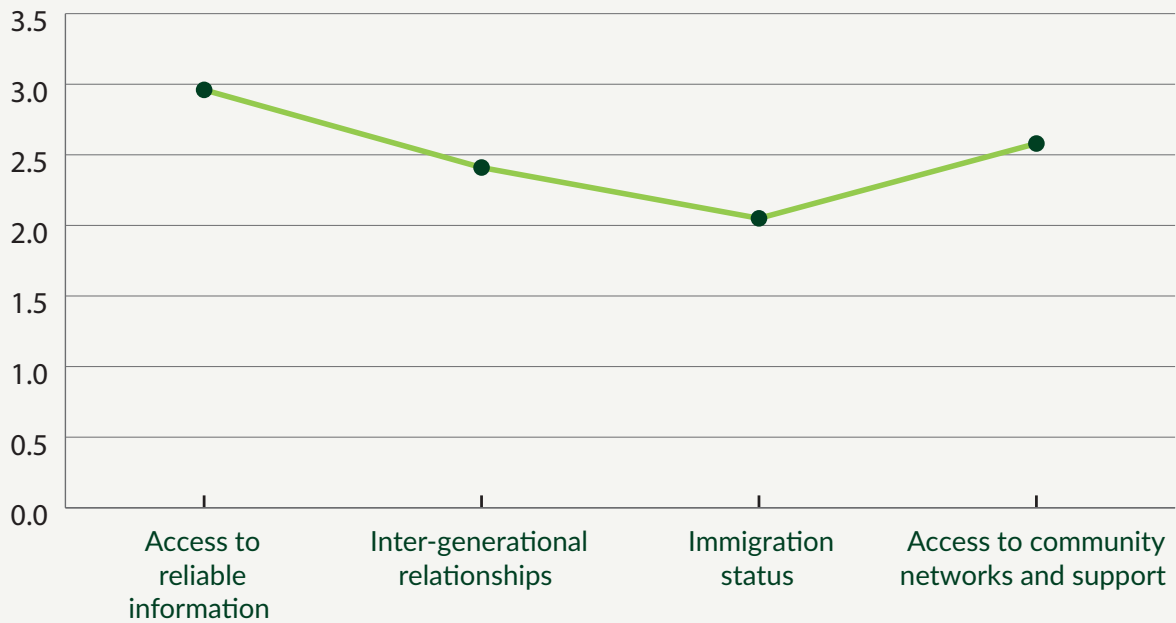


Figure 4 Ranking of Challenges Faced by Irish Diaspora (as per Global Irish Survey for Individuals)

Supporting the Next Generation

Respondents ranked supports for the next generation as follows:

1. Better access to existing Irish diaspora organisations/networks abroad (3.94)
2. Access to information pre-departure from Ireland (3.41),
3. Digital engagement/support tools (2.85),
4. Participation in community events in countries of destination (2.74), and
5. Support to create their own diaspora networks/organisations and peer networks (2.07).

Ranked Priorities for Supporting the Next Generation of the Irish Diaspora

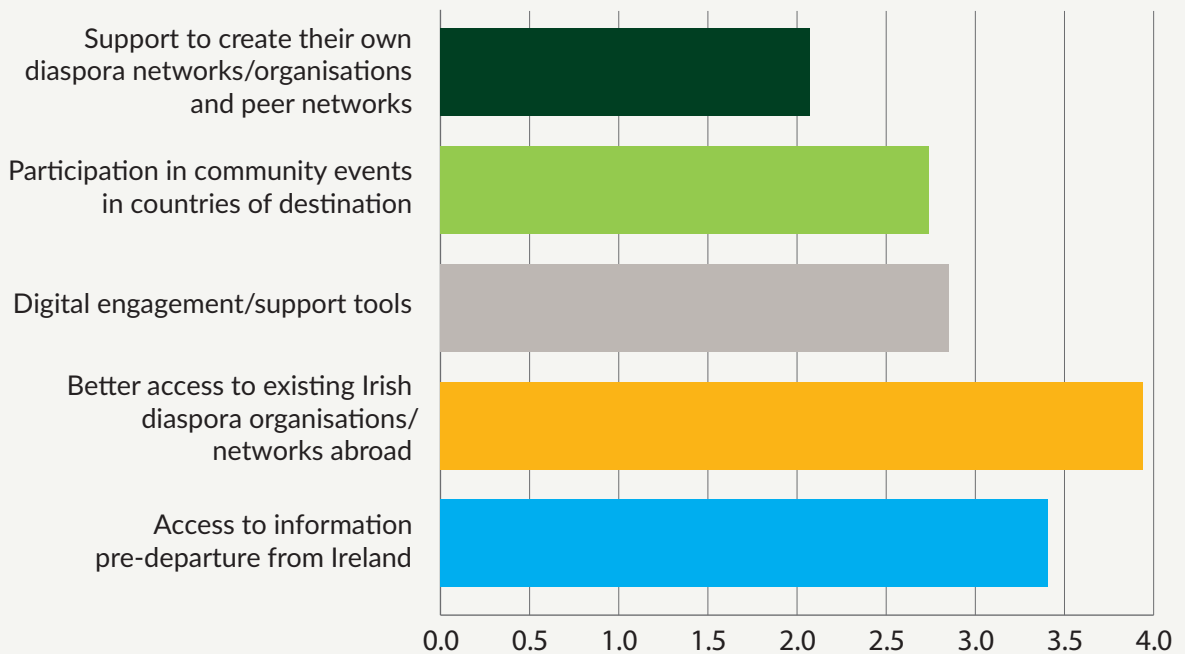


Figure 5 Prioritisation of Supports for Next Generation of the Irish Diaspora (as per Global Irish Survey for Individuals)

Key Priorities for the New Strategy

In terms of key priorities for the strategy, respondents ranked the following as the top three areas to focus on:

1. Advocating for the Irish diaspora,
2. Culture, heritage and sport, and
3. Support to return to live, work and study in Ireland.

QUALITATIVE DATA INSIGHTS

The qualitative data shared by respondents indicated strong thematic findings and helped to identify specific considerations for the strategy. Some areas of interest that were consistently raised in addition to the recommendations above include the promotion of the Irish language, strategic economic engagement, strategic academic, research and teaching collaboration, the engagement of creative industries and the promotion of Irish values.

Certain issues were frequently mentioned as barriers to return, including the cost of housing and living in Ireland, administrative hurdles returning with a non-EEA spouse, and the recognition of skills and qualifications.

Given the depth of data, this list is by no means exhaustive. It is also important to note that certain elements of the findings are outside the mandate of the Diaspora Strategy. The research report accompanying the publication of this survey provides more in-depth analysis of these findings.

“It is the entitlement and birthright of every person born in the island of Ireland, which includes its islands and seas, to be part of the Irish nation. That is also the entitlement of all persons otherwise qualified in accordance with law to be citizens of Ireland. Furthermore, the Irish nation cherishes its special affinity with people of Irish ancestry living abroad who share its cultural identity and heritage.”

Article 2, Bunreacht na hÉireann



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

