Global Ireland
Progress Report
July 2019-December 2020
Global Ireland Progress Report
(July 2019-December 2020)

Prepared by the Department of the Taoiseach
March 2021

www.gov.ie/globalireland
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SECTION 1
Progress Overview
Global Ireland 2025 was launched in 2018 with the aim of doubling the scope and impact of Ireland’s global footprint in the period to 2025. It remains the most ambitious renewal and expansion of Ireland’s international presence ever undertaken in terms of diplomacy, culture, business, overseas aid, tourism and trade.

The first report on progress under Global Ireland 2025 was published in 2019 and highlighted a range of achievements during the first year of implementation:

- New embassies opened in Wellington, Bogotá, Amman, Monrovia and Santiago de Chile.
- New Consulates General opened in Vancouver, Mumbai and Cardiff.
- Publication of A Better World – Ireland’s new international development policy.
- Additional staff appointed and offices opened across the Bord Bia, IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland global networks.
- Five high-profile Cultural Ambassadors appointed. 62 Ministerial-led missions and
- Launch of the Government’s strategy for engagement with the US and Canada.
- Ireland admitted as an Observer to the Organisation internationale de la francophonie (OIF).

Under the Programme for Government, Our Shared Future, the Government committed to continue and renew the implementation of the strategy – to enhance Ireland’s interests on the international stage and to promote democratic values around the world.

Global Ireland 2025 supports efforts to grow and diversify export markets, inward investment and tourism, while ensuring that Ireland is well-positioned to build the alliances necessary to advance its interests in an everchanging geopolitical landscape.

At a global level, Global Ireland enhances our ability to advocate for and to achieve our foreign policy objectives, including international development, peace, disarmament and security, while strengthening Ireland’s engagement with our 70 million-strong diaspora, bringing our rich culture and heritage to wider audiences.

A New Global Landscape

Global Ireland 2025 was launched three years ago, in response to the changing global landscape.

Technology is driving ever faster change in how people interact and do business around the world. There has been a political economic shift towards new and emerging markets. There is greater need than ever for countries to work together to tackle shared challenges including climate change, migration and terrorism. These changes are taking place at a time when shared international organisations and structures are under pressure, and the international trading environment has become more uncertain.

Closer to home, with the approach of Brexit it was clear that our relationship with our nearest neighbour would undergo significant change. Our place within an EU without the UK would also need to be recalibrated to reflect this new reality. We needed to ensure that our relationship would remain strong and close into the future. We needed to support our enterprises in diversifying into new markets. We needed also to work harder to maximise the benefits of our place in the EU, playing our part in shaping a strong, resilient outward-looking Europe.

Global Ireland 2025 set our course towards more active international engagement, in terms of diplomacy, culture, business, overseas aid, tourism and trade.

Of course, the most significant development since the launch of Global Ireland 2025 has been the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic and the enormous impact it has had on lives and on economies across the globe. It has demonstrated forcefully also that challenges of this scale need both good governance at home but also global cooperation. It is not yet possible to determine all of the economic and societal impacts of Covid-19, and which effects will have the longest and furthest reaches. Just as the first three years of Global Ireland 2025 have been a test of Ireland’s resilience and adaptability and ambition, the next few years until 2025 will see further tests and challenges as we work to recover and rebuild once the pandemic is under control.

“Ireland must be ambitious, visible, and active in promoting the interests of our nation on the international stage. Having regard to available resources, we will seek to continue to implement Global Ireland 2025 and its ambition to double our global footprint.”

- Our Shared Future (2020)
Interruption, Resilience and Progress

Covid-19 has had an impact on all areas of life, including on the implementation of the Global Ireland 2025 Strategy. It has disrupted travel and international supply chains. It has kept people apart. It has redirected focus and resources towards the essential work to manage and mitigate the crisis.

Different sectors and policy areas were impacted in different ways, some profoundly others less so.

The impact of COVID-19 on travel and tourism globally, for example, was overwhelming and immediate, with unprecedented and extremely serious consequences for the island of Ireland’s tourism and hospitality sector. In 2019, overseas tourism delivered revenue of €5.9 billion to the economies north and south, with tourism employing around 325,000 people across the island. Since March 2020, we have had very few international visitors. Aviation and international education were also severely impacted.

However, despite the unprecedented impact of Covid-19, it has nonetheless been possible to make progress in some areas. Negotiations on Brexit were concluded in a way that delivered Ireland’s key goals. Our campaign to secure election to the UN Security Council was successful and we took up our seat on 1 January 2021. We were also able to grow our footprint in a number of key markets – with new offices, new staff and new trade routes being established in key locations for our diplomatic missions and enterprise representative offices.

This international expansion is being supported by new regional strategies for Africa and Asia-Pacific, and by new strategies to support our international development efforts and our diaspora community.

Ireland is maintaining its unbroken record of participation in UN peacekeeping missions, and partnering with European counterparts to share the training and expertise of our Defence Forces.

The pandemic has required us to find new and innovative ways of engaging with the world. Over the past year, Irish artists have reached over 13 million viewers, as the Government sought to find new ways to share our arts and culture globally, in the absence of international travel.

Trade missions have gone online as Ireland’s enterprise agencies continue efforts to accelerate the diversification of export markets and FDI source markets.

Reviewing Global Ireland 2025

The full impact of the pandemic across sectors has yet to be finally known. Just as it presented greater difficulties to some sectors than to others, recovery can be expected to be faster and less complicated in some areas more than in others.

We also now know the final shape of Brexit. The UK has left the EU and the period of transition during which it applied the rules of the Customs Union and the Single Market came to an end on 31 December 2020.

While negotiations between the EU and the UK secured Ireland’s key negotiating objectives – protecting the peace process and avoiding a hard border; and securing a trading relationship based on zero tariffs and quotas for goods – Brexit has inevitably meant new and less advantageous trading relations between the EU and UK. It has brought challenges for Irish businesses operating in, to, or through the UK, that will continue to play themselves out in the period ahead.

We have also seen political developments throughout the world that will continue to shape the world in which we live, including a new administration in the US. The end of 2021, marks the halfway point in the life of the Global Ireland strategy. It therefore seems timely and appropriate to take stock of what has been achieved; to assess global trends and developments, and to review the Strategy to ensure that our goals and targets for the period to 2025 remain relevant, appropriate and fit for purpose.
1.1 Headline Progress on Key Priorities

Developments since the last progress report on Global Ireland 2025 include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective by 2025</th>
<th>Headline progress July 2019-December 2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open at least 26 new diplomatic missions</td>
<td>New Consulates in Frankfurt and Los Angeles. Planned openings in Manila, Rabat and Kyiv delayed until 2021 by pandemic.</td>
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<td>Ensure increased impact in shaping the future direction of the EU</td>
<td>Ireland’s Finance Minister elected President of the Eurogroup. Ireland worked successfully in 2020 within the EU to garner support for an ambitious fiscal package to support Europe’s economic recovery.</td>
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<td>Maintain support among our international partners for Ireland’s unique concerns in the negotiations on Brexit</td>
<td>Trade &amp; Cooperation Agreement and Withdrawal Agreement between EU and UK. Ireland’s key objectives achieved: protect the Good Friday Agreement, and avoid a hard border; protect the Single Market and Ireland’s place within it; and ensure minimal disruption to trade, including tariff- and quota-free trade.</td>
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<td>Accelerate diversification of export markets</td>
<td>Appointment of Minister of State with specific responsibility for New Market Development.</td>
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<td>Optimise the visual identity for Ireland’s missions</td>
<td>All mission websites streamlined to reflect Government of Ireland visual identity.</td>
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<td>Advance Ireland’s values and signature foreign policies</td>
<td>Ireland elected to the UN Security Council for the 2021-2022 term.</td>
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<td>Implement a global communications strategy</td>
<td>Ireland.ie launched as whole of government ‘Digital Ireland House’, and Pilot integrated communications strategy launched around Japan Rugby World Cup 2019.</td>
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<td>Develop an enhanced Ireland House model</td>
<td>Design for new Tokyo Ireland House selected. 20 missions operating under Ireland House model.</td>
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<td>Double the number of countries and sites for the St Patrick’s Day Greening initiative from 45 to 90 and 300 to 600 respectively</td>
<td>430 sites in 59 countries took part in Tourism Ireland’s 2020 Global Greening project.</td>
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<td>Global Ireland to be flexible and dynamic to respond to both domestic and international developments</td>
<td>Team Ireland abroad and a global perspective at home, allowed Ireland to adapt and respond flexibly at pace during the pandemic via virtual trade missions; international procurement; repatriating citizens/healthcare workers.</td>
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<td>Grow Culture Ireland-supported activities internationally</td>
<td>Online cultural events in 2020 reached over 13 million views.</td>
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<td>Support Irish Arts Centres in New York, Paris and London</td>
<td>€6.3 million and £1 million granted to Irish Arts Centres in New York and London respectively.</td>
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<td>Appoint specialist Cultural Officers to at least seven priority locations worldwide</td>
<td>Initial appointments made in New York, London and Berlin</td>
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<td>Accelerate progress towards the target of having international students represent 15% of the total full-time student population</td>
<td>International students represent 14% of the student body.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jul</td>
<td>Los Angeles Consulate opened</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Pilot Integrated Comms Strategy Japan RWC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>Frankfurt Consulate opened</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>Regional Strategy for Africa launched</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>Asia-Pacific Strategy launched</td>
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<td>Mar</td>
<td>430 sites took part in Global Greening</td>
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<td>Apr</td>
<td>Ireland elected to UN Security Council</td>
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<td>Jun</td>
<td>Irish Finance Minister elected Eurogroup President</td>
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<td>Jul</td>
<td>Design selected for Ireland House Tokyo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>New Diaspora Strategy launched</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>Cultural Officers appointed to New York &amp; London</td>
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<td>Sep</td>
<td>EU–UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement</td>
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1.1.1 CASE STUDY

Overview of Ireland’s response to Covid-19

The added value of Team Ireland abroad and a global perspective at home, came very much to the fore in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic during 2020. When the pandemic arrived last year, it brought with it unforeseen challenges, not only for everyone on the island of Ireland, but also for the Irish abroad.

The Government responded quickly and effectively. Through our network of Embassies and Consulates overseas, and our teams in Dublin, and working with EU, British and other like-minded partners, we organised repatriation flights, facilitated the safe return of well over 8,000 of our citizens, set up consular support helplines and expanded our emigrant support programmes to assist Irish emigrants where they reside – ensuring that our citizens overseas, as well as those at home, were cared for. Irish people abroad were taken care of. Irish medical personnel working abroad were among the thousands repatriated, with the assistance of our consular network, so that they too could join the fight against Covid-19 here.

In the early days of the pandemic, the global demand for health equipment was an immediate and substantial challenge for Ireland’s Covid-19 response. Team Ireland supported the HSE to help procure vital equipment, such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), testing kits, and ventilators, through collaboration between IDA Ireland, the Department of Foreign Affairs and its mission network abroad. Embassies and State Agencies worked closely together on the ground abroad drawing on their network of contacts and local market expertise to support successful sourcing and delivery in a highly competitive and complex global market.

Our place in Europe has never been more important than at this time of global crisis. The EU’s €1.8 trillion recovery budgetary package agreed in July 2020 represents a new and important milestone in EU solidarity. The recovery package sends a message that, in the most testing of times, EU leaders can work together and find a compromise that delivers for citizens.

We supported, and are benefitting from, a European vaccine strategy to accelerate the development, manufacturing, and deployment of vaccines.

Speeding up the production and delivery of vaccines remains a top priority in 2021. We are also playing our part by participating in the COVAX Facility for equitable access to affordable vaccines. Clearly, with Covid-19, no one is safe until everyone is safe.

The Government’s Embassy network provided regular and detailed reporting to the Government during the crisis, reporting on the progress of the pandemic, the wider global social and economic context, and examples of best practice internationally to improve the Irish public health response. This work continues, as our Embassy network reports daily on vaccine rollout, economic recovery measures and connects our public health experts with their global counterparts.

As the restrictions ease and the vaccine rollout advances, we will begin to reclaim elements of our previous way of life and seek to spur on economic recovery. The Government has sought also to adapt our ways of working to ensure resilience in the long term. Ministerial trade missions have continued – but they have moved online. Foreign companies seeking to invest in Ireland and Irish companies seeking to export abroad can take advantage of the various innovations introduced by the State agencies to facilitate their business virtually.

Our recovery cannot be based on trade and investment alone. The arts and culture are the beating heart of the Irish economy and the Government sought to ensure that they would endure, providing funding and platforms to share our culture and heritage online with millions at home and abroad.

The World Health Organisation has urged all countries to prepare for future pandemics, noting that this one will not be the last. The lessons we have learned and the experiences of Team Ireland in reacting to this crisis will serve us, and save us, in the future.

Further detail on these experiences can be found throughout the remainder of this report.
SECTION 2
Growing Ireland’s Global Footprint
2.1 Strengthening Team Ireland’s presence abroad

Global Ireland 2025 identified a number of priority targets to strengthen Team Ireland’s presence abroad, including the expansion of the diplomatic mission network; strengthening existing missions; pioneering a new “Ireland House” model; opening new enterprise offices; and appointing expert attachés to key locations around the world.

This expansion will help us to achieve goals including ensuring continuing impact in shaping the future direction of the EU; safeguarding our interests post Brexit, while deepening our bilateral relationship with the UK; increasing diversification in trade and investment flows; and advancing Ireland’s economic and trading interests in bilateral and multilateral contexts.

Expanding our Diplomatic Missions

Over the lifetime of Global Ireland, the Government will open at least 26 new diplomatic missions. In the first year of the Global Ireland strategy, we opened new Embassies in Wellington, Bogotá, Amman, Monrovia and Santiago de Chile, and new Consulates General in Vancouver, Mumbai and Cardiff.

Since then, Ireland’s diplomatic network has expanded further, with new Consulates General now open in Frankfurt and Los Angeles.

The addition of a new Consulate in Wales and, in Manchester in 2021, is helping us to maintain a strong relationship with the UK and its constituent parts, mitigating potentially negative impacts stemming from Brexit – a key commitment under Global Ireland 2025.

Existing missions are being reinforced to ensure that no single diplomat missions remain in our network – a move that is essential to ensuring continuity in representation across all Irish missions. Additional staff have been recently appointed to The Hague, Paris, Ramallah, Riyadh and Washington DC.
Enhancing our Expertise Abroad

Global Ireland 2025 recognised the importance of ensuring that mission staff have the appropriate level of expertise to carry out their duties and to make an impact. Sector-specific experts are being appointed in strategic locations across the globe:

To complement the appointments already made in Berlin and London in 2019, Trade Counsellors were appointed to Washington and Beijing in early 2020. The Washington post is designed to reflect the increasing importance of Ireland’s strategic trade and investment interests in the current evolving US policy context. The appointment to Beijing was based on the need to build on Ireland’s growing trade and investment relationship with China, and to gain a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges that present in an emerging economy of China’s size. This is the first deployment at Attaché level to the Embassy in Beijing.

The Government is maintaining and developing a network of nine Financial Attachés who are assigned to Irish missions abroad. This includes a team assigned to Ireland’s Permanent Representation to the European Union, the OECD in Paris, and attachés assigned to the Irish Embassies in Berlin and London. Irish officials are also seconded to the IMF and World Bank in Washington DC and, more recently, to the UK Treasury in London.

Agriculture Attachés are appointed to strategic locations to assist with trade development and facilitation, and in further developing relationships at a political and official level.

These contacts are crucial to Ireland’s efforts to gain new market access, and, to widen and broaden our existing levels of trade both in value and volume. Agriculture attachés in Washington DC, London, Brussels, Rome, Paris, Geneva, Beijing, Abu Dhabi have been supplemented by additional attachés in Berlin, Mexico City and Tokyo in 2019 and in Seoul in 2020.

The Department of Defence is increasing Ireland’s presence in international organisations with an increased staff presence in the new European Commission DG for Defence Industry and Space, the European Defence Agency, the EU Military Staff and NATO. An Official has been selected to be the first Defence Attaché to work in Ireland’s Permanent Mission to the UN in New York in support of our UN Security Council membership and on UN connectivity.

In 2020 specialist Cultural Officers were recruited by the Government for the first time to serve in New York, London and Berlin. These locations reflect the strategic importance of Ireland’s cultural relations with those countries as well as the global cultural significance of the three cities.

New Overseas Enterprise Offices

Bord Bia focused recent expansion efforts on increasing reach and impact through existing offices rather than new openings. This was manifested with the opening of Thinking House Asia in Bord Bia’s Shanghai office, to deliver specialist market-insight services for Irish exporters previously delivered only through Dublin or London.

The wider team in Asia was also expanded with additional specialists appointed in Singapore and Shanghai.

A key undertaking for Enterprise Ireland (EI) has been a targeted expansion and strengthening of its overseas presence, support the diversification of Irish exports. Eight offices were opened in 2019 Munich, Lyon, Manchester, Copenhagen, Montreal, Seattle, Melbourne and Ho Chi Minh City. These new locations give EI and Ireland a global reach through forty overseas office presences.

During 2020, EI worked to embed the new offices into the Enterprise Ireland overseas network; building buyer relationships in markets where growth opportunities have been identified for Irish exporters.

IDA Ireland (IDA) moved to a new Global HQ in 2019 and additional staff were added in Dublin across a number of business functions such as Property Marketing, Operations, Regions and IT to support the work of the Agency’s Overseas Marketing staff and to facilitate the delivery of regional targets. During the period covered by this report, in North America, IDA expanded its network with new offices or staff in Toronto; Seattle; Mountain View, California; Atlanta; New York; and Chicago. In Europe, additional staff were appointed to Paris, Frankfurt and London. “Pathfinders” (representatives who assess the opportunities for opening an office) have been appointed in each of the following Pioneering Markets - Brazil, Russia, Turkey, Middle East, and South Africa.
Outlook for 2021

Planned embassy openings in Kyiv, Manila and Rabat were delayed in 2020 owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, but work continues and it is planned that they will open, along with a Consulate General in Manchester, in 2021. In March 2021, the Government announced plans to open a new embassy in Tehran in 2023.

The Government will identify locations for further openings later in 2021, which will be chosen based on a range of factors, including our national, political, economic and trade priorities. Further strengthening of the existing network will also continue, based on a number of factors, including availability of resources.

Consideration is being given to the appointment of Agriculture Attachés in South East Asia in the short to medium term.

The Government intends to appoint additional specialist Cultural Officers to priority locations in the course of 2021.

Screen Ireland is committed to establishing a presence in Los Angeles and expects to make an appointment there in 2021.

Enterprise Ireland’s global footprint will be reviewed in 2021.

IDA Ireland will appoint a Pathfinder to Israel in the coming months.

Tourism Ireland intends to expand its presence in the United States and will open an office in San Francisco in January 2022. It will continue to scope market entry to Japan, including the appropriate level of presence.
2.1.1 CASE STUDY

Ireland House Tokyo

In September 2020, the Government announced the design for the new landmark Ireland House in Tokyo, which will serve as a flagship model for the concept across the mission network. Strong collaboration across Team Ireland has been evident in ensuring this point has been reached.

This flagship Ireland House, due to be completed in 2024, will be a showcase for Ireland in Japan and a platform from which to promote deeper political, economic and cultural ties. Tokyo Ireland House will be an important asset for Team Ireland in our efforts to build Ireland’s visibility in Japan and advance our interests. There is firm commitment to create a space that can represent the best of Ireland in Japan, which will allow us to do business and grow our trade and investment in this important market.

The project is currently in its final Design Phase with construction due to begin in Spring 2022. Strong collaboration across Team Ireland has been evident in ensuring this point has been reached. Team Ireland in Tokyo encompasses the Embassy and the State enterprise agencies which will operate their promotional and business activities from the new building: IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, Bord Bia and Tourism Ireland.

The new building will contain; a chancery, offices for the state agencies, promotion and outreach spaces suitable for conferences, exhibitions, performances and other promotional events, as well the official accommodation of the Ambassador.

The collaborative design ensures it will be a convening and meeting place for the Irish community in Japan. There is a firm commitment to create a space that can represent the best of Ireland in Japan, which will allow us to do business and grow our trade and investment in this important market.

The ‘Ireland House’ concept brings Embassies or Consulates and State Agencies under one roof in critical overseas markets to ensure a joined-up Team Ireland approach to promoting Ireland abroad.

Since the launch of the concept under Global Ireland 2025, over 20 Embassies and Consulates have been converted into Ireland Houses, with plans underway to expand the model to other key locations.

The Government is also in the process of finalising works for new Ireland Houses in Mumbai, Los Angeles, and San Francisco and opportunities are being sought for an Ireland House in Manchester.
SECTION 3

Enhancing Ireland’s Global Influence
3.1 Promoting Ireland’s Values Abroad

Ireland at the UN

Global Ireland 2025 highlights the need for Ireland to deepen our engagement with international partners, particularly through multilateral organisations including the United Nations. Ireland’s campaign for election to the UN Security Council for the 2021-2022 term was a central element of this strategy. Ireland competed against Norway and Canada for the two available seats. Ireland’s campaign was officially launched at UN headquarters in New York in July 2018 and the campaign was a whole-of-Government effort, culminating in our successful election on 17 June 2020.

This expression of confidence in Ireland by our international partners provides us with an important opportunity to contribute to the promotion of global peace and security, as well as helping us to promote our values – the values of the UN Charter – through supporting peace building, strengthening conflict prevention and ensuring accountability for those who break international law.

Each year, Ireland is represented by the President, the Taoiseach and Government Ministers at the High-Level Week of the UN General Assembly in New York.

In 2020, these meetings were held virtually: President Higgins addressed an event commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the UN; the Taoiseach delivered Ireland’s National Address to the General Assembly and made a statement at the Summit on Biodiversity; and the Minister for Foreign Affairs represented Ireland at events to mark the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

Outlook for 2021

Ireland’s priorities for our term on the UN Security Council are: building peace; strengthening conflict prevention; and ensuring accountability, in particular for breaches of international humanitarian and human rights law.

We are acting as Facilitator of the Council’s role regarding the Iran nuclear agreement; chairing the Somalia Sanctions Committee; and co-chairing the Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security (with Mexico). Ireland and Niger are penholders on the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS).

Ireland and Norway are joint penholders of the highly politicised Syria humanitarian file, preparing an annual resolution to enable humanitarian aid to be delivered from Turkey to c. 3 million people in an area of North-West Syria outside control of the Assad regime. Ireland is co-chair of the informal Security Council Expert Group on Climate and Security, looking at climate change as a multiplier of conflict and instability.

In September 2021, Ireland will hold the Presidency of the Security Council – coinciding with UNGA75 High Level Week.
Ireland’s Overseas Peacekeeping Missions

As of the end of 2020, Ireland had contributed on a continuous basis an average of 567 Defence Forces personnel to 10 different missions throughout the world. Defence Forces personnel also deployed to a range of international organisations and National representations. A total of 1,607 members of the Permanent Defence Force served overseas in various missions during the year.

The main overseas missions in which the Defence Forces personnel are currently deployed are the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) with 350 personnel and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in Syria with 138 personnel.

Since June 2019, a contingent of the Permanent Defence Forces has participated in MINUSMA, the United Nations authorised operation in Mali. Currently, there are 2 officers deployed in MINUSMA Force Headquarters in Bamako and an additional 12 personnel, including members of the Army Ranger Wing, deployed with the German Armed Forces at Camp Castor in GAO, Mali. In addition to the UN mission, there are 20 members of the DF currently serving the EU training mission in Mali, (EUTM Mali).

Operation IRINI, launched on 1 April 2020, is a European Union military CSDP operation in the Mediterranean comprising of aerial, satellite and maritime assets, primarily tasked with supporting the implementation of the UN arms embargo on Libya. Since May 2020, three members of the Defence Forces are based at the Operation Headquarters in Rome.

Other missions in which Defence Forces personnel are currently deployed with continued Government approval are; the EUFOR mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina; the NATO-led international security presence (KFOR) in Kosovo; United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO); United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO); and United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

The Defence Organisation provides staff to the Partnership for Peace under NATO, and OSCE headquarters and has assigned an additional military officer and an assistant principal to PMUNNY to support Peacekeeping matters during the Security Council seat.

At EU level, the Defence Organisation has increased its presence in EU institutions and structures including the Commission, the European Defence Agency and with the Military Planning and Conduct Capability. An officer has also been assigned to the NATO Cyber Centre of Excellence in Tallinn, Estonia and another to NATO Special Operations Headquarters in NATO. These appointments will support Defence Forces capability development across both domains and in the case of the cyber assignment in Tallinn, also support the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications and the National Cyber Security Centre.

Outlook for 2021

The Department of Defence and the Defence Forces will continue to maintain a significant overseas presence both in international institutions and on international peacekeeping and training operations into the future. The Department of Defence will also continue to develop and expand the range of bilateral defence engagements.
Building new Alliances in Defence Training and Cooperation

Ireland continues to progress its military training pledges made at the United Nations Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial in Vancouver in 2017 and in New York in 2019. During 2020, Ireland pledged personnel and equipment to the UN Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS), and also pledged to deliver training in Ireland and overseas for troop contributing country personnel deployed to UN missions. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this training was unable to proceed as planned but it is hoped that it can be rescheduled as soon as circumstances permit.

Deficits in training act as a barrier to effective peacekeeping and the courses being pledged by Ireland are responding to the identified needs of the UN. As a longstanding contributor to UN peacekeeping missions globally, Ireland is acutely aware of the challenging nature of missions and of the importance of having people trained to the highest standards in advance of deployment.

Ireland is reaching out to other EU member States with a view to building our alliances to protect and safeguard our interests within the EU on CSDP issues and also in support of our ongoing participation in UN mandated crisis management operations. Increasingly we are partnering with other countries which can support and complement our overseas deployments.

The current deployment of the ARW to Mali is supported by Germany as Framework Nation and builds on our participation in the German led EU Battlegroup. In UNIFIL in Lebanon, we have partnered with Poland and developed the joint IRISHPOLBATT contingent with Poland providing a joint Battalion level contingent to the UN mission.

The contingent also includes a Hungarian Platoon within the Polish contingent and Maltese staff officers within the Defence Forces contingent. In our continuing support to Malta, we now train a significant number of their cadets and officers through the Cadet School and the Command and Staff course in the Curragh.

In recent years we have developed a bilateral relationship with France to discuss and exchange views on security and defence issues and there is now an annual civil and military strategic dialogue on issues of common interest. Ireland is working with the French Embassy on a programme to train soldiers for Francophone missions at Alliance Française and to embed them for four months in the French army to advance their practical knowledge of French. We are providing French soldiers with the same opportunity within the Defence Forces in Ireland although this has been constrained by restrictions resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.

We also have a Memorandum of Understanding with the UK on Defence Cooperation. The cooperation includes staff-to-staff talks at senior policy and military level on issues of common interest, including international peace and security, peacekeeping and capability development. Mutual exchanges of training courses are a key element of the MoU and we have also agreed an MoU on the exchange of classified information.

Commencing 2021, the Joint Plan of Action on Ireland Germany cooperation will include defence cooperation. This reflects our common endeavour in EU Battlegroup participation and also the Defence Forces deployment with Germany in MINUSMA, the UN mission in Mali, along with extensive engagement on defence initiatives in CSDP. The first Secretary General/State Secretary meeting between Ireland and Germany was held in February 2021.
International Development

Global Ireland 2025 recognises the vital role of international development in shaping the world in which we live. A Better World, Ireland’s Policy for International Development, was launched in February 2019. Its publication marked the fulfilment of a core commitment within the Government’s Global Ireland programme, and represents a significant milestone both in Ireland’s international development policy and broader foreign policy. It reinforces Ireland’s commitment to the pledge of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to reach ‘the furthest behind first’. A Better World commits Ireland to scaling up resources and capacity across four policy priorities: gender equality; reducing humanitarian need; climate action; and strengthening governance. It also outlines Ireland’s commitment to intensifying work in three clusters of interventions where we have proven expertise: protection, food and people.

Since A Better World was launched, significant progress has been made in implementing the policy, with a number of key deliverables achieved. The new Africa Strategy, ‘Global Ireland: Ireland’s Strategy for Africa to 2025’ reaffirms Ireland’s commitment to working with our African partners to achieve peace, prosperity and sustainable development, and to increasing Ireland’s trade and investment ties with Africa.

A new Strategy for Partnership with Small Island Developing States (SIDS) was also developed, which outlines how Ireland can help amplify SIDS’ voices at the global level and areas of direct partnership with SIDS. Of the 36 commitments set out in the SIDS Strategy, 32 have been partly or fully implemented to date.

Increases in Budget 2021 to the allocation for Official Development Assistance (ODA) represent a further step towards achieving the UN target of 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) to ODA by 2030. This additional funding will enable us to respond to the needs of those most affected by Covid-19 and to step up our work on climate action. A dedicated Climate Unit has been established within Irish Aid and tasked with developing a strategy for climate finance and to build on Ireland’s emerging climate diplomacy.

International financial institutions (IFIs) also play an important role in Ireland’s development cooperation. Our membership of IFIs allows us to actively participate in globally significant policy discussions, and to strengthen our political and economic ties to increasingly important regions. Ireland officially became the 81st member of the African Development Bank in April 2020.

On joining the Bank, Ireland became a member of the Nordic + India constituency consisting of Denmark, Finland, India, Norway and Sweden. Ireland seeks to ensure that the policy priorities of The Global Island: Ireland’s Foreign Policy for a Changing World, Global Ireland 2025 and A Better World are reflected at the constituency. This is achieved by engaging in policy dialogue and programme and project oversight, with a direct line to the Bank’s board through the constituency’s executive director, represented by Norway.

Outlook for 2021

COVID-19 has reversed development gains hard won over recent decades, especially in many of the world’s poorer countries which are the focus of Ireland’s development cooperation. In addition to the health impacts, the pandemic is resulting in wider societal and economic challenges. The headline priority for 2021 remains the response to the COVID-19 crisis. This includes Irish support to the global vaccine effort. At least €50 million has been allocated to global health in 2021, which includes support to major multilateral partners such as WHO and the Global Fund.

In addition, Ireland will continue to invest in strengthening public health systems, so countries can continue to deal with other ongoing health challenges, such as TB and malaria. There is also ongoing partnership between the HSE and the Embassy network to engage with local Ministries of Health on health system strengthening, as well as a new pilot programme to provide mental health support to frontline health workers.

During 2021, the new stand-alone Climate Unit will step up actions to climate-proof all ODA, as set out in A Better World, and develop a new climate strategy. Building on previous work, the Unit’s emphasis will be on adaptation for the poorest and most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, as well as developing a Sustainable Blue Economy.

In addition, the Unit will work more intensively on climate and security, supporting our role on this within the UN Security Council. The highlight of 2021 will be the COP summit in Glasgow at which Ireland hopes to play a strong role.
The other highlight of 2021 will be the UN Food Systems Summit, planned for September. Ireland was one of the first countries to provide financial support to the Summit in 2020, and we have been playing an active role in the preparatory work, with an explicit focus on the hunger action track.

In parallel, the Government has been responding to the recommendations of the National Task Team for Rural Africa, which sees a stronger emphasis on food systems in our domestic agriculture sector, as well as our international engagement. Ongoing partnerships in this area, including the Africa Agribusiness Development Programme, and support to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), will feed into Ireland’s engagement in the Summit. Ireland will assume a seat on the Executive Board of IFAD in 2021.

A roadmap was agreed at the beginning of 2021 to guide the implementation of the remaining commitments under the SIDS Strategy and to ensure a coordinated approach to political engagement with SIDS for 2021-2022.

Key commitments which will be progressed this year include the appointment of a permanent network of envoys to the SIDS and the holding of a series of policy dialogues with SIDS to share experiences in areas such as Diaspora engagement.

Other major priorities in 2021 will include addressing the education crisis unfolding from COVID-19, especially as it relates to adolescent girls, responding to rapidly increasing global humanitarian need, and strengthening key partnerships in Africa, particularly in the Sahel.

Human Rights

Ireland continues to prioritise human rights at every opportunity, promoting core human rights issues including gender equality, the rights of LGBTQIA+ persons and the civil society space/human rights defenders. In December 2020, the Government inaugurated a memorial monument to commemorate the lives of human rights defenders around the world who have been killed because of their peaceful work defending the rights of others.

During 2020, Ireland also delivered 160 statements at UN meetings on Human Rights including at the Human Rights Council, at the UN General Assembly Third Committee, and at contributions to Universal Periodic Reviews.

As Ireland strives to double our global footprint by expanding physical presences overseas, and diversifying trade into new markets, we will continue to be cognisant of our duty to uphold in our work abroad, the rights which we enjoy at home. Ireland’s National Plan on Business and Human Rights 2017-2020 was introduced to give effect to aspects of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), which were unanimously adopted at the Human Rights Council in 2011.

The National Plan contains a series of commitments under the headings of: policy coherence across government; the State Duty to Protect Human Rights; the Corporate Duty to Protect Human Rights; and Access to Remedy (the latter three reflecting the pillars of the UNGPs).

The Implementation Group for the National Plan on Business and Human Rights met regularly in 2020 and advanced a number of recommendations under the National Plan for Business and Human Rights, including commissioning an independent review of access to remedy for potential victims overseas of human rights abuses by Irish companies.

Outlook for 2021

A toolkit for on business and human rights for public and private entities to assist them in their human rights due diligence will be published.

An interim review of the implementation of commitments under the National Plan on Business and Human Rights will be completed in advance of a multi-stakeholder forum in H1, 2021.

Work on the next iteration of the National Plan will begin in H2, 2021.
3.2 Engaging with the World

Regional Strategies

Under Global Ireland, a number of cross-sectoral regional strategies are being published, helping to intensify Ireland’s relations with specific regions, increasing trade and investment, improving political relationships, promoting Irish culture, and increasing people-to-people exchanges.

In November 2019, the Government published a regional strategy for Africa and considerable progress was achieved across its strategic objectives, despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Stronger political partnerships with Africa were advanced through a high number of bilateral meetings with African partners and ongoing deepening of engagement with the African Union. Ireland significantly stepped up engagement in the Sahel, by becoming an observer member of the Sahel Alliance, which coordinates development cooperation in the region, and through the appointment of a Special Envoy for Francophone Africa and the Sahel. Ireland also began the application process for Associate Observer membership of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), which is being finalised ahead of the CPLP Heads of State and Government Summit in Angola in July 2021.

Ireland’s Embassies in Africa reallocated more than €22.6 million from their development programming to support immediate health and humanitarian responses to COVID-19, and a further €46.3 million to mitigate its socio-economic impacts.

The cross-government Asia-Pacific Strategy was published in January 2020 and is based on five Strategic Objectives around Ireland’s political, economic, cultural and people-to-people relationships with this region. Implementation of the strategy is being taken forward in the context of a Stakeholders’ Forum, which includes the key Departments and State Agencies.

The next meeting of the Stakeholders Forum will be asked to approve the first annual report to Government on the implementation of the Strategy.

It will show progress across each of the five Strategic Objectives, despite the pandemic restrictions which have curtailed travel to/from the region. A new embassy will be opened in Manila in 2021, a key commitment in the Strategy, and the Government announced the winning design for Ireland House Tokyo in September 2020 (the largest ever overseas capital project by the State).

Outlook for 2021

A Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean to 2025 is in the final stages of development and drafting. It is planned that the strategy will be published and launched later in 2021, in the context of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in Ireland and in the LAC region.
Global Reputation and Communications Strategy

A central objective of the Global Ireland programme is to implement a co-ordinated, cross-Government, integrated approach to promoting Ireland as a good place to live, invest, trade with, visit, and study. A key focus for this is the development of ireland.ie as an integrated all-of-Government digital platform to showcase Ireland as a great place to live, invest, trade with, visit, and study. A beta site is now live and significant further development is planned for 2021.

A pilot integrated communications campaign was launched around the 2019 Japan Rugby World Cup. The Government sought to maximise the benefit arising from Ireland’s participation in the World Cup (RWC), which took place from 20 September – 2 November 2019.

Using a collaborative Team Ireland approach, approximately 40 separate stakeholders worked together to meet the project’s requirement to capitalise on Ireland’s participation in the Rugby World Cup to raise Ireland’s visibility in Japan.

A specific goal for the RWC promotional project was to deliver a high-quality, video-led online campaign which raised Ireland’s visibility across the range of Team Ireland interests in Japan.

This was a very useful prototype for future multi department/agency initiatives. The six videos produced received 32 million impressions and 9.8 million views over the 30-day campaign. During two weekends in the course of RWC2019 Ireland trended as lead item searched on some of Japan’s leading search engines.

The main campaign video in the Embassy’s social media Japanese-language feed received over 11 million impressions between promoted and organic views and was seen some 85,000 times as a pinned tweet on the Embassy’s English-language Twitter feed. In addition, the ireland.ie website was translated into Japanese for the campaign.

Notably, this was the first integrated (and co-funded) promotional campaign involving state agencies, with funding provided by DFA, IDA, Tourism Ireland, Bord Bia, and Enterprise Ireland.

This was a significant achievement, enabling a joined-up effort in a market with a recognised visibility issue. It was an important pilot approach and demonstration of ‘proof of concept’ of the strength of collaboration among Team Ireland.

Outlook for 2021

Drawing on the success of, and lessons learned from, the Rugby World Cup Japan campaign, work is accelerating on the development of a Global Reputation and Communications Strategy that:

- Delivers an authentic image of Ireland that resonates both at home and abroad;
- Is based upon a robust governance framework and stakeholder input to drive effective collaboration;
- Utilises the technology resources and expertise of the state to deliver a usable integrated digital platform for Government internationally; and
- Has a measurement framework to deliver for meaningful measurement of results and insights to stakeholders. A ‘one stop’ digital showcase of Ireland abroad will also be developed through a renewed Ireland.ie, as an all-of-Government international digital platform.
Global Ireland Summits

During the period under review, three ‘Global Ireland Summits’ were held: in July 2019, January 2020 and September 2020.

The January 2020 event focussed on an examination of significant shifts in the geopolitical landscape, both globally and closer to home. It gathered together Ireland’s Ambassadors, Permanent Representatives and Consul Generals from across more than 90 missions with key partners in the Public Service, Ireland’s Business Community, the Diplomatic Corps and representatives of the diaspora, culture and other key stakeholders.

The September 2020 summit took place virtually and was based on the themes of ‘Renewal and Recovery’.

It was delivered in partnership with the National Broadcaster, RTÉ, over three days, with contributions from the Taoiseach; Tánaiste; the Minister for Climate Action, Communication Networks and Transport; and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, amongst others.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Dr Michael Ryan of the WHO and former President Mary Robinson also addressed the summit. Global Ireland Summits
Engaging the Diaspora

Today, the Irish diaspora is a diverse and dynamic global community connected to Ireland through ties of citizenship, heritage and affinity, retaining a strong sense of Irish identity that has remained vibrant over the ages. Global Ireland commits the Department of Foreign Affairs to developing a new policy and strategic approach to supporting our citizens overseas and diaspora networks internationally. A consultation process on the new Diaspora policy was conducted in 2019, involving stakeholder engagement and public consultations in Ireland and abroad hosted by the Tánaiste and Minister of State for the Diaspora and International Development.

The Taoiseach launched the new Global Ireland Diaspora Strategy for the period 2020-2025 in November 2020. The Strategy sets out what the Government will do to support and engage with our diaspora communities around the world. It takes a broad and inclusive definition of the diaspora, reflecting the diversity of the global Irish community today. The Strategy also reflects the priorities in the Programme for Government, including a commitment to seek better outcomes for the undocumented Irish abroad. This strategy has been shaped by contributions from hundreds of individuals and organisations both in Ireland and in Irish communities around the world.

Supporting the Irish Abroad during the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges for our citizens overseas and throughout the course of 2020, we expanded our consular operations, increased resources and set up dedicated helplines to respond to the needs of our citizens. In 2020 alone, the Government’s dedicated COVID-19 Call Centre for citizens abroad responded to over 24,000 calls for assistance and advice. In the most significant repatriation operations in the history of the State, well over 8,000 citizens were assisted in returning to Ireland from 129 countries around the world. The Department of Foreign Affairs, Irish Embassies and Consulates, are working with partner organisations and like-minded countries to monitor the wellbeing and safety of our citizens who remain overseas, and to provide advice and assistance. Drawing on experiences early in the pandemic, an Emergency Travel Helpline was re-established in December 2020 and continues to operate.

As the scale of the impact of the pandemic on our Diaspora communities became clear, the Government also established a dedicated Covid-19 Response Fund for Irish Communities Abroad in 2020. The four main priorities of the Fund are to support projects that:

• protect our elderly and mitigate the impact of social isolation;
• meet the needs of those made vulnerable by the crisis and respond quickly and effectively to cases of particular hardship;
• provide mental health supports and bereavement counselling;
• support innovative ways to provide services online.

Projects were managed by our mission network and are delivered through existing community welfare organisations and charities. Over €1.3 million has been disbursed to organisations to fund just under 100 projects to deal with the immediate needs of the Irish community abroad including: €654,000 in Britain, €394,485 in United States, €116,000 in Australia, €107,000 in Canada, €39,000 in New Zealand and €30,900 in Rest of the World. The ability of Irish community organisations to respond to the challenges posed by COVID-19 in assisting their clients and finding new ways of delivering their services has been truly exceptional. Many of our organisations have come together on a regional basis and have been assisted by volunteers from the broader Irish community to deliver this vital support.

A targeted communications strategy has been developed to provide support, reassurance and connectedness to our people abroad at this difficult time.
To Be Irish at Christmas

To Be Irish (TBI) at Christmas was a virtual initiative by the Government designed to engage and stay connected with the approximately 750,000 Irish nationals and their families abroad who were prevented from travelling back to Ireland over the Christmas period due to the pandemic restrictions on international travel. The programme featured a platform hosting over 200 creative, cultural and community events, 98 diaspora stories, and 60 gifting pages showcasing Irish enterprises to an audience in over 50 countries. The initiative featured in various national, local, and international media outlets across all mediums. TBI had over 4 million impressions across Twitter, Facebook and other social media channels and there were nearly 700,000 visits to the TBI platforms.

Outlook for 2021

The implementation of the new Diaspora Strategy across Government will be overseen by an interdepartmental committee, which will be chaired by the Minister for the Diaspora, and will address emerging issues which affect our diaspora.

Plans are underway to hold a referendum on extending the franchise in presidential elections to citizens resident outside the State. Greater engagement of our citizens outside the State in our democracy will strengthen the connection between the diaspora and Ireland. Diaspora participation in presidential elections will strengthen the connection between the Presidency, the highest office in the State, and the diaspora.

The Global Ireland Media Challenge Fund

A new “Global Ireland Media Challenge Fund” has been launched by Government, with the objective of providing better public information about major geopolitical events and issues, and about the changing nature of Ireland’s role in the world. The desired outcome of the increased media engagement, and ensuing debate, is that the public would obtain an enhanced understanding of global affairs and the impact of Ireland’s foreign policy.

This initiative is based on the principles of ‘open Government’ – including transparent, participatory, inclusive and accountable governance. Editorial independence within the overall terms of the initiative will be preserved as a bedrock principle of the Fund. It will operate for a pilot period of 2 years, with an annual review.

Promoting Foreign Languages in the Irish Education System

Global Ireland 2025 made a number of commitments to accommodate heritage speakers of certain languages and support the new learning of languages of students at second level and in higher education.

In 2020, seven schools were able to introduce a new language and offer more languages to students. In schools where the target language was already being taught the school was able to expand language provision or use additional teachers to deliver the subject. Research is currently underway to evaluate the CPD/upskilling that will most benefit teacher supply to achieve this target.

The Government also published four new Leaving Certificate Specifications for Mandarin Chinese, Lithuanian, Polish and Portuguese. A small number of schools are now offering these languages on the curriculum for Leaving Certificate to be examined for the first time as curricular subjects in summer 2022.

Plans to increase the proportion of higher education students studying a foreign language, in any capacity, as part of their course to 20% were delayed due to the pandemic. A meeting of higher education stakeholders will be convened in 2021 to progress this action.

Global Schools Programme

As part of the Government’s Global Ireland programme and commitment to citizen engagement, an initiative was launched to bring Irish diplomats, aid workers, and peacekeepers to secondary schools around the country to talk to students about Ireland’s work overseas.

Since 2018, Heads of Ireland’s diplomatic missions abroad, accompanied by a peacekeeper, have visited 122 secondary schools around the country to talk to students about their work; about Ireland’s place in the world, about our role in the European Union, our membership of the United Nations, the work of Irish Aid and the global challenges we face.

The Government plans to build on success to date by expanding scope and involving other Departments and agencies. In light of the current Covid-19 pandemic and cognisant of the extreme pressure schools, teachers and students are under, the plan for 2021 is to “virtually” visit schools with the overall aim of returning to physical visits as soon as it is safe and practicable to do so.
3.3 Developments in International Education

The soon-to-be published independent review of the Government’s International Education Strategy shows that 14% of full-time enrolments (over 44,000) students were international students during the 2019/2020 academic year. The original goal under Global Ireland 2025 was for international students to represent 15% of the total full-time student population by 2025. Progress on this commitment will be significantly affected over the coming years by the worldwide drop in the number of students choosing to study internationally as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Indeed, in 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in major challenges for the international education sector in common with other sectors of the Irish economy. Particular challenges arose in relation to the attraction of overseas students and faculty and to the modes of delivery.

There has been a similar impact on the economic output value of international education to the Irish economy, which it was hoped would reach €2.7 billion per annum by 2025. While the value for the 2019/2020 academic year stood at €2.38bn – a 46% increase over the course of the Government’s international education strategy (2016-2020) – prospects of further growth are not optimistic due to the drop in the number of students choosing to study internationally.

In 2020, we successfully advertised and awarded 60 fully funded competitive scholarships to non-EU/EEA students for the 2020/2021 academic year. We will consider how best to increase the number of scholarships we award in line with the target in Global Ireland, over the next few months, while developing the next iteration of the Government’s International Education Strategy.

Outlook for 2021

The Government will, in consultation with all stakeholders, develop a new International Education Strategy in 2021, taking into account the findings of the review of the previous strategy and the challenges that the Covid-19 pandemic presents to our International Education engagements.

The new Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027 will see a significant increase in funding available to Ireland for higher education mobilities, allowing us to increase the numbers of HE students availing of a mobility opportunity in line with the target set out in Global Ireland.

In 2021, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, there will be an overall worldwide reduction in the numbers of students choosing to study abroad, therefore international student recruitment will become more competitive than before. In order to increase our competitiveness and protect our substantial market share in this area, we will engage in an intensive marketing and promotion campaign, in core and high potential markets. This campaign will involve the identification of new opportunities for Ireland in markets that we are not presently active and new delivery models of marketing and promotion in existing markets. Team Ireland abroad will continue working under the Education in Ireland Brand to create new, and engage further with, International student alumni networks.
3.4 Sharing Irish Culture and Heritage

Promoting the Irish Language

The Irish language, one of Europe’s oldest languages still in use, is thought to have been spoken in Ireland for over 2,500 years. The language has a key role to play in making cultural and heritage connections, not least with the global Irish diaspora where the language strengthens links to home and maintains expressions of Irish identity through generations. The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (DTCAGSM) is currently engaged in a wide variety of Irish language work which focuses on the Global Community.

DTCAGSM provides funding of over €1m per annum for teaching Irish in over forty universities worldwide. The objective of the funding is to promote and foster goodwill for the Irish language outside Ireland and to provide a platform on which the Irish language can be accessed and showcased as an international language. 2020 saw the addition of the University of Liverpool (Liverpool Campus) and the University of Jena in Germany to the scheme.

Fáilte ar line, a Massive Open Online Course, has been developed by Dublin City University with funding from DTCAGSM. Through this unique and innovative programme, participants are able to progress from beginner level to complete a degree in the Irish language – entirely online.

The programme has had over 110,000 users in over 200 countries participating since its inception in 2018.

Trasna na dT onnta is an online dialogue or ‘cyberGaeltacht’, which takes place on Twitter. The aim of this event is to create a worldwide engagement around the Irish language by encouraging all those ‘across the waves’ who feel a connection with Ireland to post online messages ‘as gaeilge’. 2020 was the fourth year of the campaign, and tweets with the #trasnanadtonnta hashtag reached 8 million people worldwide, with over 50 million impressions. The 2020 edition saw the successful introduction of free online events in Irish (mindfulness, yoga, music sessions, conversation circles), and a new partnership with the GAA, as well as an expansion onto Instagram.

Outlook for 2021

Due to COVID-19, students were unable to travel to Ireland to participate in Gaeltacht courses, under the scholarship scheme run by DTCAGSM. It is hoped that additional Gaeltacht scholarships can be facilitated once travel is again possible.

There are plans in place to continue to develop the Trasna na dTonnta programme over the coming year.
Promoting Irish Artists Overseas

The Government, through Culture Ireland, continues to support Irish artists to present their work in key global territories to critical acclaim. In 2020, Culture Ireland adapted its funding system to support online performances and introduced a more frequent grant process to facilitate this approach. Digital presentation has enabled Culture Ireland to reach an increased and more widespread global audience in a period where there is heightened need to reach out and maintain global cultural connections.

While not a replacement for physical presentation, the introduction of support for online digital presentations by artists globally has proven to have many advantages. There has been accelerated access to Irish artists, a broader reach without barriers on location and greater inclusivity with reduced ticket costs, flexible viewing time and no travel requirement.

In April and May 2020, through a new initiative, Ireland Performs, Culture Ireland presented 120 events, streaming artists from their homes, gardens and local spaces and reaching an audience of almost 1 million worldwide.

Also commencing in April 2020, the Courage series of concerts presented many high-profile artists from music venues, National Cultural Institutions, and significant heritage sites, and achieved 3.5 million live views and over 12.3 million online.

Support for programming Irish artists in Irish Cultural Centres in London, Paris and New York allowed Irish arts to reach the diaspora, as well as new audiences, and their digital programmes removed geographic barriers. For example, Irish artists presented by the Irish Arts Center, New York reached more than 178,000 people across 116 countries.

Outlook for 2021

Culture Ireland is working to stay connected with international presenters and continues to introduce them to emerging Irish artists for future opportunities through its showcase programme.

A twofold increase was seen in the numbers attending the annual meeting of the Network of Irish Cultural Centres in the US, which was hosted by Culture Ireland and the NY Consulate online in January 2021.

Image: Cup O'Joe #IrelandPerforms
Irish Film

Notwithstanding the enormity of the challenges presented by Covid-19, particularly to the cultural sector, steps taken in 2020 offer strong support to the industry for its recovery in late 2020 and its sustainability into the future. Additional funding was secured for Screen Ireland which will provide further investment and particular support for TV drama and animation.

A key facet in seeking to deliver on the Government’s ambition to enable Ireland to become a global hub for the production of film, TV drama and animation, is Ireland’s ability to attract additional international productions from overseas, though in the midst of a global pandemic, production mobility is severely hampered.

Nevertheless, the domestic screen sector has taken considerable steps to allow it to return to production in a safe manner, with a number of projects – including large international projects such as The Last Duel – now effectively completed.

The strength of the Irish animation sector was very much in evidence in 2020. The Kilkenny-based animation studio, Cartoon Saloon, reached a global audience with its feature film ‘Wolfwalkers’ released in select US cinemas in November. Since its premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival, critics have already heralded the film as one of the most powerful animated works of the year.

Screen Ireland is examining scope to work more directly with emerging technologies and explore new platforms to help secure Irish animation’s long-term future as a global-facing industry with sustainable growth potential and has allocated specific funding for investment in new innovation, high concept development and business growth opportunities within the Animation sector, alongside a new Talent Development Academy for Animation. The aim is to reinforce and highlight Ireland’s growing position in Animation as a centre of excellence and to fund investment in a broad and diverse range of talent, genres, formats and business growth potentials, ensuring high-value national and international success.
**Sport**

The National Sports Policy 2018-2027, published in 2018, details the measures through which the Government will continue to support Irish sports people competing internationally, as well as develop the potential of sports tourism as a growth sector in the economy.

One of the key goals in the National Sports Policy is to enable a greater number of Irish athletes and teams to systematically and fairly achieve world-class results at the highest level of international competition. The Policy recognises the challenges around funding, governance and integrity in sport. It commits to increasing the level of Government investment in sport and, in order to ensure more certainty for sporting organisations and athletes in planning and preparing for Olympic and Paralympic Games, aims to deliver multi-annual funding for high-performance programmes in place of annual funding. The most recent round of funding grants awarded to Irish athletes were allocated on a two-year basis.

Doping continues to be one of the biggest threats to the integrity of sport and the Government is committed to continuing its support for Sport Ireland in its efforts to combat doping and ensure a level playing field for athletes and teams.

The National Sports Policy and the Government’s Tourism Policy recognise that sporting events should play a part in achieving our future tourism growth targets. Fáilte Ireland will continue to support sporting organisations in attracting those sports events which meet its events criteria and deliver a significant economic return.

The current programme for government includes a commitment to develop a Major Events Policy and a Strategy to realise that policy. Major Events have the potential to drive participation in sport, contribute to our ongoing economic growth, to drive a sense of national pride and affect both how we see ourselves as a nation and how we are viewed internationally. These events can benefit trade, tourism, business, community pride and community engagement. In the past five years Ireland has won the bid to host Ryder Cup 2026, EURO 2020 and the Women’s Rugby World Cup, and has been invited to join a potential bid for 2030 FIFA World Cup. A number of other major events bids are also being considered.

**Outlook for 2021**

A key action in the National Sports Policy is the development of a new High-Performance Strategy for Irish sport. A strategy for the period up to 2032 will be published shortly.
3.4.1 CASE STUDY

Upgrading Ireland’s International Arts Centres

“The New Irish Arts Center will fulfil its mission to bring together our global Irish community, in a dynamic, diverse hub of international culture, commerce, and community, for generations to come.

In addition, as we recover from Covid-19, the new Center will serve as a powerful symbol and driver of the resurgent cultural heartbeat of the people of New York, Irish America, and the island of Ireland.

We are enormously grateful to the Irish government for your enduring commitment to this shared vision.”

- Aidan Connolly,
  Executive Director of the Irish Arts Center

The Irish Arts Center New York, with the support of Government, has just completed its capital development project at 11th Avenue. The opening of this new state of the art facility is planned for later in 2021, when restrictions permit. It will act as a flagship 21st century destination and gateway for established and emerging Irish artists to present in New York.

The Government has supported this new building with substantial funding to ensure that Irish artists will have a creative home in this key global cultural city.

As well as serving as a platform to reach the diaspora and new audiences in the US, the IAC will become a hub for artists to travel onward and tour in the US.

The London Irish Centre in Camden plays an important role in showcasing Ireland’s artists and promoting Irish culture in Britain through an annual programme of arts activity with support from Culture Ireland.

In 2019, the Government gave financial support of £1 million towards the redevelopment of the centre in London and planning permission for the exciting new facility was granted in 2020 paving the way for work to begin on the imaginative new community and cultural centre on this historic site in 2023.

In January 2021, Centre Culturel Irlandais, Ireland’s cultural flagship in Europe, launched an ambitious strategic plan for the next five years which focuses on investing in the future, enriching the artistic programme and strengthening the engagement of CCI through strategic partnerships on mainland Europe.
SECTION 4
Advancing Ireland’s Economic Interests
4.1 Export Markets

Under Global Ireland 2025, Enterprise Ireland (EI) is charged with accelerating the diversification of export markets. Significant progress has been towards achieving its targets. EI client companies achieved record levels of exports in 2019 of €25.6bn, against the backdrop of Brexit uncertainty. In 2019, the Euro area, which is a key focus of Enterprise Ireland’s diversification strategy, saw growth of 15% to €5.65bn, with Germany, France and the Netherlands each exceeding €1bn in exports. Exports to North America increased from €4.08bn in 2018 to €4.72bn, an increase of 16%.

Key actions taken by the agency to support export growth and diversification include:

- EI Supported clients in winning 1,554 new overseas contracts in 2019, and 1,275 in 2020.
- EI organised 1,111 international buyer visits to Ireland in 2019.
- EI organised 207 international trade and domestic events in 2019 across the Eurozone, North America, Asia Pacific, UK, Nordics, Central Europe and Latin America. This included 56 Ministerial-led trade events.
- Providing targeted customer and market intelligence via a network of 40 overseas offices.
- Organising 327 international buyer visits to Ireland in 2020.

The work of EI’s overseas network was greatly impacted by Covid-19 during 2020, with a significant change of focus and operations during the year. Key initiatives undertaken in the changed circumstances included:

- Virtual Trade Events/Buyer Engagements: Due to public health guidance, Enterprise Ireland was not in a position to run its annual Trade Events Programme. In response, Enterprise Ireland ran 59 virtual trade events and buyer engagements in 2020, supporting over 1,000 companies connect with overseas buyers.
- The annual International Markets Week took place online. See case study in section 4.1.1.

- Global Webinars: Over 1,000 companies participated in multiple sector webinars providing strategic customer and market insights
- Enterprise Ireland’s overseas offices assisted with the national effort to quality check and source PPE through their international networks and physical presence.
- Through initiatives such as the Scale UK Initiative, Enterprise Ireland is connecting with the Irish diaspora community to further build networks that can assist Irish companies with market entry and scaling their business. Similar initiatives are begin progressed in the Middle East and China.

EI’s strategic communications campaign, “the Irish Advantage”, connected 2 million buyers globally with the campaign’s ‘shop window’ for Irish innovation. It was supported by over 300 in-market client media articles. Irish Advantage will provide clients with increased market insights, buyer intelligence, buyer leads, virtual events and introductions and will boost their visibility internationally, as part of an international reputation building campaign.

Outlook for 2021

Enterprise Ireland will publish its strategic priorities to the end of 2021. Enterprise Ireland’s ambition for 2021 is to sustain Irish jobs and exports and increase the resilience of the enterprise base. By the end of 2021 the aim is to ensure global exports retain their pre-pandemic, pre-Brexit value of €25.6 billion.

Enterprise Ireland will also deliver, in 2021, a longer-term Corporate Strategy to 2025, which will involve a review of its global market strategies, including reflecting the post-Brexit trading environment.
Spotlight on Agri-Food Exports

Despite the extremely challenging year in 2020, agri-food exports have held up reasonably well with an estimated fall in value of exports of about 2% compared to 2019. Irish agri-food exports are estimated at €14.3 billion in total in 2020 - down by €250 million or 2% from the 2019 figures of €14.5 billion. These figures include €1.3 billion in non-edible agri-food sector goods, including forestry and animal feedstuffs, which are not included in the Bord Bia figures.

The fall in value of agri-food exports in 2020 was led by a significant fall in the value of beverages exported, along with smaller reductions in live animals, seafood and meat exports. Dairy on the other hand had a strong export performance with growth of about 1.5% in export value.

The volume of exports also fell slightly at just over 1% to 7.6 million tonnes. Somewhat over one third by value of our Irish food and drink exports went to the UK in 2020, down slightly on previous years, one third to other EU markets and the remainder, somewhat less than one third, to International markets. As a direct point of comparison, in 2009, 45% of our food and drink exports went to the UK.

During 2020, increasing third country market access and furthering trade opportunities abroad continued to be integral parts of the Government’s response to the twin challenges posed by Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic. The Government has been very active through Trade Missions and the leveraging of our network of agricultural attachés around the globe. For example, in May 2020, Ireland secured approval for the export of frozen raw pork to Mexico, a priority new market.

Mexico is an important consumer market with a growing import demand for pigmeat and further growth is anticipated.

The EU-Mexico Global Agreement which will significantly reduce tariff barriers to trade, will also provide new export market opportunities.

Market diversification remained a key priority for Bord Bia in 2020, notwithstanding the complications of Covid-19. An exercise was undertaken early in 2020 to re-evaluate market prioritisation globally, which informed diversification strategy throughout the year.

Key achievements included a dairy and livestock trade mission to Algeria and Egypt in February 2020 with 12 Irish dairy companies participating. Work was also undertaken to identify new buyers for Irish exporters in previously relatively unexplored markets.

The year closed out with an innovative and successful virtual series of ministerial trade mission to Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand focussed on raising awareness of Irish dairy in the markets and introducing Irish exporters to new customers. 429 international buyers attended these events and 448 initial introductions were made to Irish exporters with many more occurring subsequent to the event.

Alongside this activity, Bord Bia held Minister-led virtual meetings and trade receptions with priority customers across the UK, France, Germany, USA, UAE, China, Japan and the Philippines underlining Ireland’s commitment to our international partners. These efforts have been buoyed by the appointment of the first ever Minister of State with specific responsibility for New Market Development.
4.1.1 CASE STUDY

Enterprise Ireland Virtual International Markets Week

International Markets Week has been one of Enterprise Ireland’s (EI) longest running annual events. It is a unique week when Enterprise Ireland’s overseas team of Market Advisors return to Ireland and engage directly with clients on a one-to-one basis to review and support their overseas plans for the coming year. Clients have the opportunity to speak to Market Advisors from their existing markets, and to take the opportunity to get advice and support for potentially new markets of interest. The week traditionally involves a launch event and approximately 2000 individual meetings with Market Advisors, along with the opportunity to have one-to-one meetings in relation to Enterprise Ireland’s key supports and services.

In 2019 over 600 Irish companies and 140 international Market Advisors arrived in Dublin to attend EI’s International Markets Week (IMW) to discuss global export opportunities and how to evaluate the opportunities to accelerate diversification into new markets.

In March 2020 it was clear that a traditional IMW was not going to be possible in 2020 and it was equally clear the need for IMW had never been higher for our clients with the dual impact of Covid-19 and Brexit looming. A decision was made to move to a virtual event.

Appreciating the immense undertaking required, a cross-functional team was established with most of EI’s business functions contributing. Distilling down IMW’s core purpose was the first task and proved vital to provide direction throughout the project.

The one-to-one client meetings were prioritised with Market Advisors and Brexit Consultants. Additional activities and meetings with other EI services and supports would not be facilitated but alternatively would be signposted on the website and in a Digital Brochure. Quick decision-making was facilitated by revisiting the core purpose for direction.

Results

- 700+ clients registered to attend Virtual IMW and 2000 + one-to-one meetings were held virtually over 130 Market Advisors dispersed world-wide across one week
- 650+ action plans for clients recorded on the internal CRM to enable monitoring and follow up
- 1650+ attended the virtual launch event which featured Damien English, Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail. Previously the physical launch event only facilitated a couple of hundred to attend.
- An increase in clients attending IMW with higher geographical spread participating.
- A post event evaluation highlighted high client satisfaction demonstrated by positive qualitative feedback and achieving a high Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 78 and a rating of 4.5/5 for the benefit of the meetings.
- Equally Enterprise Ireland staff rated the benefit of the meetings as 4.5/5.
- Creation of a new Market Intelligence Network called IMW Connect. A platform which allows IMW participants to connect with companies operating in various Industry Sectors and Markets and is rolling out in early 2021.
4.2 Foreign Direct Investment

IDA Ireland’s objective under Global Ireland 2025 is to accelerate the diversification of FDI source markets, indicated by doubling the growth in IDA-supported project investments from non-US markets in the period 2018-2024.

Progress made in 2019/2020

IDA Ireland made significant progress in achieving this objective in 2019. The share of investments from outside North America increased from 30% to 37% over the period 2014 to 2019. At end 2019, there were over 1,600 IDA Ireland client companies employing 245,000 people in Ireland, with 60% of these jobs outside Dublin city. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) accounts for 10.5% of the Irish workforce.

Despite the challenges posed by Covid-19 in 2020, IDA Ireland won 246 investments in 2020, with 95 of these being new name investments. Over 20,000 new jobs were created in IDA client companies and there are now 257,394 people directly employed in multinational sector in Ireland. The existing base of FDI showed continued resilience with 66.6% of new investments coming from North America in 2020.

The agency actively reviews its overseas presence to determine which markets can prove the most valuable sources of FDI in the medium term. Global economic and geopolitical developments mean that the FDI landscape is changing in ways that require IDA to deepen and diversify its overseas presence.

Doing so ensures appropriate and effective coverage of both industry sectors and geographies, in order that Ireland continues to capture a significant share of global investment flows which in turn, assists in the achievement of a variety of public policy goals in Ireland.

Interaction with clients and site visits with potential investors have been organised using video-conferencing and other internet technologies since early 2020. See case study in section 4.2.1.

Outlook for 2021

IDA Ireland’s new strategy, Driving Recovery & Sustainable Growth 2021-2024, was launched in January 2021, in the context of the Government’s National Economic Plan. This strategy positions IDA to respond to the emerging trends that are accelerating as a result of the Covid-19 global pandemic. It will assist in identifying the opportunities for sustainable growth among IDA’s established base of clients through a focus on transformative investments to increase the productivity of Irish operations and their workforce through RD&I, digitisation, training and actions on sustainability.

Crucially it will also maintain a focus on attracting the next generation of leading multinationals to locate in Ireland, further driving sustainable growth and maximising the impact of FDI in Ireland to 2024 and beyond. In accordance with the Strategy, IDA will set out to:

- Win 800 investments – with the aim of having half of those go to regions.
- Support client job creation of 50,000.
- Drive market diversification.
4.2.1 CASE STUDY

IDA Ireland Response to Covid-19

IDA reacted rapidly to Covid-19 early in 2020 to ensure the organisation was positioned to provide a continuity of service to clients and to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the IDA team. The majority of client operations in Ireland were able to remain functioning successfully throughout 2020, as clients moved to remote working and/or carried out essential activities on site in line with public health guidelines.

The strength of multinational companies (MNCs) in Ireland has been vital in supporting economic activity, employment, exports and the public finances at a time of severe challenge in many domestic facing sectors. Ireland’s economic outperformance in GDP and export terms relative to other advanced economies, and relative to expectations at the outset of the crisis, is, in significant part, due to the resilience of IDA clients.

IDA took a number of steps in responding to the pandemic:

**Staying close to existing clients**

Through a structured engagement process, IDA’s Global Teams quickly engaged existing clients from March 2020 onwards with a focus on how the pandemic impacted their operations in Ireland and ascertaining how IDA and Government could support their operations. IDA utilises digital technologies to provide a continuity of service to clients remotely, availing of digital technologies that were put in place by IDA prior to the crisis in advance of IDA’s move to a new Global HQ in September 2019. In 2020, IDA engaged extensively with clients through various platforms on a one-on-one basis and also through online events and webinars (e.g. IDA held a webinar with senior representatives from the top employers within IDA’s portfolio on Ireland’s response to the crisis).

IDA developed new customised tools over the course of the year to enable where possible investments to be won remotely, including the facilitation of remote site visits by client companies.

IDA’s Stabilisation and Recovery Plan was implemented in H2 2020, to identify growth opportunities. IDA engaged with client companies on their growth agendas, with a particular focus on transformation projects across RD&I, training and green investment. For new business, the plan sought to shepherd projects in the 2020 pipeline to completion and to continue to engage with target clients on their growth agenda with a view to building the 2021 pipeline.

To support the building of IDA’s project pipeline for 2021, IDA launched a digital-focused global marketing campaign in Q3 to promote Ireland as a place of ‘innovation, invention and promise’. This was supported by the €10m in promotional and marketing initiatives for FDI provided for under the Government’s July Stimulus Package.

**Supporting the HSE in the global sourcing of critical supplies**

IDA provided formal support for the Health Service Executive (HSE) in its immediate response to the public health crisis from March 2020. IDA used its international network to assist the HSE in sourcing personal protective equipment (PPE) and other critical care products in a challenging global market characterised by unprecedented demand for these essential goods.

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**Table:**

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<th>May</th>
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<th>H2 2020/2021+</th>
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<tr>
<td>IDA shift to 100% remote working</td>
<td>Client engagement on Essential Services List &amp; critical personnel</td>
<td>Client engagement on Reopening Roadmap &amp; Business Supports</td>
<td>Overseas client leadership engagement</td>
<td>Action Plan to support clients for rest of 2020</td>
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<td>COVID-19 Policy Response Unit established</td>
<td>Collaboration across Gov. to keep supply chains open</td>
<td>COVID-19 Products Scheme approved by EU</td>
<td>New overseas marketing campaign launch</td>
<td>New strategy launch in 2021</td>
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<td>Support for Ireland’s Health Service Executive (HSE)</td>
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4.3 International Finance

IDA Ireland’s objective under Global Ireland 2025 is to accelerate the diversification of FDI source markets. The Government engages actively, through the Department of Finance, with global financial institutions such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and European institutions including the European Investment Bank, European Bank of Reconstruction and Development and the Council of Europe Bank, as well as multilateral development banks including the Asian Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the African Development Bank.

The election of the Minister for Finance as Eurogroup President has reinforced the leadership role Ireland plays at European level and provides an opportunity to deepen bilateral relationships in managing and driving the Eurogroup agenda. This increased role in shaping the future direction of the EU, its policies and budgets, is the fulfilment of a priority goal under Global Ireland 2025.

It also gives a new focus to our engagement and objectives across a range of policy areas. The Eurogroup meets on a monthly basis with regular bilateral engagement with Ministers between meetings.

The role also involves periodic interactions with other leading European figures, such as the so-called “Inter Institutional Actors” - meeting with the Presidents of the ECB, the Commission and the European Council. The President of Eurogroup represents the Eurogroup at Euro Area Summits and G7 Meetings. The President of the Eurogroup is also required to engage with the media and other stakeholders.

The assignment of the Financial Stability, Financial Services and the Capital Markets Union portfolio to Ireland’s European Commissioner further elevates Ireland’s profile on EU banking and financial services issues.

Outlook for 2021

The annual European Financial Forum is the showcase event for Ireland’s international financial services sector. Once again, the Forum attracted a distinct mix of senior executives from global companies and public sector leaders in 2020. The 2021 edition of the Forum will be held as a virtual event on 11th February 2021.

Looking further ahead, the Government’s work on international financial policy will continue to play an important role in building alliances, promoting our priorities, and leveraging our bilateral and multilateral relationships.

Image: ©European Union
4.3.1 CASE STUDY

Virtual Engagements by the Minister for Finance

The outbreak of Covid-19 and associated restrictions presented challenges to the established methods of maintaining engagements with our international partners and building alliances through bilateral engagement.

At the Department of Finance, a programme of virtual international engagements was developed for the Minister for Finance, the Minister of State, and officials, to ensure that engagement with EU and international partners could continue despite the challenges associated with Covid-19.

In this context, the Minister for Finance undertook a number of speaking engagements and bilateral meetings during 2020, including an intensive virtual US visit in June.

Over the course of two days, the Minister held discussions with US Treasury Under Secretary, Brett McIntosh; Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, Senator Chuck Grassley; and Presidential economic advisor at the White House, Kevin Hassett. He also met with Managing Director of the IMF, Kristalina Georgieva, discussing the Fund’s response to the global economic challenge associated with Covid-19.

The Minister participated in a business roundtable hosted by the US Chamber of Commerce, where he provided an update on Ireland’s economy and highlighted key points of Ireland’s continued attractiveness as a partner for trade and location for investment.

The ‘virtual visit’ enabled Minister Donohoe to discuss the strong bilateral relationship between Ireland and the US, to share views on the economic impact of Covid-19 and pathways to recovery, and to discuss the dynamic two-way trade and economic relationship. It provided an opportunity to maintain relationships and engage with key contacts in the US administration, on Capitol Hill, and with the Irish-US business community, in the absence of an opportunity to travel to Washington due to Covid-19.

The experience and observed benefits of this ‘virtual visit’, in addition to other virtual engagements during 2020, will be incorporated into planning for 2021. In addition, in the longer-term post-Covid-19 landscape, such virtual engagements may provide an additional dimension to international engagement, to complement but not replace the established face-to-face methods.
Planning for EXPO2020

EXPO2020 was postponed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Plans are currently in place for Expo to commence in October 2021 and run through to March 2022. Ireland’s participation in EXPO2020 in Dubai will showcase Ireland to a global audience, in a region with significant trade and investment potential. The EXPO2020 theme “Connecting Minds, Creating the Future” will highlight our traditions and capabilities in fields such as innovation, creativity and education. Ireland’s participation at EXPO is built on a strong Team Ireland approach to promoting Ireland as a global partner for the development of new ideas and technologies in meeting international challenges, as well as an attractive location for business, study, tourism, and investment.

The Government is working closely with the UAE authorities and stakeholders in Ireland to ensure Ireland is best placed to optimise our presence, given the challenges of the pandemic. A primary focus during the period covered by this progress report was the design and construction of Ireland’s pavilion, which is now complete.

The theme of Ireland at EXPO2020 is ‘Ireland - Island of Inspiration’ and the programme will follow and compliment the thematic weeks planned for Expo, including Climate and Biodiversity; Health and Wellness; Urban and Rural Development; Global Goals; and Travel and Connectivity. Ireland’s events and activities are in planning for Ireland’s Expo pavilion and around the Expo site. A whole of Government Team Ireland approach is a fundamental principle in the programme design and operation of EXPO.

Building around these focal themes, and using the performance spaces at the Ireland pavilion and elsewhere on the Expo site, our programme will be a mixture of: trade missions, Ministerial visits, tourism promotion, food promotion, an innovation focus, business to business networking events, educational programmes for students, and a variety of cultural performances, activities and events.

We also have a number of flagship events planned outside Ireland’s pavilion, including for Halloween and St Patrick’s Day.
Science and Innovation

Science Foundation Ireland undertook its first international research mission in December 2019, to the Bay Area of California. The mission, involving six SFI Research Centres (ADAPT, Confirm, Insight, Lero, CONNECT, VistaMilk), showcased Ireland’s research capabilities and SFI’s investments in the fields of artificial intelligence, data science, machine learning and related areas. Further missions may be planned and SFI will also participate with IDA and EI on future Ministerial-led international trade and investment missions, including at Expo 2020 and future St. Patrick’s Day programmes.

Outlook for 2021

Science Foundation Ireland’s new strategy, Shaping our Future, was launched by the Taoiseach and the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science on 1 March 2021.

The new strategy is aligned with the Government’s national ambition for Ireland to become a global leader in research and innovation.

There are two pillars to the strategy, Delivering Today and Preparing for Tomorrow:

- Delivering Today focuses on developing Ireland’s top talent, building on our excellent research base and maximising tangible benefits to benefit Ireland in the immediate future.
- Preparing for Tomorrow seeks to position Ireland to take first-mover advantage on new and emerging fields; to do this SFI will focus on anticipating what’s next by working collaboratively across the research ecosystem.

The strategy places a strong emphasis on seamlessly working with others to build a cohesive ecosystem that is embedded in the fabric of society and realising the potential of research for all of Ireland’s people. Working closely with colleagues across Government at home and abroad is an important element of this ambition.
4.5 Tourism

The impact of COVID-19 on travel and tourism globally was overwhelming and immediate, with unprecedented and extremely serious consequences for the island of Ireland’s tourism and hospitality sector. In 2019, overseas tourism delivered revenue of €5.9 billion to the economies north and south, with tourism employing around 325,000 people across the island. Since March 2020, we have had very few international visitors.

Unfortunately, given the increased incidence of Covid-19 and its continued devastating impact on the island of Ireland, and in our key overseas markets, most of Tourism Ireland’s paid-for promotional activity remains on hold for now.

However, despite most of our paid-for promotional activity being on hold, it is vital for Tourism Ireland to keep the island of Ireland ‘top of mind’ with prospective international visitors – until the time is right for them to visit. This will ensure that we are in the best possible place to immediately start converting business for Irish tourism operators, when the time is right.

Our research shows that consumers are considering now where they will travel to on their first post-pandemic trip – so keeping the island of Ireland ‘live’ in that consideration set has never been more important, to ensure a successful recovery for Irish tourism.

Instead, the Tourism Ireland teams around the world continue to engage in an extensive programme of mainly non-paid-for promotional activity – to keep the island of Ireland visible, or ‘front of mind’, with prospective future holidaymakers, until such time as they can visit again.

Tourism Ireland’s global social campaign, #FillYourHeartWithIreland, has been running since April 2020. The initiative aims to bring the best of the island of Ireland onto people’s screens and to help ensure that Ireland stays ‘front-of-mind’ with prospective visitors for future holidays. It involves the sharing of inspirational content that speaks to the world at this difficult time and connects people with the island of Ireland.

To date, the campaign has achieved excellent engagement with fans and followers on social media, delivering 833 million impressions on Tourism Ireland’s Facebook channels, with 44 million video views and 7.9 million engagements. There have been 220,000 engagements on Twitter, as well as 7.4 million likes on Instagram.

Content produced for this campaign has also been used by our industry and trade partners, such as Aer Lingus and Stena, in their consumer communications. We are also sharing the content with our database of international travel and lifestyle journalists, who’re all looking for great ‘armchair travel’ ideas right now. We estimate that, so far, the campaign has helped generate positive exposure for Ireland in international media worth more than €200 million in EAV (equivalent advertising value).

Outlook for 2021

While we face significant uncertainty right now, Tourism Ireland is actively planning for the restart of international travel, with a target of the second half of 2021.

There will be a three-phase plan to restart, rebuild and ultimately redesign demand. The priority for 2021 will be to RESTART tourism to the island of Ireland. While Tourism Ireland will remain active in all markets, closer-to-home markets and North America are likely to provide the earliest opportunities. Planned activities include:

- The #FillYourHeartWithIreland campaign will continue into 2021.
- Digital marketing has been increasingly important for Tourism Ireland in recent years. However, 2021 will see a step-change in our capabilities in this area. A significant redesign of Tourism Ireland’s international website, Ireland.com, has been under way throughout 2020. The new site will go live in early 2021; in all, there will be 33 market sites, in 30 different countries, in 11 languages. It will be fundamental to Tourism Ireland’s proposed kick-start success in 2021.
- As international travel begins to restart, it will be more important than ever before to keep Ireland ‘top of mind’ with potential visitors. Major broadcasts in the pipeline include an Ireland food travelogue fronted by celebrity chef Donal Skehan, on PBS in the United States; and Hidden Ireland, hosted by respected American travel journalist Peter Greenberg, also on PBS. A new two-part series called Adrian Dunbar’s Coastal Ireland will air in February 2021 on Channel 5 in Britain.
- A major new advertising campaign will be launched, when the time is right, with a very clear ‘book now’ message. The aim of the campaign will be to single-mindedly drive visitor numbers and intention to book a trip to Ireland. The concept revolves around creating a commitment to travel here by ‘pressing the green button’ – green being the universal colour of ‘go’. Filming for the campaign will take place when travel restrictions on the island of Ireland have been eased. It will include a focus on outdoor experiences and will feature some of our iconic attractions – including Trinity College, the Cliffs of Moher, Titanic Belfast, the Giant’s Causeway and Lough Tay, to name but some.
Tourism Ireland, together with around 370 tourism industry partners, will participate in 26 virtual trade promotions in the first quarter of 2021 – meeting, and doing business with, over 5,000 important travel trade contacts.

These virtual promotions include ITB Berlin NOW, the PGA Merchandise Show, Britain and Ireland Marketplace, the Los Angeles Travel & Adventure Show, a Northern European virtual workshop and an ‘Ireland Meets the Middle East’ virtual workshop, as well as a virtual sales mission to Austria and Switzerland.

Even though the transition period is now ended, the impact of Brexit on tourism is not yet clear, because of the devastating impact COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on our industry.

Post-COVID, we will be in a better position to assess the impact, potential opportunities and risks of Brexit for tourism to the island of Ireland.
Spotlight on St Patrick’s Day 2021

Saint Patrick’s Day attracts levels of publicity and media attention unmatched by the national day of any other country. It provides a unique opportunity to increase awareness of Ireland and our history, culture and values across our Mission network, and to celebrate our bonds with the global Irish family, our diaspora of over 70 million. The 2020 St. Patrick’s programme was severely curtailed owing to Covid-19. Nevertheless, the Government adapted to the challenging environment and hosted a number of events online.

The focus of the Government in 2021 is to inspire, as much as possible, Irish people and those connected to Ireland as they face new challenges and opportunities. Activities will be centred around virtual engagements in collaboration with key stakeholders.

Irish Embassies and Consulates will host virtual receptions including cultural performances and video contributions from political leaders. Ireland.ie will become a ‘Virtual Ireland House’. Other events involving the President and the Taoiseach are also being planned.

The first ever online global St Patrick’s Festival will take place in 2021, including a curated high-profile programme available through the Culture Ireland branded platform.

Tourism Ireland will roll out a programme of promotions to capitalise on the heightened exposure for Ireland around the globe on 17 March, to ensure that Ireland remains ‘top of mind’ as a great holiday destination for bookings when the time is right. A programme of virtual travel, trade and media events will be run in all overseas markets. Other events planned include:

- Tourism Ireland’s Global Greening 2021: hundreds of iconic landmarks and buildings around the world will take part in Tourism Ireland’s Global Greening 2021 initiative around St Patrick’s Day. From Brussels to Buenos Aires and from Sydney to San Francisco, a host of buildings and sites around the world will light up in green to mark our national day. 2021 will be the 12th year of Global Greening. In particular, the aim will be to bring some positivity and hope to the 70+ million people around the world who claim links to the island of Ireland. At a time when Irish people overseas cannot travel home, we want to shine a green light in as many locations around the world as possible, giving our Diaspora a sense of connection with home and reminding them that we cannot wait to welcome them back, as soon as it is possible to do so. Our Global Greening is a powerful symbol of the impact of the Irish abroad and is an expression of our reach, our shared values and our ambition. Tourism Ireland estimates that its St Patrick’s promotional activity alone generates positive publicity for Ireland worth well in excess of €10 million in advertising value.
- A new online video will be created and shared by Tourism Ireland, to inspire people to think about holidaying in Ireland, without encouraging travel right now.
- A tailor-made event, called St Patrick’s Day in your Living Room, will be livestreamed on social media from a pub in Ireland.
Expanding Consumer and Commercial Transport Routes

Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic Ireland’s global connectivity was severely curtailed in 2020. The aviation sector globally has seen a catastrophic collapse and Ireland has lost a lot of strategic connectivity with Transatlantic, Asia-Pacific and Gulf markets - at least in the short term. However, the Government is fully alert to the devastating impact of the global pandemic on international travel and values the critical role that aviation plays in the Irish economy.

It may still be some time before it is possible to permit a large-scale return to air travel, but the Government is committed to ensuring that the aviation sector can maintain the necessary core capability to retain strategic connectivity and to quickly rebound when circumstances allow.

To that end, in 2020 the Government agreed an €80m funding package for Irish aviation in addition to economy wide Covid-19-related supports – notably employment supports, rates waivers and deferred taxes. The value to the sector in 2020 of these measures was in excess of €100m.

The airport authorities and tourism agencies will continue to engage constructively with international airlines a view to restoring lost connectivity. The Department of Transport will also continue to seek opportunities in 2021 to enhance our bilateral aviation relations through the negotiation of air transport agreements with third countries, both bilaterally and at the EU / multilateral level. Discussions on a new bilateral Air Service Agreement with the Republic of Korea for example have begun already in 2021.
SECTION 5

Funding Global Ireland in Budget 2021
Funding Global Ireland in Budget 2021

The Year 1 Global Ireland progress report noted that the additional monies provided in Budget 2019 included significant increases in both the Overseas Development Aid (ODA) budget and allocated an additional €13 million to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Vote 28 to support the ambitious expansion of Ireland’s diplomatic network overseas.

Budget allocations for the Department of Foreign Affairs Group continued to substantially increase in both 2020 and 2021 with the continued provision of additional funding related to Global Ireland to include EXPO, SECCO and an enhanced Brexit response. The following sets out the sustained levels of increased Government funding provided.

Budget 2020 provided increased allocations for both ODA and some €19 million additional for the Department of Foreign Affairs Vote including:

- €5 million of this additional funding was allocated to nine new missions\(^1\) operational in 2020 under the Global Ireland strategy;
- an additional €0.5 million was allocated to commence a further three new missions\(^2\);
- €4 million additional to provide for Ireland’s representation at EXPO 2020;
- €6 million provided for enhancement of mission network and HQ under Global Ireland.

Similarly, Budget 2021 has provided an increased allocation of €30m for ODA bringing the total ODA allocation to €868m. Budget 2021 has also provided an additional €11 million for the Department of Foreign Affairs Vote 28 which includes the following:

- €5 million of this increase was allocated to support Ireland’s Seat on the UN Security Council (SECCO) with additionality provided for missions in New York, in HQ and in strategic locations around the world.
- €2.75 million additional to further operationalise those 12 missions already announced under this strategy and to initiate a further mission in Manchester to form part of Ireland’s Brexit response.

Enterprise Ireland is being provided with an additional €1m in current funding to allow it to progress the Global Ireland Strategy and to expand its promotional and awareness activities. A key target is to support client diversification through the Irish Advantage campaign and to expand the Irish Advantage campaign to 40+ sectors and 70+ markets. In this regard, Enterprise Ireland plans to accelerate the roll-out of its digital campaign Irish Advantage in 2021 promoting Irish innovation and capability to international buyers and supporting exporter diversification into priority markets.

In July 2020, the Government announced its Stimulus package which included an additional €10 million for IDA Ireland for FDI related promotional activities. These monies will assist IDA Ireland in building a pipeline of investments from 2021 onwards and will enable the agency to activate its new strategy. It is IDA Ireland’s intention to use the additional resources granted to meet IDA’s FDI target audience in their home markets with new engaging content that gives them confidence in Ireland’s reliability as a place to invest. Partnering with some of the most established brands in the business world this campaign will be delivered via social media, newspapers and TV advertising campaigns.

Additional funding requirements that may arise from further initiatives highlighted within the Global Ireland Strategy will fall for consideration as part of the annual estimates process and will be considered in line with the range of demands across Government and the capacity of the public finances to meet them.

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\(^1\) Wellington, Vancouver, Bogotá, Santiago, Amman, Mumbai, LA, Frankfurt & Cardiff full year operating costs.

\(^2\) Manilla, Rabat and Kyiv.
SECTION 6

Monitoring Implementation
Monitoring Implementation

*Global Ireland 2025* is a whole of government strategy; a commitment which is reflected in the Programme for Government, *Our Shared Future*.

Implementation of the strategy is overseen by a Senior Officials’ Group – led by the Department of the Taoiseach – which meets periodically and includes representatives from the following Government Departments:

- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Department of Defence
- Department of Education
- Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
- Department of Finance
- Department of Foreign Affairs
- Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
- Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
- Department of the Taoiseach
- Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
- Department of Transport

State and other Government Agencies play an essential role in the implementation of the strategy.

The Senior Officials’ Group will continue to monitor developments and will consider a review of the strategy in December 2021, to coincide with the halfway point in the lifespan of *Global Ireland 2025*, including an examination of the original commitments and whether they remain relevant.