



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Shared Island
Initiative

An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely Drogheda, showing a river flowing through the town and a large industrial or port area with cranes. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue and green geometric design.

Shared Island Initiative Report 2022

Action on a Shared Future

“Over 2,500 citizens and civic representatives from across all regions and communities have been involved, in what have been positive, practical, forward-looking discussions.”



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Foreword by the Taoiseach, Micheál Martin TD

I launched the Government's Shared Island initiative in October 2020 to engage with all communities and traditions around a shared future.

Our approach is to unlock the full potential of the Good Friday Agreement to deepen cooperation and connections across our borders and communities. It is an open and inclusive approach to which all communities and traditions can contribute with confidence.

This is a whole of Government priority, coordinated through the Department of the Taoiseach.

In the Programme for Government and revised National Development Plan (2021-2030), the Government set out a positive vision to invest for a more sustainable, connected and prosperous island for all. We have significantly raised the level of ambition for what North/South and East/West partnerships deliver, and backed this up with the €1billion Shared Island Fund.

All Ministers and their Departments are taking forward new investment, policy and cooperation initiatives that benefit the whole island and bring people together around common concerns, for instance on climate action and biodiversity protection; arts, culture and creativity.

The continuing challenges with the power-sharing and North/South political institutions of the Agreement impacts what is possible, and it is crucial that they return to operation without further delay. Over the last two years, the Government has worked with the Northern Ireland Executive and the British Government, with local authorities,

educational institutions and through island wide funding programmes to progress new collaborative investment projects that benefit people, North and South. We are ready to do significantly more in the time ahead, working closely with a new Northern Ireland Executive and the British Government.

The Shared Island unit in the Department of the Taoiseach has commissioned a comprehensive programme of published research to examine and deepen understanding of the island in economic, social, cultural and political terms.

And, over the last two years, I and my Government colleagues have convened 14 Shared Island Dialogue events, hearing from more than 2,500 citizens and civic representatives from across all communities, traditions and regions on how, in real tangible ways, we could better share this island.

This report sets out how the Government has taken forward this positive agenda of action on a shared future for all communities in 2022:

- With more than €140 million allocated from the Shared Island Fund this year, including for the Ulster Canal and Narrow Water Bridge as landmark sustainable tourism and connectivity assets; Co-Centres for Research and Innovation on Climate and on Food Sustainability; Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure; and, development of new investment projects by Local Authority partnerships across the island;
- A stream of published research, including recommendations to Government from the National Economic and Social Council, and

Economic and Social Research Institute reports examining Education, Primary Healthcare, and Productivity levels on the island of Ireland;

- And, Ministers held Shared Island Dialogue events at locations around the island on: Tourism; Sport; Rural and Community Development; hearing from younger generations on Identity issues; on Arts and Culture; and on Ending Gender-Based Violence and Abuse. It was very welcome too that civil society organisations proposed and led a number of new all-island projects and interactions as part of the initiative.

I want to extend my thanks to all who have participated in and contributed to the Shared Island initiative so far - our investment partners in the Northern Ireland Executive, UK Government, and in Local Authorities North and South; educators and researchers; business and trade union representatives; civic representatives, sports people, artists, cultural, voluntary and community leaders from all generations, backgrounds and identities on this island.

The Government is very pleased to work with you in building a shared, reconciled future with all communities and traditions on the island of Ireland, underpinned by the Good Friday Agreement.

Micheál Martin

Micheál Martin T.D.
Taoiseach





Shared Island Initiative in Numbers

Shared Island Initiative in Numbers

Investment Cooperation

€1bn commitment through Shared Island Fund out to 2030

Over **€190m** allocated from Shared Island Fund over 2020-2022

Including:

For a more **sustainable** island:



€3m for Shared Island Community Climate Action programme



€15m for All-Island Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure scheme



€11m for cross-border peatland restoration and all-island invasive species and biosecurity initiative

For a more **prosperous** island



€20m Co-Centres for Research and Innovation, funded through Science Foundation Ireland, the NI Executive and UK Government



€40m North South Research Programme for higher education institutions



€7.6m Wild Atlantic Way and Causeway Coastal Route tourism brand collaboration

For a more **connected** island



€47m enabling Phases 2 and 3 of the Ulster Canal Restoration



€3m moving ahead with Narrow Water Bridge project



€5m seed capital for cross-border Local Authority investment projects



€7.4m Arts investment projects



A Shared Island dimension to the Government's Creative Ireland Programme 2023 - 2027

Shared Island Dialogue



14 Shared Island Dialogues on themes from Environment, Economy and Healthcare to Sport, Identity, Culture, and Tackling Gender-Based Violence



2500 participants across all communities, political traditions and regions on the island of Ireland



New all-island civic fora convened by the National Women's Council; and also by The Wheel and Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action

Research on a Shared Future



National Economic and Social Council comprehensive report to Government on "Shared Island; Shared Opportunity"



Research on cross-border green hydrogen infrastructure and regulation



11 projects funded in 2021 through Irish Research Council across culture, science, education, law, equality and community relations



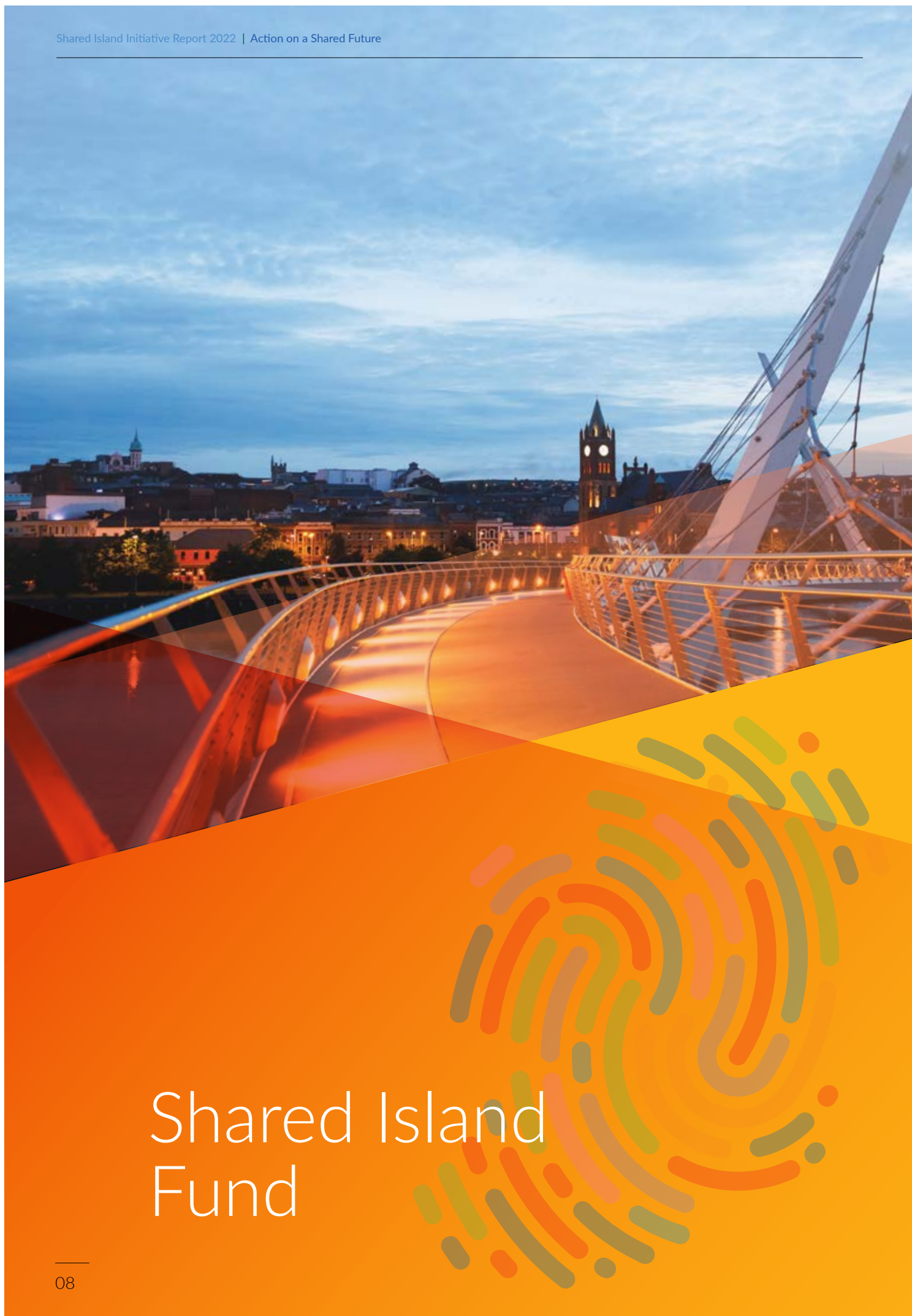
8 ESRI Shared Island reports on Services, FDI, Education, Healthcare, Productivity, Renewable Energy, Migrant Integration, Early Childhood Care and Education



5 projects funded with Standing Conference on Teacher Education North South on Educational Attainment and Curriculum Delivery



New research programme on all-island emergency planning cooperation and response



Shared Island Fund

Shared Island Fund

The Government in the Programme for Government and revised National Development Plan (2021-2030) set out a significantly-enhanced level of ambition for collaborative all-island investment.

The goal is a more connected, sustainable and prosperous island for all communities.

This is backed by a total all-island investment commitment of more than €3.5billion out to 2030, through the Government's Shared Island Fund; Project Ireland 2040 funds; resourcing for North/South cooperation; and the PEACEPLUS programme, delivered with the European Union, UK Government and Northern Ireland Executive.

The Shared Island Fund - with a commitment of at least €1billion out to 2030 - is ring-fenced funding to enable delivery of all-island investment commitments and objectives. The Government is deploying the Shared Island Fund, working through all-island partnerships, with the Executive, UK Government, Local Authorities, education institutions and through island-wide funding programmes.

With allocations from the Shared Island Fund, cross-border infrastructure that has been talked about for decades is being delivered: projects like the Ulster Canal restoration and the Narrow Water Bridge, as major sustainable tourism and connectivity assets for the central and east border regions.

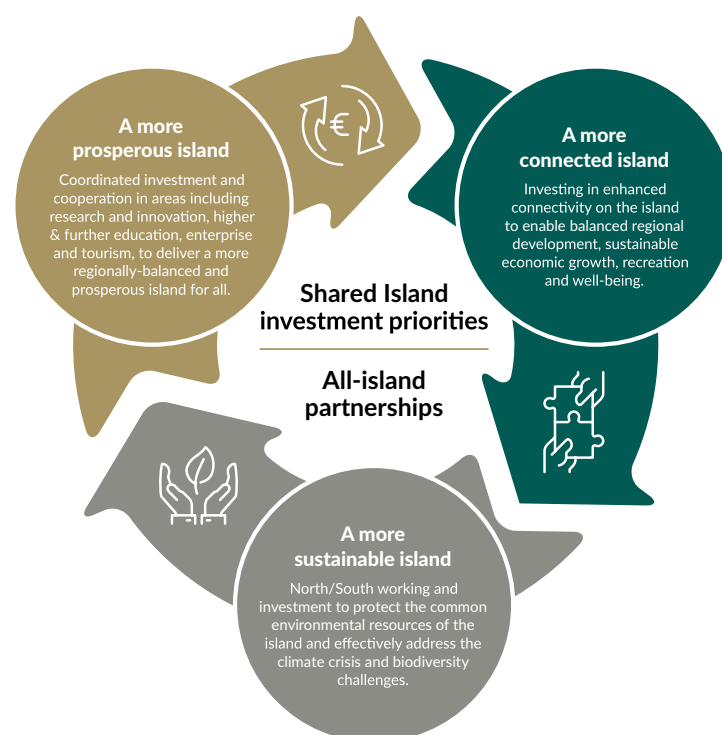
The Fund is also enabling a new generation of projects, that help to meet common challenges and take up opportunities for the

whole island, by harnessing the scale, capacity and complementarities that can be achieved through cross-border investment cooperation.

Over the last two years, Government has allocated more than €190 million from the Shared Island Fund.

We will continue to invest at this unprecedented level in the years ahead, demonstrating and harnessing the value of ambitious North/South and East/West cooperation, for the island of Ireland.

This Shared Island action is central to how the Government is working in practical ways with all communities and political traditions, to build consensus around a shared future underpinned by the Good Friday Agreement.





Shared Island Fund projects in focus

A more sustainable island

Shared Island Community Climate Action Programme

Overview:

- €3 million Shared Island strand to the Government's Community Climate Action Programme. Projects will include at least one partner in Northern Ireland and at least 50% of awarded funding will be for project delivery in Northern Ireland.

Objectives:

- Supporting Local Authorities to step up climate action in partnership with communities across the island, including on nature recovery networks; farming for nature; just transition; improving land use and water quality; peatland restoration; renewable energy solutions; and flood forecasting.

Impact:

- Helping to reach climate and energy targets on the island of Ireland; supporting collaborative community involvement on climate action on a shared island basis.

Shared Island Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Scheme

Overview:

- €15 million grant funding via National Sports Governing Bodies for clubs across the island to install publicly accessible Electric Vehicle (EV) charge points on a cooperative cross-border basis.

Objectives:

- Installation of interoperable EV charging infrastructure on both sides of the border, with up to 90 rapid EV charging points delivered in sports locations across the island.

Impact:

- Facilitating increased EV use across the island; EV charging points at destination locations; support for aligned standards and use of interoperable technologies for EV charging on the island of Ireland.

Peatland Restoration

Overview:

- €11 million contribution to 'Lighthouse' demonstration sites for peatland restoration in Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland, delivered by a partnership of Heritage and Environment Agencies.

Objectives:

- To deliver peatland restoration, build capacity for long-term peatland management, undertake research and monitoring, and address socio-cultural concerns.

Impact:

- Reduction of carbon emissions through restoration of blanket bogs; capacity building; knowledge exchange.



Shared Island Fund projects in focus

A more prosperous island

Co-Centres for Research and Innovation

Overview:

- €20 million Shared Island Fund contribution to Co-Centres for Research and Innovation to bring together leading academic and industrial researchers, as well as policy-makers across Ireland, Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
- Funded by Science Foundation Ireland, Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and UK Research and Innovation. Call opened in November 2022 focused on thematic areas: Climate, and Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems.

Objectives:

- Joint virtual centres to strengthen the research and innovation base across Ireland, Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Impact:

- Building strategic partnerships to support a competitive economy and addressing societal and environmental challenges.

North South Research Programme

Overview:

- New North South Research Programme administered by the Higher Education Authority, with €37.3 million awarded to 62 collaborative research partnerships involving academics and institutions in Ireland and Northern Ireland under the first call in 2022. Second round in 2023.

Objectives:

- Support the deepening of links between higher education institutions, researchers and research communities on the island of Ireland.

Impact:

- Strengthen research, innovation, development and collaboration in and between individuals and higher education institutions; rewarding innovation and excellence, to enhance the higher education sector, North and South on the island of Ireland.

Wild Atlantic Way and Causeway Coastal Route Brand Collaboration

Overview:

- €7.6 million available for enhancing the visitor journey from the Causeway Coastal route to the Wild Atlantic Way.
- Investment and collaboration by tourism agencies in discovery point and destination development; seamless cross-border online booking experience; cross promotional content, digital strategy and hub development.

Objectives:

- Connecting the Causeway Coast and Wild Atlantic Way so visitors stay longer and spend more, bringing greater economic benefit to the region.

Impact:

- Bringing two internationally-renowned tourism assets and regions closer together to improve the overall performance of tourism for the island, creating lasting economic opportunity and benefits.



Shared Island Fund projects in focus

A more connected island

Ulster Canal Restoration

Overview:

- Ulster Canal blueway and greenway restoration from Upper Lough Erne to Middletown, managed by Waterways Ireland. Phase 1 completed in 2019.
- €47 million Shared Island Fund allocation in 2021 and 2022 to enable delivery of Phase 2 and 3 blueway restorations. Phase 4 and 5 greenways funded by the Government and Northern Ireland Executive and European Union INTERREG VA programme.

Objectives:

- Completion of a landmark cross-border investment, with economic and social benefits for the central border region and exemplifying the value of all-island collaboration.

Impact:

- Sustainable tourism and recreation asset for Fermanagh, Cavan, Monaghan and Armagh; connected waterway across the island from the Shannon Estuary in Limerick, to Lough Erne in Fermanagh and on through the Ulster Canal to Clones, Co. Monaghan.

Narrow Water Bridge

Overview:

- Launch of tender process for Narrow Water Bridge agreed in November 2022; €3 million allocation in 2021 from the Shared Island Fund to bring the project to tender stage. The Narrow Water Bridge is a long-standing cross-border investment commitment of the Government.

Objectives:

- Delivery of the Narrow Water Bridge project to link the Mourne Mountains and Cooley peninsula, providing tourism, recreation and connectivity boosts for the east border region.

Impact:

- Connectivity and integrated active travel initiatives in the East Border region; increase cross-border active travel and recreation activities.



Shared Island Local Authority Development Funding Scheme

Overview:

- Seed capital grants of up to €250,000 for cross-border Local Authority partnerships.
- 25 awards to 15 Local Authorities in the South, working with 9 Councils in Northern Ireland in September 2022. Array of feasibility and pre-planning projects including on biodiversity, decarbonisation, tourism, and rural regeneration.

Objectives:

- To generate a pipeline of well-developed cross-border local authority projects that will be in a position to secure funding for construction/ implementation stages from both jurisdictions, including through the Shared Island Fund.

Impact:

- Local Authorities cooperating to deliver shared regional development goals. More strategic investment cooperation by central and local government on the island.



Shared Island Fund projects in focus

A more connected island

Shared Island Arts Investment Projects

Overview:

- To support the delivery of a suite of new Arts capital investment projects on the island in consultation with the Arts Council and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

Objectives:

- Complement and enable programme funding by the two Arts Councils with capital investment in projects including residential and studio spaces for cross-border writer artistic and traditional music collaborations; and digitisation and curation of film, music and architectural archives on an island-wide basis.

Impact:

- Promoting interaction and enhanced understanding on the island through the Arts.

A Shared Island Dimension to the Government's Creative Ireland Programme 2023 - 2027

Overview:

- A new Shared Island dimension to the Government's Creative Ireland programme to deploy the power of creativity by people and communities, North and South.

Objectives:

- Increasing opportunities for community cultural and creative initiatives for children and young people; supporting local authorities to enhance networks of community creativity on a cross-border basis; deepening creative collaborations for a more environmentally and socially sustainable island.

Impact:

- Harness the power of cultural creativity to bring communities together, and to strengthen our sense of shared and connected identities.



Research on a Shared Future

Research on Shared Future

The Shared Island unit in the Department of the Taoiseach is progressing a wide-ranging research programme to examine the political, social, economic and cultural considerations of a shared future for all communities and traditions on the island, underpinned by the Good Friday Agreement.

Deepening beneficial all-island cooperation and enhancing civic connections and understanding are key areas of focus. North/South and East/West partnership is central to the approach.

Research is being progressed by the Shared Island unit taking account of discussions at the Shared Island Dialogue series, with Government Departments and Agencies, and working with research bodies including: the National Economic and Social Council; Economic and Social Research Institute; Irish Research Council; and Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South.

The programme is providing both a stronger evidence-base along with a rigorous analysis to inform inclusive civic and political discussion on a shared future on the island of Ireland.

The research is also contributing to the shaping of the Shared Island initiative, including:

- Setting of Shared Island investment priorities under the National Development Plan (2021-2030);
- Development of new all-island investment, policy and cooperation projects by all Government Departments;
- Government engagement with the Northern Ireland Executive, UK Government, and with Local Authority and civil society partners on Shared Island investment cooperation;
- Informing the case for cross-border climate action partnerships; greater support for all-island civil society engagement; and a Shared Island dimension to the Creative Ireland programme;
- Evidencing the FDI and other economic benefits derived from greater all-island investment in R&D, including through the recently-agreed Co-Centres for Research and Innovation and the North South Research Programme administered by the Higher Education Authority.

More than 20 reports are being published over the first two years of the programme, available at www.gov.ie/sharedisland/research.



Evidence, analysis and recommendations from the research programme so far includes:

Department of the Taoiseach-Economic and Social Research Institute Joint Research Programme on Shared Island

- **Cross-Border Trade in Services (published December 2021):**

“Cross-border services trade is quite considerably lower than cross-border trade in goods. Services make up 26 per cent of the total trade going from Northern Ireland to Ireland and 16 per cent of the trade going from Ireland to Northern Ireland. This suggests **considerable scope for greater development of all-island services links.**”

- **Enhancing attractiveness of the island of Ireland to FDI (published December 2021):**

“The **largest gains in terms of the number of high-value FDI projects that would be attracted to both Ireland and Northern**

Ireland would be in the case of higher R&D expenditure in the public sector. Northern Ireland’s attractiveness to high-value FDI would also be substantially increased in a situation of increased educational attainment of the working-age population.”

- **Analysis of primary health care systems of Ireland and Northern Ireland (published March 2022):**

“There are **higher levels of unmet healthcare needs due to affordability issues in Ireland relative to Northern Ireland.** However, the most common reason for unmet healthcare needs in both Ireland and Northern Ireland relates to long waits to access care.”



- **North South comparison of Education and training systems and outcomes (published April 2022):**

“There are marked differences in the extent of early school leaving between the two jurisdictions, with Northern Ireland experiencing over twice the level of early school leaving than Ireland. Furthermore, students from more disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to be early school leavers in Northern Ireland than in Ireland. This highlights an important difference between the two systems, and it is likely that academic selection in Northern Ireland and the success of the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) programme in Ireland in retaining students in education are strong contributory factors.”

- **Modelling Productivity Levels in Ireland and Northern Ireland (published November 2022):**

“Productivity levels in the two regions were broadly equivalent in 2000. Over the period 2001 to 2020, productivity levels in Ireland have trended slightly upwards, while in Northern Ireland productivity levels have been trending downwards. By 2020, productivity per worker was approximately 40 per cent higher in Ireland compared to Northern Ireland.”

- **Calculating the benefit of all-island coordination of energy infrastructure and renewable energy supports (publication December 2022):**

“Added renewable energy capacity will result in a changing pattern of renewable energy absorption on the island. As renewable energy is variable, it must

be either consumed instantaneously, transmitted for consumption elsewhere, stored, or discarded. A certain proportion of the additional renewable energy generation in Northern Ireland can be absorbed locally, which reduces the storage requirement in Northern Ireland, but a commensurate increase in storage in Ireland is observed. This highlights the potential for alignment of policy targets to increase cooperation and security across the market.”

- **Children’s care and early education in Ireland North and South (publication Q1 2023):**

“Childcare use is more strongly associated with maternal employment in Ireland. Mothers of young children work longer hours and are more reliant on formal provision in Ireland, whereas in Northern Ireland, mothers are more likely to work part-time and may need to fit paid work around support from family or friends to a greater extent.”

- **Migrant Integration in Ireland, North and South (publication Q1 2023):**

“Migrants in both jurisdictions have high employment rates, particularly EU migrants: in Northern Ireland, migrants overall are more likely to be employed than non-migrants. A higher proportion of migrants in both jurisdictions work in professional/managerial jobs, particularly EU-West and non-EU migrants....While migrants make a substantial contribution to employment in Ireland and Northern Ireland, they can also face challenges in the labour market, as well as considerable challenges in cross-border travel and access to work and services.”

National Economic and Social Council report

Shared Island: Shared Opportunity

The National Economic and Social Council (NESC), at the request of the Department of the Taoiseach, undertook a programme of research to produce a comprehensive report on Shared Island issues for the Government, to inform development of the Shared Island Initiative as a whole of Government priority.

The Council's report Shared Island: Shared Opportunity was launched by the Taoiseach, Micheál Martin TD on 12 April 2022. Following broad consultation with stakeholders across the island, the National Economic and Social Council drew three overarching conclusions:

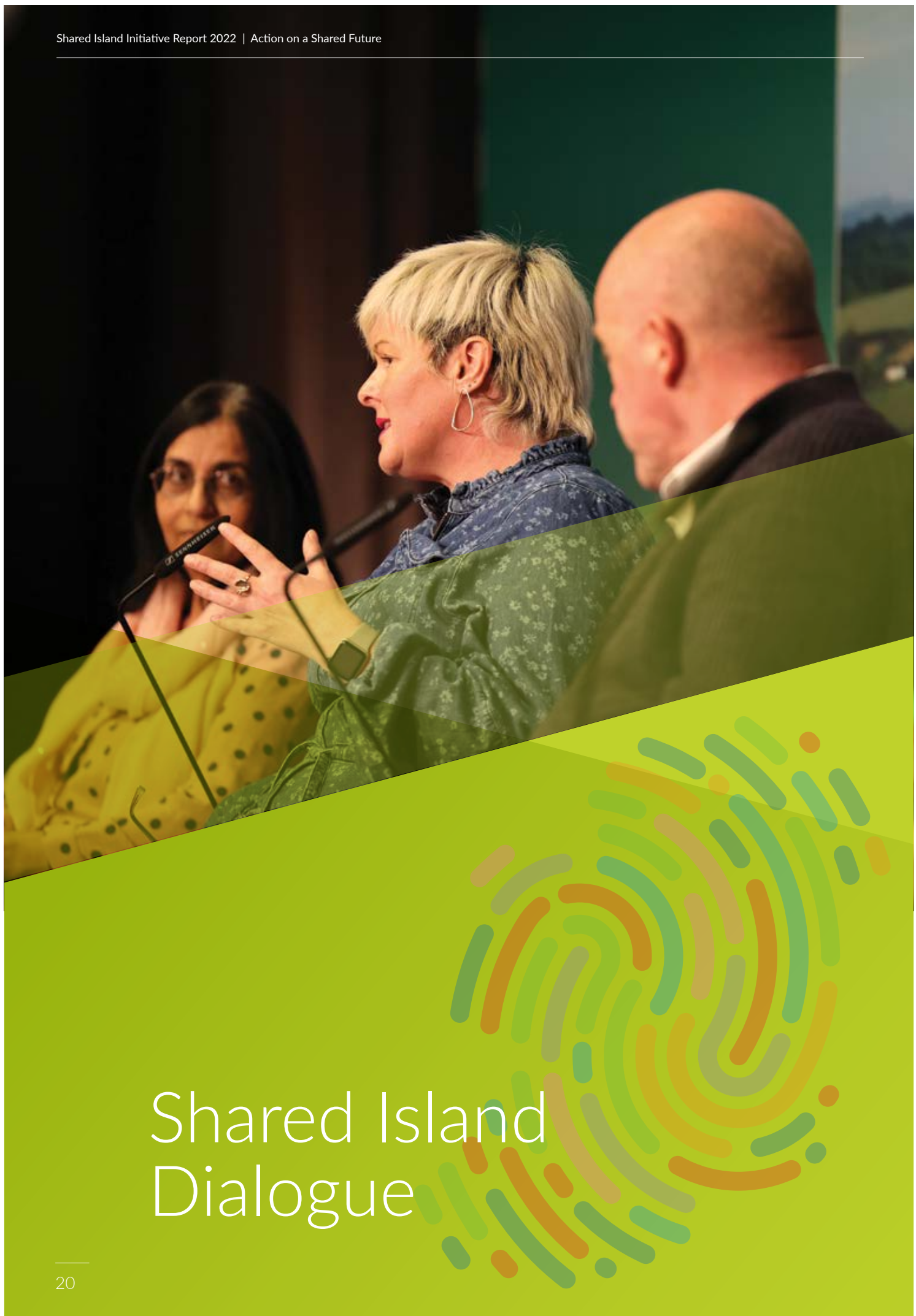
- "There is **very significant support, in practice, for an all-island approach to key economic, social, environmental, and well-being challenges.**"
- "Climate change and biodiversity loss provide a clear and urgent platform for ambitious all-island action and collaboration."
- "There are **key factors which are shaping current and future collaboration. These include: a shared agenda, resources, political certainty and support, legislative and regulatory coherence, and collaborative projects.**"

NESC also made 25 recommendations on deepening cooperation in economic, social and environmental terms, which are being positively considered by Government in consultation with Northern Ireland and UK counterparts.

NESC recommendations include:

- "Both administrations should take greater cognisance of the connected nature of the climate crisis and biodiversity emergency for the island of Ireland, and reflect this in a programme of co-ordination and joint action."
- "Although it would require agreement by the Government and the Northern Ireland Executive, **a more structured basis for consultation, co-operation and action by the two administrations on enterprise policy, and other economic development issues,** should be considered."
- "The two administrations and the tourism agencies should **cooperate to grow local, sustainable tourism on a cross-border basis,** as this would benefit both jurisdictions, particularly regions that attract lower levels of overseas visitors."





Shared Island Dialogue

Shared Island Dialogue

Inclusive dialogue with all communities and political traditions is central to the Government's Shared Island approach.

Over the last two years, the Shared Island Dialogue series has brought together more than 2,500 citizens and civic representatives to discuss how cooperation and interaction can help address challenges and take up opportunities that concern and connect the whole island.

There have been 14 Dialogues in the series and a number of related consultations and events, with a focus on sectoral issues - including Education, Healthcare and Climate Action - and on broader societal concerns under the Good Friday Agreement, like Equality and Civic Engagement.

In 2022, it was possible to hold the Dialogues on an in-person basis, at locations across the island, which enhanced the richness of discussions and allowed for greater networking and interaction by participants, from across all regions and backgrounds.

The Dialogue series has sought to include as broad a range of experience and perspectives as possible, particularly those voices underrepresented in the Peace Process - women, young people and ethnic minority communities on the island.

Through the Dialogue series, the Government is listening to people's views on a range of common concerns, on how we can work across communities and borders for a shared future, in practical, meaningful ways.

The Dialogues are informing how the Government, working with our counterparts and civil society partners, develops and delivers the Shared Island initiative.

Reports and recordings and summaries of all of events are at gov.ie/sharedisland/dialogues.

6 Dialogues were held this year, with participation by some 1000 people, with discussions on:

- **Tourism**
- **Sport**
- **Rural and Community Development**
- **Identities on the Island**
- **Arts and Culture**
- **Tackling Gender Based Violence**



A flavour of the Shared Island Dialogue series in 2022

Tourism on the Shared Island: Building on Past Success to Create a Sustainable Future

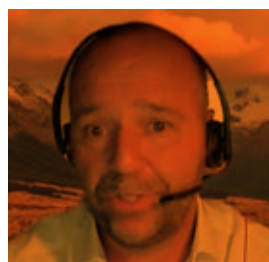
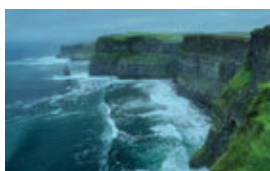
20 January 2022 - Dublin Castle and online

Convened by the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Catherine Martin TD.

The event heard from more than 160 tourism agencies, organisations, interest groups and stakeholders from North and South; moderated by Fionn Davenport, travel writer and broadcaster.

There was a focus on:

- Tourism as a driver of economic activity on the island, worth more than €5.8 billion and 325,000 jobs in 2019, with particular significance for rural areas;
- The importance of cross-border tourism agency and industry interaction and the broad scope and support to develop this, including through new and coordinated marketing initiatives;
- Opportunities also to grow more local and sustainable on-island tourism, and as a way to deepen connections between people, North and South.



Shared Island Actions

- Shared Island Funding for brand collaboration for the Causeway Coastal Route and Wild Atlantic Way.
- Funding for feasibility work on 10 new cross-border tourism and heritage projects under the Shared Island Local Authority Development Funding Scheme.



Heard at #SharedIsland Dialogue:

“There is more I believe we can do...funding to connect the Wild Atlantic Way to the Causeway Coastal Route; ...including the magnificent cities of Enniskillen and Armagh in the region marketed as Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands; ...ensuring that the Irish Open Golf Championship rotates to other locations around the entire island, cementing the internationally-recognised Irish golf brand.”

Dr Howard Hastings OBE, Chairman of Hastings Hotels.

“With the industry coming together, through the first decade of this century, under the Good Friday Agreement and Tourism Ireland’s existence...helped people to build a level of trust, understanding and that competency that was required to actually sell Ireland as an all-island experience...Really in the last decade we’ve seen from the foundations that were put in place at every level in the first ten years, we really saw that take off.”

Ruth Andrews , CEO of ITOA & Chair of ITIC

“In the context of travel on the island itself, where a larger proportion of people from the Republic haven’t been to Northern Ireland compared to vice versa, Covid has been an eye opener for a lot of people in the Republic that wouldn’t have thought of traveling to Northern Ireland before, that’s something we have to build.”

Niall Gibbons, CEO of Tourism Ireland

Breaking Down Barriers and Tackling Shared Challenges: Sport Cooperation on the Island

24 February 2022 - National Sports Campus, Abbotstown, Dublin and online

Convened by the Minister of State with responsibility for Sport and the Gaeltacht, Jack Chambers TD.

Participation by over 100 current and former sports stars, sports organisations, clubs, community groups and health and wellbeing professionals; moderated by Joanne O’Riordan, Irish Times Sportswriter.

There was focus on:

- Sport as a way of bringing people together from different backgrounds and communities;
- Scope for sharing of sports facilities on the island, including through support under the Sports Capital Programme;
- The shared objective of increasing participation and engagement in sport, particularly for young people and minorities.



Shared Island Actions

- Agreed joint North-South bid to host the opening stages of a future Tour de France, in 2026 or 2027.
- Minister Chambers has asked Sport Ireland to engage with Sport Northern Ireland to identify ways to bring about more sporting exchanges on this island, with inclusion being the primary focus.



Heard at #SharedIsland Dialogue:

“You have to enjoy what you’re doing. We have to make sport more enjoyable. If girls come and they enjoy playing sport, then they’re going to come back. ...It’s about participation, it’s about having fun and we have to make it fun for all the kids.”

Chloe Magee, Three-time Olympic Badminton Player.

“Sport and in particular boxing is one of the greatest catalysts for fostering good relationships particularly at community level, boxing reflects trust, loyalty, discipline, empathy, core values that are at the heart of building strong relationships in community.”

Barry McGuigan, former World Featherweight Boxing Champion and International Hall of Famer.

Enabling Rural and Community Development on a Shared Island

20 May 2022 - Connected Hub, Drumhowan, Co. Monaghan and online

Convened by the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD.

With over 200 people from rural and community groups, business organisations, social enterprise coordinators and Government agencies North and South; moderated by Darragh McCullough, Farmer and Broadcaster.

There was focus on:

- The important and growing role of social enterprise, North and South and the critical role of government in supporting and facilitating this.
- Significance of networked connected hubs in supporting rural economy and communities.
- Opportunities for the two administrations on the island to learn from and to conduct linking work, for instance to develop an all-island network of connected hubs.



Shared Island Actions

- Shared Island Funding to move forward with the Ulster Canal and Narrow Water Bridge projects as sustainable tourism and connectivity assets for the central and east border regions.
- Department of Rural and Community Development to fund feasibility work on development of a Connected Hubs Network on an all-island basis, in consultation with the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.



Heard at #SharedIsland Dialogue:

“Let’s look to build talent here across the island rather than using the government’s resources to make a small number of people super rich. Let’s understand post pandemic opportunities are so much more than digitisation, let’s find a way for state agencies to work more cohesively with social enterprises and make the network of rural hubs start to hum with opportunities. Let’s find a tangible way to give our diaspora the ability to invest in the future and share in the success of the companies we are going to create. And let’s think more creatively about unlocking the power, the economic power of the women across this island.”

Mary McKenna MBE, Tech Entrepreneur, Angel Investor and Awaken Hub co-founder.

“Ultimately while the infrastructure is the connected hubs network, it’s the community it creates across of engaged rural and urban centres... it brings new blood into those communities, because people that traditionally would have left and travelled throughout the week are now on-site and able to give back, and I think that is why in the medium to long term this network of digital hubs or connected hubs is of huge benefit.”

Tomás Ó Síocháin, CEO, Western Development Commission.

We as a group would like to tie in to the hub network in...Ireland...the way you should look at these things is, it’s like your Hilton card or Marriott card, you know if you go to one of these hubs that you are going to get the same quality, same facilities...in Dundalk today, Carndonagh tomorrow, Portrush and Cushendall.”

Liam O’Hagan, Grow the Glens.

Identities on a Shared Island – New Generation Perspectives

28 June 2022 - St Columb's Hall, Derry and online

Convened by the Taoiseach, Micheál Martin TD, who delivered an address online.

Over 150 young people took part in-person and online in a wide-ranging and inclusive discussion on what identity - cultural identity, race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender and ability - means today, and what it should mean in the years ahead; moderated by journalist Aoife Grace Moore.

There was a focus on:

- Changes sought by young people include improved representation of women and ethnic minorities in public life, overhauling approaches to sex education North and South, and providing more space for gender identity to be affirmed and celebrated.
- View that people don't want to be pigeon-holed with a one-dimensional identity and need for more political recognition and representation of identity diversity and complexity;
- Importance of more inclusion of ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma communities and the role for political leaders in supporting communities on the margins.



Shared Island Actions

- New Shared Island civic society funding scheme being commenced by the Department of Foreign Affairs, welcoming applications from regional or national representative bodies, including of the underrepresented voices of women, young people, older people, ethnic minorities, and LGBTQI+.
- A series of initiatives to support engagement with Ulster Scots language, culture and heritage and Irish language as part of the island's diverse cultural heritage.

Heard at #SharedIsland Dialogue:

“Yes, they might be Protestant and Catholic and yes that makes them different, but they’re all moms, they’re all sisters, they’re all aunts, they all share the common concerns of trying to make ends meet, trying to improve their mental health, so it’s identifying those things and bringing them together on common issues rather than... bringing together for the sake of being different”

Kyra Reynolds; Development Worker; Bogside and Brandywell Initiative

“I go to college in Dublin and I couldn’t believe it that within the first week members of my class had asked me so are you Protestant or Catholic? ...Well I’ve never really seen it like that...there is more to me than that. I am a musician, I am a sister, I am a daughter, I am a granddaughter, I love my sport. It’s not about just Protestant or Catholic.”

Éile Smith; Tyrone County Youth Officer, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann

“What young women want is to see themselves in those roles and we wanted it also to be diverse women, women that look like us, trans women, women of colour, disabled women, women from working class backgrounds. Where all these identities intersect. I think that’s what young women want to see in politics.”

Aoife Clements, Co-founder, 50:50NI

“I would identify myself as British, but when you say that, people just see the Union Jack above your head and automatically maybe align you to a certain political party which is not really the case. If you look at the cities all across London, Glasgow, Edinburgh, the multi culturalism that’s there, the richness of that culture, that’s why I identify myself as British.”

Darren Milligan, Project Coordinator, North West Cultural Partnership

“As one of the first black women to enter into this space, it’s extremely difficult when you haven’t seen someone who looks like you, whether it be politics, education, academia. For a lot of young people what they really need is the support to be themselves in whatever environment they find themselves in and obviously right now... government and other organisations aren’t reflective of the society we have today.”

Bukky Adebawale, Equality Officer, Union of Students in Ireland

“As a young trans person, my sex education was non-existent and although there was support from the teachers, even the curriculum that was there, there was only one or two pages. You are talking about a huge proportion of Irish society that is LGBT...we need to have proper sex education... and that should be done through schools.”

Sam Blanckensee, Transgender Equality Network Ireland Board and Equality Officer, Maynooth University

Arts and Culture on a Shared Island

13 October 2022, Queens University, Belfast and online

Convened by the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Catherine Martin TD, and with participation by the NI Executive Minister for Communities, Deirdre Hargey MLA.

With over 200 artists, musicians, writers, members of cultural and creative community organisations, and government agencies North and South; moderated by Sean Rocks, Arena presenter, RTÉ Radio.

There was a focus on:

- Hearing from artists and arts organisations on North/South and East/West collaboration, challenges and opportunities.
- Building cultural and creative communities on the island of Ireland; fostering community and voluntary sector interactions, both North/South and East/West.
- How can arts, culture and creativity contribute to enhanced understanding of different communities and traditions.



Shared Island Actions

- Shared Island Funding for a number of Arts investment projects developed in consultation with the Arts Councils, North and South and delivered in cooperation with the Northern Ireland Department for Communities.
- Shared Island dimension to the Government's flagship Creative Ireland programme 2023-2027.
- Funding under the Shared Island Local Authority Development Funding Scheme for feasibility work on 2 Arts and Culture related investment projects.



Heard at #SharedIsland Dialogue:

"I had no connection with the North at all... I was a staff director in the Abbey and Colm Morrison, a brilliant director, directed this show called 'In a Little World of our Own' by Gary Mitchell, which blew me away. It was set in a loyalist estate. I knew nothing about this but it reminded me of where I was from in Tallaght, and I saw it was full of similarities."

Jimmy Fay, Director, Lyric Theatre, Belfast.

"We [the two Arts Councils] have been co-operating for many decades...and are very keen to keep going in that direction. We want to reinstate things like cross-border touring... Also, we are very aware that there are gaps on the island of Ireland that need to be attended to. Maureen Kennelly [Arts Council Director] has been working hugely on dance and we are right behind that. We have no conservatoire. There are lots of things that we don't have, I think by working and focusing our energies together on those issues, we can move forward and it's really important that we do. We are a tiny island. We need each other."

Roisín McDonough, Chief Executive, Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

"While there are lots of examples of really beautiful work that happens across the island and also lots of evidence of goodwill and creativity on the part of our policy makers around how they can better work together, the hard reality is for an arts organisation and an arts community in Northern Ireland, there is a strong and growing sense that the arts are not equally valued on this island."

Anne McReynolds, Director MAC Theatre.

Tackling Gender-Based Violence and Abuse

4 November 2022 - Eureka House, Kells, Co Meath and online

- Convened by the Minister for Justice, Helen McEntee TD, and with participation by the former NI Executive Minister of Justice Naomi Long MLA.
- Over 120 people from victim and survivor support organisations, government and political representatives North and South, as well as researchers and legal practitioners discussed how to tackle gender-based violence and abuse on the island of Ireland.



There was a focus on:

- How all-island interaction can contribute to eradicating the social and cultural factors that contribute to gender-based violence, with opportunities for both jurisdictions to learn and benefit from progress on different fronts across the island.
- How victims and survivors of gender-based violence and abuse can be better supported on the island of Ireland, through victim-centred services and processes, empowering victims' voices to feed into policy-making, and greater appreciation of and responsiveness towards the intersectionality of victims.
- The urgent need for whole-of-society, systematic, cultural, attitudinal change, enabled by education, awareness, increased funding, men championing progress, and an enhanced evidence base to support research informed policy.



Shared Island Actions

- Minister for Justice Helen McEntee TD affirmed a commitment to strengthened North/South government cooperation and supported civil society engagement to promote a cohesive response to ending all forms of gender-based violence and abuse on the island.



Heard at #SharedIsland Dialogue:

“It’s not about indict; it’s about invite. It’s about inviting men into the conversation, inviting them to become the champions and the allies in relation to addressing the issues.”

Sean Cooke, CEO, Men’s Development Network

“A system is only as good as the people, from the police and the solicitors to the judge and that jury of your peers, have all been raised in misogynistic society that normalises gendered violence against women, why would we assume that such a system would be in any way functional. But it doesn’t have to be this. I believe in change. I believe in the human capacity to learn and grow and evolve.”

Louise O’Neill, Writer

“We don’t really have a full picture of the intersectionality of our victims. We know that there are 32,000 incidences of domestic abuse reported to the PSNI, again the tip of the iceberg. How many of those are women who are living with a disability? How many of those are women from a migrant background? How many of those are lesbian or bi sexual or trans women or non-binary individuals? We simply don’t know.”

Aisling Playford, Policy and Advocacy Manager, Rainbow NI

“We talk about the criminal justice system, we design systems and we ask victims to step into them and quite often then we blame them if they don’t. We should be designing systems with them, their voices and they will tell us how to design what they need and that will work and it’s just as simple as that. We need to start changing what we do radically.”

Marie Brown, Director Foyle Family Justice Centre

“If we have an overall vision where victims are empowered, the process that they are agents in their own right, the communities and the families in which they live and work have the language and have the capacity and have the courage to act, this will transform a huge amount of workers and I think of the burden on guards, on social workers, on frontline health workers, never mind frontline DV services.”

Mary McDermott, CEO, Safe Ireland

“One of the major problems is we have a tendency to view everything around gender-based violence as a private issue, not a political issue.”

Elaine Crory, Advocacy and Policy Co-Ordinator, Women’s Resource and Development Agency



Civil society contributions

A number of civil society organisations are leading projects which are contributing the Shared Island initiative and to inclusive engagement with all communities around a shared future on the island of Ireland, including:

All Island Women's Forum

The All-Island Women's Forum was established by the National Women's Council (NWC) in 2021, consisting of 28 members, 14 from Northern Ireland and 14 from the South. The Forum aims to address underrepresentation of women and further develop women's role in peacebuilding and civic society. It brings together women's groups and individuals on a cross-border basis to examine issues and areas of commonality between both jurisdictions. The Forum's work has been supported through the Reconciliation Fund of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Views from members of the Forum highlighted in the report included:

"The all-island Women's Forum is...my first ever 'regular' encounter with women from the south of Ireland. This, I believe, has been a major weakness in the shared island approach to peacebuilding. Like many of my unionist friends and colleagues, we have little or no experience of Irish culture, history, and way of life south of the border. The forum enables us to exchange ideas, expertise, and experience on a wide range of issues, from integrated education to reproductive rights to cultural diversity and is of tremendous value as a means of increasing understanding between us."

Dr Jane Morrice



The Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD launched the All-Island Women's Forum first term report on 9 September 2022, which made a series of recommendations to both administrations on this island,, which include calls for:

- “both governments to make a **joint commitment to developing an all-island approach to ending Gender Based Violence**”
- “a **joint North-South education scheme that encourages free movement** and education exchange”
- “**gender quotas at candidate selection in local level elections North and South**, gender quotas at candidate selection for Assembly elections in Northern Ireland”

The Forum's report is available at www.nwci.ie. The Government is positively engaging with the recommendations of the All-Island Women's Forum, consulting with the Executive and the UK Government, and looks forward to continuing to engage with the Forum as an important space for civic dialogue led by women, contributing to wider public debates and helping to shape the all-island civic agenda.



“The Women’s Forum has provided a timely space to share ambitions, challenges and concerns about not just the future, but the lived present of women and women’s groups across the island...You cannot underestimate the power of constructive and safe spaces for dialogue and learning. We need to keep going. This stuff doesn’t happen overnight, and it doesn’t happen over a year. It takes commitment over generations, and it takes the resource to manage it.”

Síona Cahill





iCommunity Hub

The iCommunity hub is a joint initiative of The Wheel and Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA), born from a view that civil society has played and can continue to play a key role in leading the way for all-island collaboration. The iCommunity Hub has been supported through the Reconciliation Fund of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department for Communities in Northern Ireland.

iCommunity supports non-profits, North and South, to explore the benefits of collaboration by highlighting examples of existing all-island practice while developing new opportunities to work together on shared challenges. The project brings people and communities together to explore key themes, make plans to collaborate and showcase what works in communities.

The first iCommunity report “A Vision for Addressing Challenges on our Shared Island” was launched by the Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD and NI Executive Minister for Communities, Deirdre Hargey MLA on 3 October 2022. The report is available at icommunityhub.org

The iCommunity project made recommendations on a new vision for increased all-Ireland collaboration on shared challenges, including climate action; rural development and digital connectivity; and remote work. iCommunity made a number of recommendations including:

- “**more inclusive bureaucratic processes** that can be understood between jurisdictions.”
- “**dedicated funding streams** to support organisations to have additional capacity for **networking and relationship building** beyond core service delivery.”
- “**deep listening at the civic level, through the convening of specific opportunities for collaboration** and rights-based deliberation on development choices for local communities and marginalised groups.”

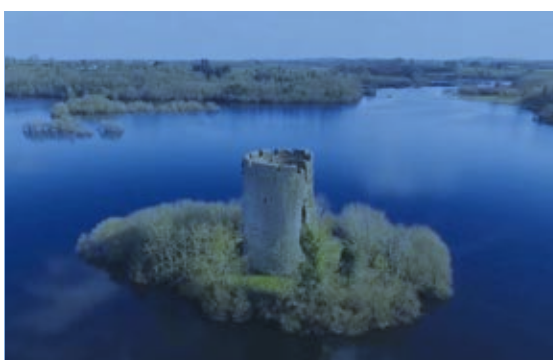
The Government is considering the iCommunity recommendations and engaging with and supporting the further development of the Hub, as all Government Departments progress work to develop new policy, investment and cooperation projects, as part of the Shared Island initiative.

Shared Island Actions: New All-island Civic Society Funding Scheme

Recognising the value of active and inclusive civic engagement on a cross-border basis, in supporting and developing the relationships accommodated in the Good Friday Agreement, the Department of Foreign Affairs will commence a new Shared Island Civic Society Funding Scheme to support civic society and community organisations to develop new cross-border links, strengthen existing partnerships, and deepen cross-border connectivity on issues of concern for the island of Ireland including on:

- **Climate and environment**
- **Community development**
- **Heritage and conservation**
- **Social enterprise, charity, and voluntary sector**
- **Sport**

The Department for Foreign Affairs will open a call for proposals for new all-island civic cooperation initiatives from regional and national bodies working in these areas, from business or trade union representative groups and from other regional or national representative bodies, including of the underrepresented voices of women, young people, older people, ethnic minorities, and LGBTQI+.





Appendix

Appendix

Research programme – 2021-2022 publications

All research is published and available from:
www.gov.ie/sharedisland/research.

National Economic and Social Council:

- [Shared Island; Shared Opportunity: NESC Comprehensive Report](#)
Council Report No 157, April 2022.

Economic and Social Research Institute joint research programme on Shared Island:

- [Cross-border trade in services](#)
Martina Lawless (December, 2021).
- [Enhancing the attractiveness of the island of Ireland to high-value Foreign Direct Investment](#)
Iulia Siedschlag, Weijie Yan, Nigel Driffield (December 2021).
- [An analysis of the Primary care systems of Ireland and Northern Ireland](#)
Sheelah Connolly, Aoife Brick, Ciarán O'Neill, Michael O'Callaghan (March 2022).
- [A North-South comparison of education and training systems: lessons for policy](#)
Emer Smyth, Anne Devlin, Adele Bergin, Seamus McGuinness (April 2022).
- [Modelling Productivity Levels in Ireland and Northern Ireland](#)
Seamus McGuinness and Adele Bergin (November 2022).
- [Calculating the benefit of all-island coordination of energy infrastructure and renewable energy supports](#)
Niall Farrell and Muireann Lynch (December 2022).

- [Children's care and early education in Ireland North and South](#)

Helen Russell, Frances McGinnity, Emer Smyth, Sarah Curristan (published Q1 2023).

- [Migrant Integration in Ireland, North and South](#)
Frances McGinnity and James Laurence (published Q1 2023).

Scoping research:

- [Collaborating on Healthcare on an All-Island Basis](#)
Prof. Deirdre Heenan (June 2021)

Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South:

- [Buddies: BUilding BriDges, DimInishing Educational DiSadantage:](#)
Examining the Role of the Home-School Community Liaison Coordinator (HSCL) across the island of Ireland - led by Dr Glenda Walsh (Stranmillis University College) in collaboration with Dr Seaneen Sloan (University College Dublin) and Dr Clíodhna Martin (Marino Institute of Education).
- [SHARED: Student Hopes: Achievement, Research, Equity and Diversity:](#)
Exploring how teacher educators can prepare and support student teachers to negotiate and engage with challenges of educational underachievement while on school placement - led by Dr. Melanie Ní Dhuinn and Dr. Julie Uí Choistealbha (Marino Institute of Education) in collaboration with Julie Hamilton (St. Mary's University College).



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Irish Research Council New Foundations programme (Strand 8 - Shared Island):

- [Éire strategy for Quantum Information and Technology](#)
led by Assistant Prof. Steve Campbell, University College Dublin.
- [Appraise Curriculum Content for Entrepreneurship in Secondary Schools](#)
led by Assistant Prof. Isobel Cunningham, Atlantic Technological University.
- [North-South Legal Mapping Project](#)
led by Prof. Oran Doyle, Trinity College Dublin.
- [Building Capacity for the Cultural Industries: Towards a Shared-Island Approach](#)
led by Dr. Victoria Durrer, University College Dublin.
- [Exploring the Economic, Political, Societal and Health Benefits of an All-Island Cancer Research Institute \(AICRI\)](#)
led by Prof. William Gallagher, University College Dublin.
- [Towards A Fair and Prosperous Island: An All-Island Network to Combat Hate](#)
led by Dr. Amanda Haynes, University of Limerick.
- [Providing a multi-disciplinary expert network to promote and support implementation of a circular economy on the island of Ireland](#)
led by Prof. Michael Morris, University of Dublin, Trinity College.
- [Assisting Irish churches and religious communities to develop values-based common positions on current European issues and to engage with European counterparts](#)
led by Prof. Deiric Ó Broin, Dublin City University.
- [Brexit at the border: Intergroup Relations on the Shared Island](#)
led by Dr. Jenny Roth, University of Limerick.
- [Negotiating difference on a shared island: agonism, commonality, or critical-constitutionalism](#)
led by Prof. Jennifer Todd, University College Dublin.
- [Reading Rooms: Fostering constructive & inclusive dialogue between communities](#)
Dr. Padraic Whyte, University of Dublin, Trinity College.

Notes

“Let’s keep building a
shared, reconciled future
with all communities and
traditions on the island
of Ireland.”



As part of the Shared Island Initiative
gov.ie/sharedisland



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland