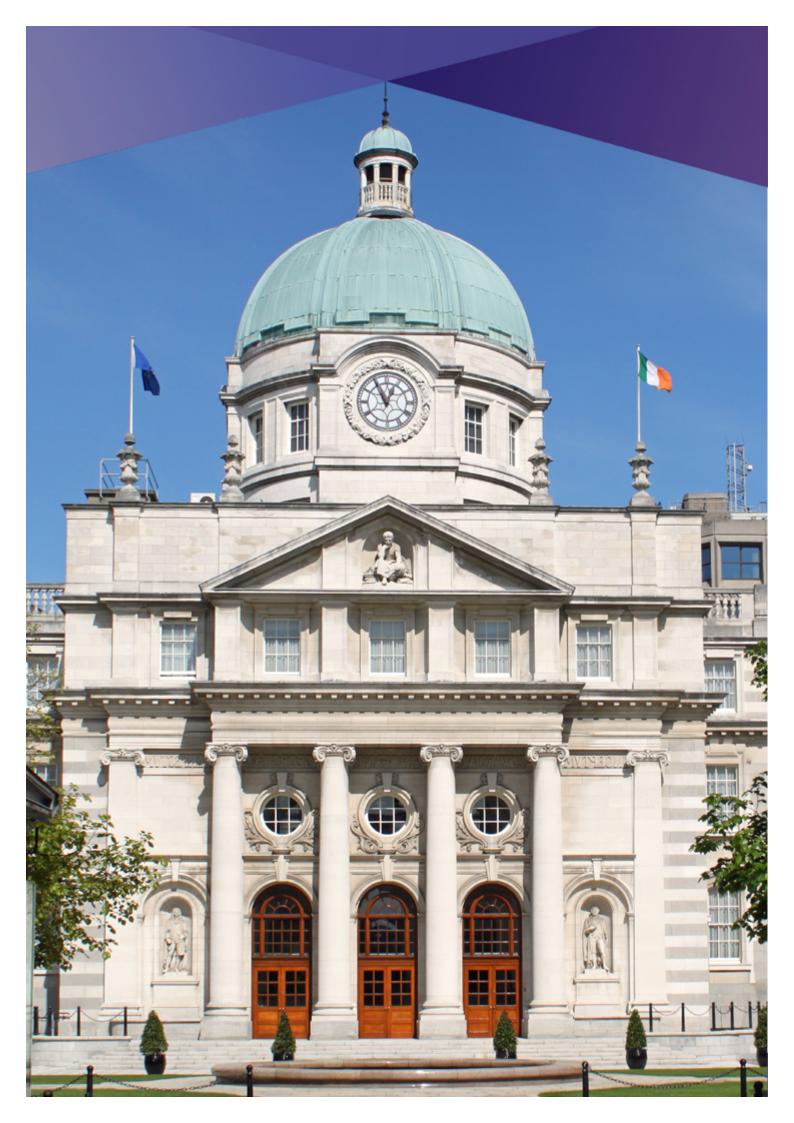


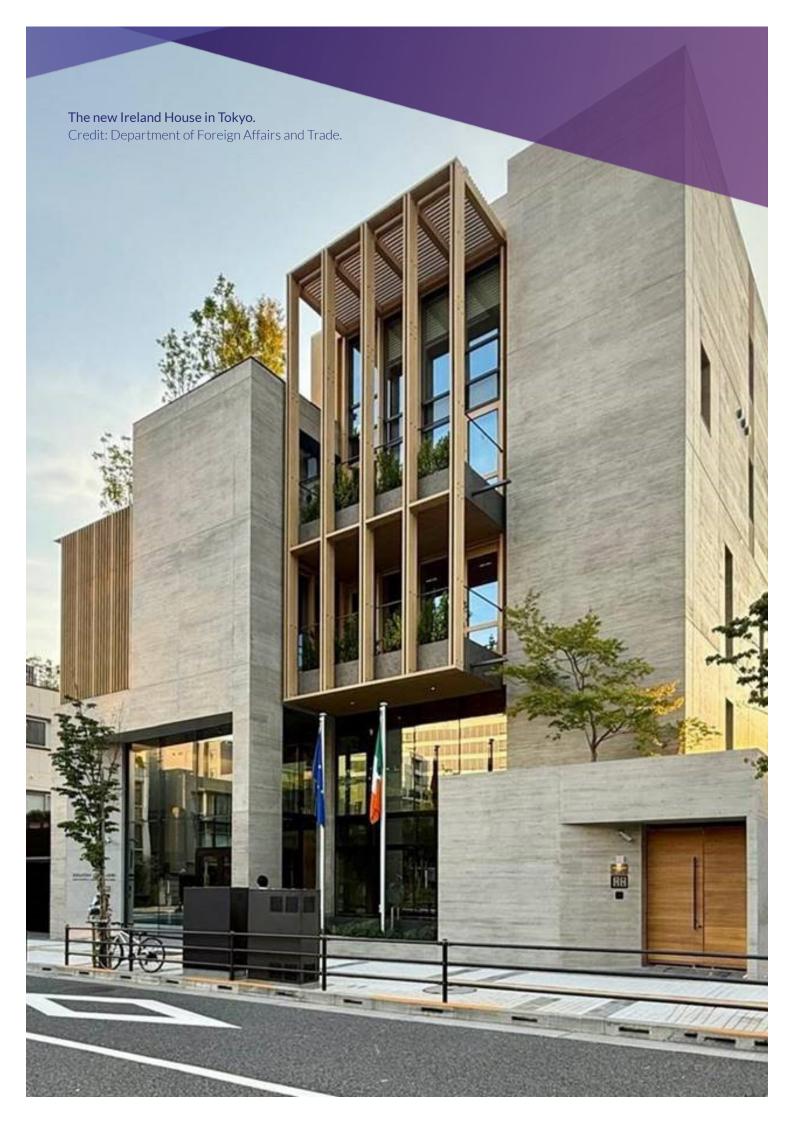
Government Action Plan on Market Diversification





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## **Foreword by Tánaiste**



Ireland is an open global trading economy. That openness has been a key pillar of our continued economic success. Through a strong foundation of Irish and multinational exporting companies, together with a highly skilled workforce and access to the EU Single Market and the EU's network of trade agreements, we have built a strong industrial base which has created jobs, grown exports, nurtured innovation, and raised our standard of living.

However, we can never take that economic success for granted. The economic model on which we rely, based on a strong enterprise economy, free trade, competitiveness and innovation is facing new headwinds.

Through the Global Ireland Strategy, we have deepened and expanded our investment in existing and high potential markets. Now is the moment to accelerate this process.

It is timely therefore for us to review our markets around the world and more importantly the supports, which the Government and its Agencies provide to support Irish business. The EU Single Market and the UK bolstered by the recent EU-UK Agreements and the ambition in the UK-Ireland 2030 Joint Statement will be key markets in this regard. As of course will the US, Ireland's largest trade and investment partner, as we continue to trade and invest there. Asia with over two-thirds of annual global growth is also strong in our areas for further growth.

We will also invest in our relationships in new and emerging markets and identify and avail of the opportunities they offer to businesses in Ireland. The Government has already made a significant investment in this regard with significant additional diplomatic and State agency resources in Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Gulf under Global Ireland 2025. Ireland is now represented with diplomatic missions in over 100 cities around the world, all of whom have trade promotion as one of their core priorities.

This Action Plan has been developed with inputs from across Government Department and the State agencies, in recognition that concerted action is required if we are to effectively support businesses in their market diversification ambitions. This in line with our Programme for Government commitment to support Irish-based enterprises.

The Government Trade Forum will monitor implementation of the Action Plan.

This Action Plan and the Action plan on Competitiveness and Productivity, due to issue later this year underlines the Government's commitment to support businesses, to protect jobs and to take the necessary steps to enhance our national resilience to emerging economic trends.

Simon Harris T.D.

Tánaiste & Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade

## Foreword by Minister for Enterprise, Tourism and Employment

#### Foreword by Minister for Enterprise, Tourism and Employment



I am pleased to present this Action Plan on Market Diversification which the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade have jointly developed. This Action Plan is the result of extensive engagement across Government and with our State Agencies. It is crucial that we sustain and deepen our existing trade relationships where there are opportunities to do so, while at the same time we seek to extend and diversify into new markets.

Ireland's economic success has always been underpinned by our openness to the world—our ability to trade, innovate, and build strong international partnerships. In today's increasingly complex and uncertain global environment, this openness must be matched by resilience, agility and strategic foresight. The Government Action Plan on Market Diversification is a timely and ambitious response to this challenge.

This Action Plan sets out a clear and coordinated roadmap to strengthen Ireland's global economic resilience by broadening our trade and investment horizons. The plan reflects a whole-of-Government commitment to supporting Irish businesses in navigating change and seizing new opportunities.

The global trading landscape is evolving rapidly. Geopolitical tensions, shifting regulatory environments and supply chain disruptions are reshaping how and where we do business. Our long-established trade partnerships, forged over many decades, must endure and evolve. At the same time, new markets are emerging, digital technologies are transforming industries and the global demand for sustainable solutions is accelerating. In this context, market diversification is not just a strategic choice, it is an economic imperative.

This plan is built around four core objectives:

- **Supporting Exporting Businesses and Market Access** ensuring that Irish enterprises, particularly SMEs, have the tools, insights and supports they need to succeed in new and existing markets.
- Deepening and Broadening Ireland's International Engagement scaling up our diplomatic and agency presence in key regions and leveraging our diaspora and global networks to open doors for Irish business.
- **Delivering Trade and Tourism Missions for Strategic Impact** enhancing the visibility of Ireland as a trusted partner and destination for trade, investment, and tourism.
- Enhancing Domestic Readiness for Economic Engagement and Partnership ensuring that our domestic policies, infrastructure, and regulatory environmentsupport international competitiveness and innovation.

The plan also recognises the importance of aligning with broader EU and global strategies. It complements Ireland's contributions to the EU's evolving trade agenda and reflects our commitment to open, rules based international trade. It also supports the ambitions of the Government's Trade and Investment Strategy, Global Ireland 2025, and the forthcoming Global Ireland 2040 framework.

#### Foreword by Minister for Enterprise, Tourism and Employment

Importantly, this Action Plan is not a one-off initiative. It is a living framework that will evolve in response to global developments and the needs of Irish businesses. It will be monitored and reviewed regularly, with real-time engagement and inputs from our agencies and our business stakeholders. This ensures that the plan remains dynamic, responsive and impactful.

I want to acknowledge the vital role played by our enterprise, tourism, and food agencies, our diplomatic network and our business community in shaping and delivering this Action Plan. Their insights, ambition and commitment are central to its success.

This Action Plan on Market Diversification reflects our shared ambition to build a more resilient, competitive and globally connected Irish economy—one that delivers sustainable growth, quality employment and opportunity for all.

Peter Burke, TD

Ista Burke

Minister for Enterprise, Tourism and Employment



#### **Summary Overview**

The key elements of the Action Plan can be summarised as follows:

- Identify New Market Opportunities: Informed by business demand, leveraging the expertise of each department and agency to pinpoint emerging markets and sectors in existing markets where Ireland can potentially expand its presence.
- Maximise existing business opportunities, utilising our membership of the EU Single Market and swift ratification of outstanding elements of international FTAs such as CETA, and Investment Protection Agreements with Singapore and Vietnam.
- Work collaboratively at EU level to improve competitiveness and eliminate barriers to trade in the single market, so that Irish enterprises can seamlessly access our markets of 450 million consumers.
- Sector-specific considerations: Addressing the specific needs and strengths of different sectors, ensuring a holistic and tailored approach to market diversification while supporting a competitive enterprise base at domestic and EU levels.
- Harness the experience, knowledge and goodwill of diaspora business networks to support the scaleup Irish of businesses in strategically important locations and avail to the greatest extent possible of the invaluable connections, expertise and insights of Irish citizens based overseas in support of the Government's trade and investment priorities.
- Refresh engagement with Irish connected business leaders and high-level decision makers based overseas.
- Foster Collaboration: Reinforcing ongoing collaboration and communication between agencies and Departments to maintain alignment and adapt to changing global conditions. Ireland House will continue to play an important role in this regard.
- Bring forward a review of the existing Government Trade and Investment Strategy and publish a new Trade and Investment Strategy in line with the Global Ireland 2040 regional and country strategies.
- Commission and publish economic studies for markets in which there are recently agreed EU trade and
  investment agreements and Double Taxation Agreements, with a view to identifying and maximising
  opportunities arising from the agreements to Irish based companies.
- Implement the new Horizontal Single Market Strategy. The Single Market: Our European Insurance in today's uncertain world presents the Single Market as the primary driver of Europe's prosperity and competitiveness and a stable, vibrant market of over 450 million consumers where EU businesses are not as exposed to global uncertainties and market shocks.
- Accelerate the modernisation of visa service delivery to ensure an efficient, fair and predictable visa process that facilitates inward travel to Ireland for business, including attracting critical and high value workers, education and tourism.
- Carry out a strategic review of opportunities for Ireland within the matrix of both current and potential EU free trade negotiations in seeking areas for opportunities for Ireland.
- Pursue the expansion and enhancement of Ireland's tax treaty network, by engaging new and existing Double Taxation Agreements, in line with the published Tax Treaty Policy Statement, to stimulate trade and investment flows between Ireland and global tax treaty partners.

#### Introduction

In the face of unprecedented global economic uncertainty, driven by a dynamic geopolitical backdrop and a rapidly evolving landscape for rules-based trade, it is important for Ireland to play to our strengths as an open trading nation by re-doubling our long-established relationships with established markets and striking up new relationships with newer, high-growth markets. Ireland's economic model is founded upon open access to international markets facilitated by open trade and investment flows. The nation is particularly sensitive to shifts in global trade dynamics and currency fluctuations.

Membership of the European Union (EU) provides businesses in Ireland with access to the Single Market of 450 million people, as well as to the EU's comprehensive network of free and preferential trading agreements with over 70 countries. Additionally, the rules agreed upon at the World Trade Organization (WTO) provide a basis for stable trade and investment decisions with other major partners.

However, recent changes in the global environment for trade policy, including new and prospective tariffs, have the potential to bring about serious disruptions to global supply chains and value chains in which Ireland is currently embedded, unless these issues can be resolved satisfactorily. Input to the EU's trade policy response to this changed environment, and Ireland's contribution to sensitive trade negotiations, will continue to be a key priority of work.

As geopolitical disruptions persist and trade policies remain unclear, global decision-makers are confronted with increased risk in their planning processes. This environment of uncertainty dampens investor confidence and delays critical business decisions, leading to significant opportunity costs in the form of foregone investments.

To mitigate current risks and bolster economic resilience, it is imperative to develop and implement a Government Action Plan on Market Diversification. This plan also draws upon Ireland's extensive global outreach and market insight from our network of overseas missions and State agencies.

Securing and gaining further, freer access to global markets for Irish enterprises is also one of the pillars of the overall Government Action Plan on Competitiveness and Productivity. The Action Plan on Market Diversification therefore aligns with the Action Plan on Competitiveness and Productivity and both are part of the government response to current challenges. A proactive approach to market diversification will help promote Ireland's economic resilience, foster competitiveness and productivity, and strengthen and support our trade and investment model, ensuring sustainable growth in an increasingly unpredictable global economy. The opportunities identified in this Action Plan on Market Diversification will have the potential to bolster Ireland's economic position and strengthen our trading relationships while diversifying further into new and high-growth markets.

#### **Approach to the Action Plan**

#### **Objectives**

The overarching goal of the Government Action Plan on Market Diversification is to set out a path to assist and support Ireland's businesses – large and small – to adapt to this new environment by striking out into new and diverse markets and deepening their engagement in existing markets. It is a stock-take of the current supports available domestically and internationally for exporting Irish-based companies. To this end, the Action Plan sets out specific measures for Team Ireland e.g. the overseas mission network in 105 locations allied to the State's enterprise, tourism, food, research and other promotional agencies to refocus on markets and sectors which offer additional opportunities for trade, investment and productive relationship-building in the rapidly evolving global economic environment. The Action Plan seeks to support Ireland's continued growth, increase exports sustainably, deepen and extend our trade and investment relationships, grow quality employment and bolster Ireland's economy.

At present the United States is our largest trading partner (imports and exports). In 2024, 30% of Ireland's total trade was with the United States – this market also accounted for 43% of Ireland's imports (goods and services) and 19% of Ireland's exports (goods and services). In 2024, total exports to the United States were €132 billion and total imports were €245 billion giving a total trade figure of €377 billion with the United States. Ireland had a trade deficit with the United States of €113 billion in 2024 when looking at total trade (goods and services). Trade Diversification should be seen as Ireland entering a new phase of trade development rather than a move away from the US market and the opportunities it offers, with the focus being on risk reduction through trade growth beyond our traditional markets. In parallel, the development of Irish multinational presence overseas should be encouraged and seen as a natural maturing of our indigenous Irish companies.

The strategic context for the Action Plan includes the Government's Trade and Investment Strategy 2022 – 2026, Value for Ireland, Values for the World, the Global Ireland 2025 Strategy, regional strategies, State agency and sector specific and horizontal strategies, such as the new National Semiconductor Strategy, Silicon Island and Global Citizens 2030 Ireland's International Talent and Innovation Strategy. In line with commitments in the Programme for Government, this Action Plan and future iterations will both feed into and evolve in line with future strategies, including Global Ireland 2040, the new Diaspora Strategy 2026, new regional strategies and our forthcoming National Life-sciences Strategy, our Space Strategy etc. A review of the Trade and Investment Strategy will be completed in 2025.

Building upon the enhanced programme of action discussed by Government in May 2025, the Action Plan on Market Diversification is anchored around four objectives:

- Supporting Exporting Businesses and Market Access
- Deepening and Broadening Ireland's International Engagement
- Delivering Trade and Tourism Missions for Strategic Impact
- Enhancing Domestic Readiness for Economic Engagement and Partnership



#### **Development and Implementation**

A whole of Government Team Ireland approach will be necessary to deliver on the ambition of this Action Plan on Market Diversification.

In the development of this strategy, the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, have actively sought input from various Government Departments and State agencies. This collaborative approach is essential for aligning strategies and leveraging expertise across different sectors and in different markets.

The Headquarters Market Team (HQMT), co-chaired by the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, will monitor implementation of this Action Plan and will in turn report to the Cabinet Committee on Economy, Trade and Competitiveness.

Businesses and their employees, along with other representative groups, will also have an important role to play in achieving the objectives of the Action plan. The Government Trade Forum, established by the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, will play an invaluable role, allowing for Government Ministers from a range of relevant portfolios to communicate directly with stakeholders and experts as we shape the national, multi-faceted response to the trade challenges facing the country and the business sector in particular.

Elements of the Action Plan will feed in, in due course, to the preparation of a new Trade and Investment Strategy and Global Ireland 2040.



## Objective 1: Supporting Exporting Businesses and Market Access

## Objective 1: Supporting Exporting Businesses and Market Access



Image from the Government Trade Forum featuring Minister for Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Services, Reform and Digitalisation Jack Chambers TD, Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Harris TD, Minister for Finance Paschal Donohoe TD and Minister of State for Trade Promotion, Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation, Niamh Smyth TD. Credit: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Ireland's continued economic resilience and prosperity depend on the ability of its businesses to compete and thrive in a dynamic global marketplace. As international trade landscapes evolve, shaped by geopolitical shifts, technological advancements, and changing consumer demands, it is essential that Irish exporters are equipped with the tools, knowledge, and access they need to succeed.

This objective focuses on strengthening the foundation for export-led growth by enhancing the supports available to businesses, improving access to international markets, and fostering a more agile and diversified export base. It recognises that while traditional markets remain vital, there is a growing imperative to explore new opportunities and reduce over-reliance on any single region or sector.

To achieve this, the Action Plan outlines a series of targeted initiatives designed to:

- Deepen agency support for companies seeking to diversify their export markets.
- Leverage the unique advantages of the all-island economy to drive cross-border trade and innovation.
- Promote and protect market access for Irish goods and services through strategic engagement and advocacy.
- Identify and cultivate new market opportunities, both within the EU and globally, to ensure Irish-based businesses remain competitive and future ready.

The following sections detail the key categories of action under this objective, each contributing to a more resilient, outward-looking, and opportunity-driven export economy.

#### **Enhanced Agency Supports and Focus on Market Diversification**

In response to an increasingly complex global trading environment, the lead Departments, are working closely with key agencies to strengthen Ireland's export resilience and support businesses in diversifying their market reach. A central focus is on equipping companies, particularly those impacted by tariffs or concentrated market exposure, with the expertise, tools, and strategic guidance needed to mitigate risks and unlock new growth opportunities.

Enterprise Ireland has taken a proactive stance through the establishment of a dedicated 'Trade and Tariff Response Team', which is actively engaging with Irish exporters. This team ensures that Irish businesses are kept informed of evolving trade developments and supported in developing tailored mitigation strategies. Complementing this, a nationwide communications campaign is underway to promote the benefits of market diversification and encourage Irish exporters to expand globally.

IDA Ireland is aligning its strategy to both retain and renew existing foreign direct investment (FDI) operations while also targeting new investment opportunities in high-growth sectors such as AI, semiconductors, sustainability, and health. This dual approach is essential to maintaining Ireland's competitiveness and ensuring that trade development efforts are underpinned by a strong and evolving FDI base.

Enterprise Ireland will research the case for developing an export credit insurance scheme for exporters into strategic high-growth markets and bring forward a proposal for consideration by the Minister for Enterprise, Tourism and Employment. The proposed Market Diversification and Resilience Fund will provide targeted assistance to both indigenous and multinational firms navigating current trade challenges. The scale of the fund will be contingent on the level of change to the EU-US trading relationship.

Tourism Ireland continues to play a key role, implementing a refreshed strategy to drive visitor revenue from specific regions including Great Britain, Mainland Europe and North America, while adopting an agile approach to emerging markets. Enhancing direct air connectivity, particularly from Asia, South America, and key US gateways, and growing direct air connectivity to the regions, are recognised as critical enablers for both tourism and trade and engagement with relevant departments, agencies and stakeholders is ongoing.

In parallel, InterTradeIreland continues to support cross-border trade through initiatives like the TradeHub, helping businesses leverage the all-island economy and navigate the evolving UK trading context. The All-Island economy can be an important launch pad for businesses seeking to scale and internationalise.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine also has a strong focus on market access. Agrifood exports have grown substantially over the last ten years increasing by 66% from €11.6 billion in 2014 to €19.26 billion in 2024. The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and Bord Bia are also advancing market diversification through the Food Vision 2030 strategy, reflecting the growing importance of new markets for Ireland's agri-food exports.

A priority for this Action Plan is enhancing agency supports for Irish exporters and working to create and capitalise on new markets to enable diversification. These efforts represent a coordinated, cross-agency multi-departmental response to ensure Irish exporters are well-positioned to adapt, compete, and thrive in a rapidly changing global economy.

Action	Delivery	Responsible Body
Establish a Market Diversification and Resilience Fund.	Ongoing	DETE
Review of potential enhancements in Ireland's incentive offering, across grants and tax, to support existing businesses (e.g. on digitalisation, RD&I, sustainability, energy costs) and win new growth opportunities aligned to national policy objectives.	Q1 2026	DETE/IDA/EI Whole-of- Government
Implement national and EU competitiveness strategies putting in place key enterprise enabling conditions including cost competitiveness; an efficient planning system; infrastructure delivery; talent development and innovation; incentives; and a balanced regulatory environment.	Ongoing	Whole-of- Government
Develop a contingency plan for a fund to support company working capital, should economic conditions deteriorate significantly (e.g. in the event of a nodeal EU-US trading scenario or standards or tariff divergence between EU and UK). The approach would be similar to the 'Sustaining Enterprise Fund', supporting company growth plans, leveraging diversification and productivity subject to EU State Aid regulations.	Q3 2025	EI/DETE
Through the estimates process, seek additional investment in Tourism Ireland's 'Global Agile Partnerships Programme', to support industry to carry out activity in new markets to drive incremental business and establish a foothold in new tourism markets for Ireland.	2026	Tourism Ireland

Develop a new strategic air access fund, to be deployed where there is potential to maximise the opportunity presented by the establishment of new air routes, including strategic long-haul destination, through stimulating demand, in partnership with air carriers on a co-operative basis in support of overall economic activity.	2026	Tourism Ireland / DETE / DOT
Through the estimates process, seek additional investment in Mainland Europe to run year-round communications campaigns, seeking to elevate perceptions of Ireland, in line with Tourism Ireland's Mainland European Appraisal, and generate year-round business.	2026	Tourism Ireland
Pivot InterTradeIreland's successful Trade Hub communication campaign to concentrate on 'Looking for the answers you need to trade'. A new dedicated market diversification section will encourage businesses to use the NI market as a means to validate their product or service and to grow sales.	H2 2025	InterTradeIreland
Provide specialist technical advice to businesses on trade matters impacting the island will continue to be available to businesses through this service at no cost.	Ongoing	InterTradeIreland
Progression of Next Generation Sites initiative to develop up to three large scale, pre-permitted sites with property, utility and sustainable infrastructure for transformational advanced manufacturing projects aligned to FDI growth drivers across core sectors.	Ongoing	IDA / DETE / Whole-of- Government / Local Authorities / Infrastructure Agencies
Refocus and prioritise national and EU competitiveness ensuring key enterprise enabling conditions including cost competitiveness; an efficient planning system; infrastructure delivery; talent development and innovation; incentives; and a balanced regulatory environment.	Ongoing	Whole-of- Government

Through the estimates process, seek an enhanced IDA communications and marketing budget to enable broader reach, deeper engagement and awareness building in existing and developing FDI markets.	Q1 2026	DETE/IDA
NSAI will work alongside EI to provide support to EI client companies on the use of international standards and the certification to these standards to ensure Irish companies have greater access to international markets.	Ongoing	NSAI / EI
Through estimates process, seek additional investment for a new 'Scale in Europe' programme to support market penetration and growth.	Q1 2026	EI
Explore and develop approach to key sectoral opportunities across existing priority markets.	Q4 2025	EI
Commence economic / sectoral mapping across key emerging markets with a priority list to be agreed by the Government Trade Forum.	Q3 2025	DFAT / DETE
Develop and implement key sectoral strategies that will focus on embedding Irish companies in value chains under large-scale expenditure programmes / investment / industrial policy focus, including in the areas of renewables and security.	Ongoing	DETE/EI/IDA
Utilise Ireland's new 'National Semiconductor Strategy', 'Silicon Island', as an instrument for market diversification, particularly in attracting foreign direct investment from new international partners, including across Asia.	Q2 2025	DETE / IDA / EI / Whole-of- Government

Develop and publish a National Life-Sciences Strategy to promote competitiveness and innovation within existing sector and to realise future growth opportunities.	Ongoing	DETE/EI/IDA
Review and publish of national digital and AI strategies in context of strategic and cross sectoral growth opportunities.	Ongoing	DETE/DECC /IDA/EI
Continue rollout of extensive market diversification programme across our priority markets, as agreed with DAFM.	Ongoing	Bord Bia
A newly enhanced market study visit programme for companies to immerse themselves in the market and develop a plan on where to play, how to win.	Ongoing	Bord Bia
Through the estimates process, seek enhanced budget support for exhibition at trade fairs to include operational in field costs in market.	2026	Bord Bia
Provision of enhanced consultancy support in logistics and supply chain to build resilience to strengthen existing and identify new supply routes to improve business competitiveness.	Ongoing	Bord Bia
Invest in opportunities presented by new gateways in North America expanding the reach of Tourism Ireland's marketing campaigns. Increased investment will be needed to stimulate demand in changing circumstances, to maintain capacity benefiting all sectors of the economy.	Ongoing	Tourism Ireland

Re-instatement of Tourism Ireland's Industry Market Access Programme (IMAP) to co-fund incremental activity by industry partners, which would substantially increase the island of Ireland's industry presence across diversified markets including, Mainland Europe, as the Mainland European Appraisal Action Plan is rolled out.	Ongoing	Tourism Ireland
Enterprise Ireland to research the case for developing an export credit insurance scheme for exporters into strategic high-growth markets and bring forward a proposal for consideration by the Minister for Enterprise, Tourism and Employment.	Q4 2025	EI
Agree new approach to Strategic Industry Sourcing to support EI/IDA clients and sectors access more opportunities with the multinational base in Ireland.	Ongoing	EI/IDA

#### Leverage the All-Island Economy as a Springboard for Export Growth

InterTradeIreland, the body responsible for diversifying and growing North-South trade, will continue to develop and implement a range of new and modified programmes and initiatives in response to evolving external market conditions, ongoing challenges and emerging opportunities in the areas of trade, innovation and entrepreneurship. They will commit to strengthening their trade support portfolio across three key priority areas in the provision of Trade Information and Advice in response to change in the global environment affecting:

- (a) Trade on the Island of Ireland
- (b) Cross-border sales growth
- (c) Developing new cross-border opportunities

Tourism Ireland is a North-South body established under the Good Friday Agreement with responsibility for promoting the island of Ireland overseas as a compelling holiday and business events destination. Tourism Ireland's focus is to grow the value of overseas tourism to the island of Ireland, supporting economies and communities while respecting the environment. It does so by inspiring visitors through global marketing campaigns and overseas publicity activity creating billions of opportunities to see what the island of Ireland has to offer and strengthening partnerships.



Action	Delivery	Responsible Body
Deliver a 2025 Trade Mission@Home, developing sales for up to 20 Irish businesses in the NI market in the Agri-tech / Manufacturing sector and will scale up the trade mission activity in 2026.	H2 2025	InterTradeIreland
Host a Trade Conference in 2025 in Dublin, aimed at promoting cross-border market opportunities (sales, tendering and supply chain), linking businesses to the appropriate support.	Oct 2025	InterTradeIreland
Deliver a service to businesses whose supply chains are at risk of disruption. The advice and support will help near-shore supply chains on the island, identifying potential cross-border suppliers to help maintain supply chain stability.	June 2025	InterTradeIreland
The 'Trade Webinar Series' will be extended to focus on developing business understanding in areas such as 'Understanding Rules of Origin' and 'Northern Ireland as your first step into GB and international market diversification'.	Ongoing	InterTradeIreland
Tourism Ireland markets the island of Ireland overseas creating compelling propositions that encourage visitors to explore more of the island of Ireland including destinations supported by Shared Ireland investments.	Ongoing	Tourism Ireland



Market Access Day Dublin 2025 Chief Trade Enforcement Officer of the European Union, Denis Redonnet. Credit: Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment.

#### **Promoting Market Access for Irish Exporters**

On 9th April 2025, the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment hosted a Market Access Day, in conjunction with the European Commission, in Dublin. Market Access Days are events organised by Member States' national authorities and the European Commission that include chambers of commerce, employers' associations, investment and trade development agencies, exporters' and other national and sectorial business organisations. Market Access Days aim to engage with stakeholders and businesses, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises and provide a platform to network with policy makers and agencies.

Market Access Days give an opportunity to promote EU trade policy, and EU work on implementation and enforcement, and the presentations on practical tools and resources that help businesses navigate international trade and address barriers, such as Access2Markets portal and the Single-Entry. This event showcased the tools and supports available to businesses to navigate the various barriers that might exist for exporters operating in third country markets as the importance of trade diversification increases.

The Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment and the Enterprise Agencies will put in place a programme of further events aimed at promoting access to new and diverse overseas markets. In particular, the annual Trade Horizons conference, delivered jointly with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, will include a particular focus on strategic regional markets, 2025 focused on Africa and 2026 will focus on Latin America-Caribbean.

Enterprise Ireland's International Markets Week (IMW), to take place from 30th September 2025, will provide an opportunity for companies to meet with Enterprise Ireland's international market advisors to discuss and refine their global expansion and internationalisation strategies. Enterprise Ireland is putting a key focus on diversification and managing global trade policy changes as part of this event.

Action	Delivery	Responsible Body
NSAI to explore provision of a self-assessment tools to SMEs to assess their readiness to obtain certification to international standards.	Ongoing	NSAI / DETE
Through the estimates process, seek funding for continued delivery of international communication campaigns to raise awareness and encourage Irish exporters to grow their business globally and embrace a market diversification approach.	Ongoing	EI / IDA / Bord Bia
Deliver a Trade Horizons conference with a regional focus on Latin America and the Caribbean.	2026	DETE / DFAT
Assist companies in their diversification efforts utilising My Bord Bia client communications platform by providing up-to-date market information, webinars, and relevant events.	Ongoing	Bord Bia
Undertake a review of the existing Government Trade and Investment Strategy.	Q4 2025	DFAT / DETE
Publish a new Trade and Investment Strategy in line with Global Ireland 2040's regional and country strategies.	2026	DFAT / DETE
Through the estimates process, seek to establish a marketing fund to encourage greater industry engagement in Mainland Europe and other markets identified with a market diversification opportunity.	2026	Tourism Ireland
Implementation of Tourism Ireland's Mainland European Appraisal Action Plan.	Ongoing	Tourism Ireland
Support and amplify the drive for diversification using Enterprise Ireland's flagship International Markets Week 2025 in October focusing on practical and impactful engagement between clients, El's overseas market advisors from across the globe and client advisors and facilitate access to client solutions expertise.	Q4 2025	EI
Build out a new exporter programme to support the entry of the market entry of 170 new exporters globally, following the completion of pilot in 2025.	2026	EI

### Work to Create and Develop New Markets and Market Opportunities for Irish-Based Companies Including Within the EU

The new Horizontal Single Market Strategy (The Single Market: Our European Insurance in today's uncertain world) presents the EU's Single Market as the primary driver of Europe's prosperity and competitiveness and a safe haven shielding EU businesses from global uncertainties and market shocks.

The Commission states that further deepening the Single Market and the smooth circulation of goods, services, people and capital could generate extra benefits of around €1.3 trillion per year. Using it to its full potential is critical to increasing productivity and Europe's competitiveness, protecting states' ability to finance their social welfare responsibilities, addressing climate change and securing strategic sovereignty and security. Rather than adding an additional layer of rules the Single Market strategy aims to achieve these goals 'by adding an additional layer of ambition and commitment by all to make them work'.

The strategy proposes addressing, as a first priority, the ten most harmful European Market barriers identified across the Single Market - as presented by the European Commission to the Single Market Enforcement Taskforce (SMET) earlier this year. Ireland will be taking a proactive role in supporting the ambitions for the Single Market agenda; and the Departments of the Taoiseach, Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Enterprise, Tourism and Employment will each have a leadership role to play in their respective dimensions of governance, whole-of-government coordination and implementation.

Ireland is committed to supporting free, fair and open trade. Our membership of the EU makes us part of a growing network of EU Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), supporting more opportunity for expanding trade relationships. Other opportunities, such as those offered by increased engagement in the EU's Global Gateway Initiative, could offer new markets for Irish companies active in digital innovation, green energy, transport, healthcare and education, in Africa, Asia and in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In the context of market diversification, it is important for Ireland to continue to pursue an outward looking, open, rules-based approach to trade policy. This has been, and certainly should remain, a distinctive pillar of the EU's economic model, and the work of expanding opportunities and securing market access with new partners will go hand-in-hand with our wider competitiveness agenda.

It is therefore important to encourage and assist companies in taking advantage of opportunities arising from new FTAs. Alongside assessment of FTA opportunities, it is useful to assess global economic and trade growth and to identify if there are gaps between Ireland's in-market resources and growth markets. Double Taxation Agreements are a cornerstone of Ireland's trade policy with our trading partners and are a key element in stimulating trade and investment flows between countries. To continue the expansion and enhancement of the tax treaty network, a prioritisation process has been established for identifying potential new partners along with re-engagement with existing partners, and in the coming years in line with Ireland's published Treaty Policy Statement, Ireland's network of Double Taxation Agreements will be updated and enhanced where feasible.

The EU is a critical and growing market for Irish exporters. A near to long term focus for Enterprise Ireland is to further build on Irish companies' presence in European markets to support Ireland's growth and resilience.

Action	Delivery	Responsible Body
Proactively review existing and potential EU FTA negotiations to establish highest potential market opportunities for Ireland and work to shape EU trade policy and priorities to reflect these.	Q3-Q4 2025	DFAT
Commission economic studies for markets in which there are recently agreed or modernised EU trade agreements, with a view to identifying and maximising the economic opportunities for Ireland arising from the agreements.	Q4 2025, Ongoing	DFAT / DETE
Ratify existing FTA agreements in line with commitments in the programme for Government.	Ongoing	DFAT
Departments across Government will work on the implementation of the new Horizontal Single Market Strategy to address the ten most harmful European Market barriers identified across the Single Market presented by the European Commission to the Single Market Enforcement Taskforce (SMET).	Ongoing	Whole-of- Government
Ensure that Ireland prioritises policies for the further development of the EU Single Market, particularly through the new Single Market strategy, which will create new opportunities for Irish-based companies in both goods and services.	Ongoing	DETE / DFAT
Maximise opportunities arising from Ireland's 2026 EU Presidency to promote and actively bring forward work on the completion of the single market of benefit to Irish-based companies.	2026	DETE / DFAT
Continue the expansion and enhancement of the tax treaty network using a prioritisation process to identify potential new partners along with reengagement with existing partners. In the coming years, in line with Ireland's published Treaty Policy Statement, Ireland's network of Double Taxation Agreements will be updated and enhanced where feasible.	Ongoing	DFIN / Revenue / DFAT

# Objective 2: Deepening and Broadening Ireland's International Engagement

## Objective 2: Deepening and Broadening Ireland's International Engagement

Strategic and consistent international engagement is necessary to develop, maintain and grow our relationships and connections with key international partners. This Action Plan envisages a suite of concerted actions across the whole-of-government and other key stakeholders including the State Agencies in support of businesses, to significantly deepen and broaden Ireland's international engagement.

This work builds on strong existing foundations. Under the Global Ireland 2025 strategy, the government has undertaken the most ambitious renewal and expansion of Ireland's international presence ever in terms of diplomacy, culture, business, overseas development assistance, tourism and trade. Since then, the government has opened, or plans to open, new diplomatic and State agency offices in fifty locations. The expansion has been accompanied by a significant deepening of our presence in key locations.

Ireland is operating in a dynamic and highly competitive international trading environment. It is important therefore that the State agencies consider their resourcing priorities, on an ongoing basis with additional resources being prioritised to maximise opportunities in existing priority markets, while also developing deeper market knowledge and supports in new and emerging markets.

Strong bilateral relationships will continue to underpin Ireland's trade and investment partnerships. Bilateral economic fora such as Joint Economic Commissions, and international agreements, including Double Taxation Agreements, play an important role in shaping a positive bilateral economic, trading and investment partnership.

There is an opportunity for Ireland to take an innovative approach to engaging in key markets availing of new technologies and international partnerships. The Government will be forward leaning in this regard; prioritising tangible supports and investment that can make a real difference to scaling Ireland's trading and investment relationships in key markets.

The diaspora will continue to play an important role in Ireland's international engagement, as key partners in delivering on the government's trade, tourism and investment objectives in priority markets. Deepening that partnership, developing a more strategic approach to Irish business networks and nurturing the next generation of Irish business leaders overseas will be a focus of the upcoming Diaspora Strategy and will be informed by this Action Plan.

Methodologies for market prioritisation may need to be more flexible to account for emerging opportunities driven by new economic and geopolitical developments causing trade uncertainties and the emerging opportunities in proximate markets to well established markets.



UK Ireland Summit in Liverpool, March 2025. Credit: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

#### Scaling-up the State's Economic Presence in Key Strategic Locations

In line with the more competitive international environment for trade, tourism and investment, it is vital that the State agencies are adequately equipped in key strategic locations if they are to identify and avail of the opportunities that exist. The lead Departments have requested through the Headquarters Market Team that State agencies review their current overseas footprint to ensure they are adequately represented in key strategic locations. This is the case both in established markets, where there is significant and long-term investment by Irish businesses and also in new and emerging markets.

Action	Delivery	Responsible Body
DETE and DFAT, as the lead Departments, have requested through the Headquarters Market Team that State agencies review their current overseas footprint to ensure adequate representation and resourcing.	Q4 2025	DETE / DFAT

#### **Enterprise Ireland**

Enterprise Ireland currently has 42 overseas offices, with specialist staff in place to grow businesses and explore new opportunities. In line with the Programme for Government, the Minister for Enterprise, Tourism and Employment has directed Enterprise Ireland to review staffing levels in overseas offices to maximise opportunities for Irish companies. This review will be completed in 2026.

Priorities for expansion are the EU Single Market, UK and EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) partner countries. The need for Irish business to reposition commercially in the US market will also be a guiding factor. Specific resourcing requests and associated business cases will be addressed in the context of the 2026 estimates.

Action	Delivery	Responsible Body
Enterprise Ireland to open a new office in Zurich, Switzerland to support and build on commercial opportunities developed by Irish businesses, following on from the opening of 2 new overseas offices in 2025 in Glasgow and Atlanta, Georgia.	H2 2025	EI
Enterprise Ireland will conduct an in-depth review of current footprint to understand budget and additional EI resources required to address the key challenges in responding to the impact of changing trade environment.	2026	EI/DETE
Develop strategic approach to support EI clients to strengthen engagement with US customers through new channels, including US landing pads to enable a physical presence in the market.	H2 2025	EI

#### **IDA** Ireland

As IDA Ireland pursues its 2025-29 strategic objectives, its network of offices in Ireland and overseas will continue to play a critical role. IDA Ireland has a footprint in over 20 locations overseas. Attracting, retaining and renewing FDI requires IDA Ireland to have a global focus across its three key territories (North America, Europe & UK, Asia Pacific) to engage with existing clients and to build relationships with target clients.

IDA is also supported by "Pathfinders" (in-market consultants) to target FDI investment from the UAE and South Africa. This approach allows IDA to raise awareness of Ireland and explore new opportunities in markets of FDI potential that are not covered by IDA overseas office network. It is important to note that realising FDI opportunities in new or emerging markets is not a short-term initiative but requires a medium to long-term focus on building awareness, relationships and investment pipelines.

IDA's new 2025-29 strategy includes focus on identifying new opportunities associated with FDI growth drivers. To date this has resulted in some resource adjustment in Asia Pacific that will see IDA put in place a new in-market presence in South Korea. IDA will review its approach to the Canadian market by Q1 2026, in addition to a review of its Pathfinder locations (currently UAE and South Africa).

Action	Delivery	Responsible Body
IDA will undertake a comprehensive review of strategic locations and supports, including the necessary financial and human resources required to implement a plan.	Q1 2026	IDA
As an early action, IDA will review Canada market opportunities and Pathfinder locations.	Q1 2026	IDA
IDA to recruit a new in-market presence in South Korea (Seoul).	Q1 2026	IDA

#### **Bord Bia**

In 2025, Bord Bia is steadfast in its commitment to supporting client companies through its network of fourteen overseas offices, eight across Europe and six in other key international markets. With Ireland's food and drink exports reaching a record €17 billion in 2024, a 5% increase on 2023, Bord Bia is focused on sustaining and building on this success by delivering local market insights, cultivating networks, and enabling commercial opportunities between Irish suppliers and international customers.

By championing Ireland's global reputation for sustainably produced, high-quality food and drink, Bord Bia continues to drive export growth. Despite ongoing inflationary pressures and subdued consumer spending, several categories are achieving volume growth. Bord Bia remains agile in adapting its supports to meet client needs.

The sector and channel priorities of each market shape the activities undertaken, but the overarching goal remains unchanged: to enhance global awareness and reputation of Irish food and drink suppliers, strengthen their market readiness, and connect them with the most suitable customers worldwide.

Bord Bia continues to actively work with Irish client companies to support growth in key priority markets. Building on momentum from previous years, the emphasis remains on cultivating strategic customer partnerships across retail and foodservice channels.

Action	Delivery	Responsible Body
Examining current footprint of offices and considering potential need for expansion based on market prioritisation exercise.	Q4 2025	Bord Bia
Review of updated market prioritisation framework, identify 3 markets of consideration for expanded footprint, and implement a phased approach for implementation of a resource in the market.	Q4 2025	Bord Bia
Increase staff secondment opportunities to enable Bord Bia to mobilise markets and initiate customer opportunities. e.g. Toronto, Canada in 2025 (continuing from Sydney in 2024).	Q4 2025	Bord Bia
Working with our in-market teams, ensuring we have sufficient 'feet on the street' consultants in market who can support clients market diversification ambitions.	Ongoing	Bord Bia
Review of 'Talent Academy' programme and findings and outputs to be considered. e.g. a new Marketing Fellowship placement in Sydney, Australia in 2025.	Q4 2025	Bord Bia

#### **Tourism Ireland**

Tourism Ireland is focused on supporting overseas tourism to Ireland and the businesses and communities that depend on it. Throughout 2025 it is investing in an extensive and targeted programme of activity across 14+ overseas source markets. Its overseas missions will deliver campaigns with a reach of over €1.6billion, publicity opportunities with a reach of over €1.6billion, and 30,000+ business-to-business meetings for tourism partners overseas in 2025 with a renewed focus on Business Events, luxury travel and adventure travel.

Tourism Ireland will continue to invest in activity in Great Britain building on the market opportunity for year-round and regional business.

Having recently completed an in-depth appraisal of mainland European markets, Tourism Ireland will implement its new strategy to achieve a step-change in visitor revenue from these important markets.

In North America, Tourism Ireland will build on their expanded West Coast presence in recent years and increased resources in Canada. The growing network of access routes across North America expands the marketing opportunity in the US.

Tourism Ireland's 'Global Partnerships' team continues to take an agile partnership approach towards opportunities in markets where Tourism Ireland does not have a presence ensuring all business opportunities for growth are realised.

Action	Delivery	Responsible Body
Increase Tourism Ireland's team in US and Canada to facilitate greater activity in new gateway cities.	Ongoing	Tourism Ireland
Increase Tourism Ireland's consumer marketing and publicity teams in Mainland Europe to implement the findings of the Mainland European Appraisal.	Ongoing	Tourism Ireland
Increase Tourism Ireland's Global Partnerships team to support industry entry and activity into new and underdeveloped markets.	2026	Tourism Ireland
Additional investment in US and Canada to substantially upweight Tourism Ireland's activity in these markets.	2026	Tourism Ireland

#### Research Ireland

Science diplomacy can play an important role in Ireland's market diversification. In support of Ireland's market diversification efforts, Research Ireland will consider locations to co-locate their staff with existing Diplomatic and State agency offices. These new overseas positions will offer deep technical insight and direct research networks go-to-market strategies.

Research Ireland will also develop a strategic approach to collaborative research investment with international partners recognising the societal and economic benefits that can be achieved through international collaboration.

Research Ireland will seek to identify opportunities for joint projects between Research Ireland Centres and EU Centres of Excellence, which will bring scale to addressing global grand challenges. Such projects serve to improve competitiveness for major funding programmes like Horizon Europe, especially for companies involved in these centres.

Building on the proven models of the National Challenge Fund and the Future Innovator Prize, Research Ireland will leverage challenge-based funding formats to stimulate applied, mission-oriented research. Including international collaboration within this model should provide dual test beds for solution development and would enable validation and market readiness to not only drive high-impact innovation but also strengthen Ireland's research links in strategically important global markets.

Action	Delivery	Responsible Body
Consider overseas locations for Research Ireland staff. This would be done in tandem with the DFHERIS International Attachés where a specific domain is identified requiring deep technical focus.	2026	Research Ireland
Develop a strategic approach to developing collaborative research investment funds with international partners.	2026	Research Ireland
Establishment of a new international Challenge Funding initiative.	2027	Research Ireland
Identify potential joint projects with European Centres of Excellence focused on addressing global grand challenges.	2027	Research Ireland

#### **Diplomatic and Overseas Network**

The expansion of Ireland's diplomatic footprint has been accompanied by a significant deepening of the State's presence in key locations, with attachés appointed to Ireland's diplomatic missions from across Government Departments.

Attachés play a key role in advancing Ireland's economic relationships in priority markets, working in close cooperation with the State agencies. To ensure that we are maximising the value of economic-focused attachés across the diplomatic network, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will conduct a review of current practices through the HQ Market Team to be completed by the end of 2025.

Under Global Citizen 2030, new Talent and Innovation Attachés were recently appointed to Boston and San Francisco with four more due to be appointed by 2030. The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science will advance consideration by the end of 2025 for locations for the next two Attachés.

Action	Delivery	Responsible Body
Review of Attaché posts to assist with its market diversification efforts.	Q4 2025	DFAT/DETE/ DAFM/DFIN
Under Global Ireland 2040, an in-depth review of Ireland's overseas presence with a view to expanding and deepening this presence where needed to support Irish economic priorities.	Q1 2026	DFAT
Continue to implement the Global Citizens 2030 commitment to appoint six Talent and Innovation Attachés by 2030, with a further four such positions to be identified in addition to already in place in Boston and San Francisco.	2026	DFHERIS
Develop a more targeted international scholarship programmes to better align with strategic priorities and markets.	H2 2025	DFHERIS
Establish a programme to attract established and rising star researchers to Ireland. The initiative will fund research on a number of thematic areas reflecting key economic and societal priorities.	Q3 2025	DFHERIS / Research Ireland

#### **National Standards Authority of Ireland**

The National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) has an existing presence in the US. The purpose of this office is to aid US companies to obtain CE and MDSAP markings for their medical device products to sell into the European market and to enable Irish medical device companies access the US market through MDSAP.

NSAI will explore offering the same service to Asian companies wishing to access the European market. Through MDSAP they can get access to Brazil, Canada, Japan, Australia, US.

Action	Delivery	Responsible Body
NSAI to explore offering services to Asian companies to obtain CE and MDSAP markings for their medical device products to sell into the European market.	Ongoing	NSAI



#### **Enhance Joint Economic Commissions**

Joint Economic Commissions (JECs) provide a valuable forum for structured, regular practical engagement and experience-sharing with another partner country on trade, economic, industrial policies and related bilateral matters. They can act as a platform to progress mutually beneficial trade and investment promotion, raise market access or regulatory issues and support closer cooperation in priority areas such as science, innovation and technology, education, connectivity, labour markets, green and digital transformations, supply chain resilience, tourism and culture, agriculture and food security, health, aviation and aerospace, and cybersecurity.

JECs meet, in general, on a biennial basis. Ireland currently maintains active JECs with China and South Korea; a JEC with Saudi Arabia in in place but has not been active in recent years; and the Minister of State for Trade Promotion, Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation signed a JEC agreement with the UAE in Q2 2025 with the first meeting planned for Q4 2025. A new JEC with India is at an advanced stage of negotiation in line with the commitment set out in Enhancing Engagement with India, the Government Action Plan adopted in March 2025.

It is proposed to lend extra momentum to these JECs, including via preparatory work at the HQ Market Team (a forum of relevant Departments and State Agencies which coordinates the work on international trade promotion and trade missions), to ensure that all of these JECs are active in opening up practical access to these overseas markets.

Action	Delivery	Responsible Body
Maintain active JECs with China and South Korea; reactivate the JEC with Saudi Arabia.	Ongoing	DETE / DFAT
Implement the new JEC with the UAE established in April 2025, including a first meeting in 2025.	Q4 2025	DETE / DFAT
Implement the Government Action Plan on Enhancing Engagement with India and continue working towards a new JEC with India.	Ongoing	DFAT / DETE

## Develop New Ireland Houses as Major Promotional Platforms in Key Locations

The 'Ireland House' model is important in bringing together diplomatic and State Agency colleagues to work together as a single team, under one roof, winning investments, exports and jobs for Ireland and maximising impact in host countries and value for Irish taxpayers at home. There are currently twenty Ireland Houses, including the new Ireland House in Tokyo which was officially opened on the 2nd of July 2025 by An Taoiseach. New Ireland Houses are under development in London, Toronto and Lyon (expected completion by 2027), and another is at project feasibility stage in Milan. Plans are also in train to develop an upgraded Ireland House in Madrid. This will bring the total number of Ireland Houses to twenty-four by 2027.

Action	Delivery	Responsible Body
Building on the recent successes of new Ireland Houses in New York, Tokyo, Singapore, Shanghai, Chicago and elsewhere, deliver ambitious Ireland House projects in London, Toronto, Milan, Lyon and Madrid (expected completion by 2027), as focal points for, inter alia, in-market promotional activity.	Ongoing	DFAT / DETE / EI / IDA / Bord Bia
Continue the review and rollout of the Ireland House model in strategic locations and key markets overseas.	Ongoing	DFAT / DETE / EI / IDA / Bord Bia / Tourism Ireland

## **Enhance Trade and Economic Focus in Regional and Other Internationally Focused Strategies**

The current international trade and investment environment highlights the importance of international trading relationships underpinned by strong political relationships.

Whole-of-Government regional and country-specific strategies under Global Ireland 2025 have played an important role in enhancing Ireland's international engagement. The Programme for Government commits to a new Global Ireland 2040 overarching framework to Ireland's international engagement, including ever deeper relationships with our European partners, and to continue to implement and enhance whole-of-government strategies covering Latin America, Asia-Pacific, including China, US & Canada and Africa.

The new strategies under development, or to be developed, provide an opportunity to deeply integrate this new enhanced approach to market diversification across the Government's strategic international engagement.

Action	Delivery	Responsible Body
Include market diversification as a key pillar of the new regional strategies to be developed under Global Ireland 2040.	2026-2027	DFAT
Market diversification to be included as an objective of the new International Sports Diplomacy Strategy.	Q4 2025	DFAT / D/CCS
Consider through the upcoming Diaspora Strategy how best to partner with diaspora business organisations to scale-up Irish businesses in strategically important locations in conjunction with the Local and Regional Market Teams.	Ongoing	DFAT / DETE / EI / IDA / Bord Bia
Develop a more strategic approach to engagement with Irish connected business leaders and high-level decision makers based overseas, along the lines of the Strategic Economic Advisory Panel (SEAP) in the United States.	Ongoing	DFAT/DETE/EI



Minister of State for Trade Promotion, Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation, Niamh Smyth TD, at Africa Ireland Trade Horizons at Dublin Castle. Credit: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

# Objective 3: Delivering Trade and Tourism Missions for Strategic Impact

# Objective 3: Delivering Trade and Tourism Missions for Strategic Impact

The Headquarters Market Team (HQMT), jointly chaired by the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will play an important role in fostering cohesive, collaborative work across Government Departments and Agencies to optimise the impact of trade promotion and development initiatives in-market.

Ministerial-led trade and tourism missions are a 'Team Ireland' effort, led by the relevant Department, working with other Departments, Ireland's embassy and consulate network, our State agency network and our teams across Government to ensure close cooperation alongside business to ensure their success.

Trade and tourism missions are essential components in Ireland's strategic approach to growing economic, trading and investment relationships with partners. These missions have proven to be very successful in terms of supporting businesses by raising Ireland's profile as a world-class supplier of goods and internationally tradeable services, delivering high-value business-to-business connections and contributing to the generation of incremental sales to foreign markets. They can also provide comfort to investment decision-makers that Ireland is the right choice of location and can offer them the business environment to make their investment a success.

In the current geopolitical and economic context, it is imperative that Ireland continues to plan these missions on a 'Team Ireland' basis including a whole-of-government approach, and in cooperation with businesses. To maximise the reputational impact of these visits, coherent and aligned messaging amongst Team Ireland partners is essential, especially overseas.

The St. Patrick's Day period also offers a unique opportunity to promote Ireland at a global level, a key part of which is the 'Promoting Ireland' Ministerial visit programme and in 2025 this covered over 113 cities, across 41 countries that included almost 200 business events and meetings.

There have also been successful all-island trade missions, and the Government will continue to ensure that opportunities to include an all-island dimension in trade and tourism missions will continue to be taken account of.

In addition to outward missions, inwards visits by visiting international delegations, particularly around largescale conference and sporting events, also offer a strategic opportunity to build international business-to-business connections and to showcase Ireland, our innovation eco-system and Irish businesses. A coordinated approach is necessary to maximise the value of such visits.

### Re-start the Team Ireland Trade Mission Week and Advance Further Multi-Minister Trade Missions

In May 2023, the first Team Ireland Trade Mission Week to the Republic of Korea, led by the Taoiseach, provided an innovative and impactful platform to advance Ireland's economic connections and support Irish businesses operating in the Korean market. The Team Ireland Trade Mission Week will return in 2025, with the Taoiseach leading a multi-Ministerial visit to Canada to promote economic, trade, investment, innovation, cultural connections between Ireland and Canada.

Building on the success to date and to facilitate good planning for future visits, the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, working closely alongside the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will work closely with the Department of the Taoiseach and other departments and agencies to develop a schedule of annual Team Ireland Trade Mission Weeks for subsequent years.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will also work closely with the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, State Agencies and other departments, to examine the potential benefits of Tánaiste-led missions in existing priority markets such as the EU Single Market.

Action	Delivery	Responsible Body
Restart the Taoiseach-led Team Ireland Trade Mission Week to focus on key markets for Market Diversification with Canada the selected location for late 2025.	Q4 2025	DETE / DFAT / Whole-of- Government
Agree plans for future Team Ireland Trade Mission Weeks in 2026 and 2027 in early course to enable long-term planning.	Q4 2025	DETE / DFAT / Whole-of- Government
Deliver a multi-Minister trade, tourism, cultural and research/innovation missions to EU Single Market.	Q2 2026	DETE / DFAT / Whole-of- Government

#### Deliver an Ambitious and Impactful Programme of Trade and Tourism Missions

This Action Plan will support the goal of securing high-level market access for companies based in Ireland who are aiming to grow business overseas and increase domestic employment, and which showcase opportunities for foreign direct investment in support of high-quality jobs and regional development throughout Ireland.

A comprehensive programme and trade and tourism missions is already underway in 2025. The plans are the culmination of regular consultation with businesses by the State agencies – Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Bord Bia and Tourism Ireland – agreed with the relevant Departments including the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Department of Finance, and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Trade missions are planned for Scotland (Glasgow), USA Mid-West Chicago and Minneapolis, Japan (Expo 2025), Australia (APAC), USA West Coast, Sweden, Bavaria and Switzerland and Canada. Ministerial led agri-food trade missions to the United States in April and Korea and Japan in June. A further agrifood focused trade mission is to China. Tourism missions are planned for US (IMEX and Best of Ireland), Germany (IMEX Frankfurt and Ireland Meets Germany) France (IFTM Top Resa Paris and ILTM), London (WTM and Flavours of Ireland) and Spain (IBTM Barcelona).

The trade and tourism mission programme for 2026 will be planned early, in consultation with State agencies business and Local Market Teams, coordinated by the HQ Market Team. Recognising the importance of international connections to science and research in Ireland, the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, and Research Ireland will deliver a Research Centre Trade Mission in a priority market in 2026.

The HQMT will discuss a comprehensive programme of visits in January each year and seek to ensure effective communication and coordination where possible. The Government Trade Forum will be informed of any high-level planned business event/conferences being hosted in Ireland by the various Departments and State agencies in 2026. Planned visits will give due consideration to maximising the impact of Ministerial engagement in both established priority markets and new and emerging markets, particularly where an EU FTA has been recently agreed with partner country.



Minister for Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, Peter Burke TD meeting with Enterprise Ireland Client Druid Software and Kyocera (Japanese Partner) at the Future of Life Pavilion at the World Expo. Credit: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

#### St. Patrick's Day 2026

The St. Patrick's Day period is enormously valuable in showcasing Ireland and advancing the government's international economic objectives. There will be an enhanced focus on trade and investment when developing the St. Patrick's Day 'Promoting Ireland Programme' in March 2026.

Action	Delivery	Responsible Body
Deliver on the planned trade and tourism missions for 2025.	Ongoing	DETE / EI / IDA / Tourism Ireland / Bord Bia / DAFM
Agree an ambitious Ministerial-led trade and tourism plan for 2026 to be discussed at the HQMT.	Q1 2026	DETE / EI / IDA / Tourism Ireland / Bord Bia / Research Ireland
Develop a list of high impact events hosted in Ireland in 2026 suitable for in-bound trade visits and consider how to ensure high level overseas business engagement.	Q1 2026	EI / IDA / Bord Bia / Tourism Ireland / InterTradeIreland / DETE / DFAT / DAFM / DFIN
Deliver a Research and Innovation Trade Mission to a priority market.	Q2 2026	DFHERIS / Research Ireland
Increased focus on key priority and emerging markets as part of the 'Promoting Ireland Programme' for St. Patrick's Day 2026.	Q1 2026	DFAT

## Maximise the Value of Trade and Tourism Missions to Optimise their Effectiveness and Future Delivery

Key to Ireland's success overseas in delivering on the government's economic, trade and investment priorities is the Local and Regional Market Teams model. The Local and Regional Market Teams (LMTs/RMTs) are led by Heads of Mission and comprise Embassy/Consulate General personnel, including attachés, and State Agencies working together in-market as 'Team Ireland'. The RMTs bring together a number of LMTs, to enhance activities in a region by bringing together the experience, expertise and access of each LMT member. In 2024, there were 23 Local, Regional and Sub-regional Market Teams operating across the world to deliver on the objectives of the government's Trade and Investment Strategy.

Maximising the impact of the trade and tourism missions benefits from a coordinated Team Ireland approach through the LMT and RMTs. As plans are being developed it is of the utmost importance that there is clear communication and good collaboration between LMT / RMT members and also between members of the HQ Market Team.

In order to ensure that trade and tourism missions are formulated and targeted in an optimal manner, the Minister for Enterprise, Tourism and Employment proposes to conduct a review of the operation of trade, tourism and investment missions. In so doing, the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment will work closely with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, in particular, and with other Team Ireland partners, including through consultation with all members of the HQ Market Team.

This review will seek to identify what has worked well in trade and tourism missions to-date, and how these elements might be augmented, as well as areas for improvement, including potential gaps in programme planning, resource allocation (including Ministerial time) and other elements of coordination across government. This review will also examine how locations have been selected for missions and how this should be done going forward. The review will also consider where there are opportunities to add a research component to trade missions to facilitate deep technical conversations with key stakeholders.

In addition to efficiency and outcome optimisation, the overarching principles of this review should include collegiality, communication and collaboration by Team Ireland, as key stakeholders in the delivery of the government's economic, trade and investment objectives.

On completion, this review should present a clear path forward for cross-government coordination, planning and delivery of trade and tourism missions, with a suite of implementable recommendations to enhance this whole-of-government work by Team Ireland.



Ireland House @ SXSW 2025. Credit: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Action	Delivery	Responsible Body
Review of how trade missions and tourism missions are formulated and targeted via the HQMT, to ensure that Ministerial time is allocated to our key sectors and markets and that work across Government Departments is fully coordinated.	Q4 2025	DETE / IDA / EI / Tourism Ireland / DFAT / DAFM / Bord Bia / DFIN
Consider opportunities to add research element to existing trade missions.	Q4 2025	DETE / DFAT / Research Ireland

Objective 4: Enhancing Domestic Readiness for Economic Engagement and Partnership

# Objective 4: Enhancing Domestic Readiness for Economic Engagement and Partnership

It is vital that Ireland prepares, not just through its actions internationally, but through actions at home to ensure that economic engagement and partnership opportunities can be progressed. The Government is focused on ensuring Ireland is a competitive environment for businesses. Ireland's overall international competitive position is strong and currently ranks as the seventh most competitive economy in the world. Ireland has experienced a decade of very significant economic growth, strong population growth, rapid employment growth, and large energy demand growth. This is clear evidence of a very successful and resilient economic model, during a volatile period which has also witnessed events such as Brexit, a global pandemic, the war in Ukraine and turbulent international trading conditions. However, Ireland's rapid expansion has further highlighted constraints in the country's physical infrastructure capacity, and structural barriers to continued rapid economic development.

#### **Competitiveness and Productivity**

The Programme for Government calls for the preparation of an Action Plan on Competitiveness and Productivity, giving the changing international economic environment. This Action Plan is to focus on matters within Ireland's domestic sphere of control which can make the Irish economy more competitive and 'shock-resistant' to future adverse economic events. The plan must be informed by international best practice and extensive engagement with stakeholders, if Ireland is to compete at the frontier, it must benchmark itself against top-performing peers with the ambition to compete at the leading edge.

This focus on competitiveness comes amid a changing international context and heightened EU attention on bolstering Europe's economic dynamism, as highlighted in recent reports and the European Commission's 'Competitiveness Compass'. While Ireland benefits from a skilled workforce and success in attracting high-value FDI, challenges remain, notably in infrastructure capacity and the high cost of doing business compared to competitor nations.

#### **Key Sectoral Strategies**

The development and execution of national, sectoral strategies aligned to key growth drivers is a key enabler of unlocking future growth opportunities from existing and new enterprises in Ireland's core sectors. This includes the new National Semiconductor Strategy, 'Silicon Island', the forthcoming National Life-Sciences Strategy, and reviews of national Digital and Al strategies.

'Silicon Island' is not only a blueprint for sectoral growth, but it also represents a powerful instrument for market diversification, particularly in attracting foreign direct investment from new international partners, including across Asia.

The Department of Finance in preparation, and subsequent implementation, of the 2026 strategy for international financial services, will consider further opportunities for market diversification. There is significant importance placed on this currently by the Department of Finance in the current Ireland for

Finance strategy. As an outward-looking nation, the wide range of global relationships that make up the international financial services sector in Ireland is highly valued. The Minister of State at the Department of Finance plays a central role in promoting Ireland's attributes as an international financial services hub globally, with the Department at both ministerial and senior official level engaging both domestically and internationally on the policy formation and dialogue and to make the Irish voice heard.

By using these strategies [sector strategies for Digital, Life-Sciences, and Space Enterprise] as structured platforms to attract new investment and build partnerships with a broader set of countries, in particular the EU Single Market countries and with Brussels-led programmes, such as Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEIs) and Lead Markets, Ireland can embed diversification into the architecture of our economic development model. This aligns with both our national resilience goals and the EU's emphasis, on foot of the Draghi Report, on innovation, economic security and open, secure value chains.

Action	Delivery	Responsible Body
InterTradeIreland, in partnership with Enterprise Ireland and Invest Northern Ireland, in delivery of the Shared Island Enterprise Scheme (2025 – 2027) will support the development and scaling of all-island clusters in priority sectors (eg. offshore wind) to develop the scale and export potential of associated businesses.	2026 - 2027	InterTradeIreland / EI / Invest NI
InterTradeIreland will continue to deliver collaborative cross-border Innovation Programmes. These will provide support across manufacturing and tradeable services sectors to overcome technical or innovation related challenges that limit a SMEs ability to scale, improve productivity, or compete effectively within their own markets.	Ongoing	InterTradeIreland
In the preparation of, and subsequent implementation of, the 2026 strategy for international financial services, consider further opportunities for Market Diversification.	2026	DFIN/IDA

Accelerate the modernisation of visa service delivery to ensure an efficient, fair and predictable visa process that facilitates timely inward travel to Ireland for business, including attracting critical and high value workers, education and tourism. This should deliver faster and more consistent turnaround times, improved communication and targeted services for business applicants.	Ongoing	DOJ
Develop the single permits process and digitisation of the permits process to ensure service integration and delivery improvements.	2027	DETE/DOJ
Increase investment and resources to support faster processing of legal migration visas and permissions.	Ongoing	DOJ
Urgently examine and introduce expedited visa options for high-demand sectors to facilitate quicker entry for skilled professionals as foreseen in the Programme for Government.	Ongoing	DETE/DOJ
NSAI provides Irish construction companies with CE and UKAS approvals for construction products which increases the attractiveness of Irish products into the UK market.	Ongoing	NSAI / EI /DETE
Expand the BIM service to provide an accredited offering to Irish construction firms to enable them to tender for European projects.	Ongoing	NSAI
Through the estimates process, seek funding for additional activity to grow Business Events, to boost both tourism SMEs and the wider economy.	2026	Tourism Ireland
Engage fully across government on the implementation of the Action Plan on Competitiveness and Productivity.	Ongoing	Whole-of- Government
Engage fully on the implementation of the Action Plan on Collective Bargaining which the Government will deliver in 2025.	2025	DETE

