



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

Statement of Strategy

2023-2025



Foreword from the Tánaiste

I am pleased to present the Department of Foreign Affairs' Statement of Strategy 2023-25, setting out the goals that we will work towards in the period ahead, to serve the needs and interests of Irish people and communities, at home and abroad.

The broad strategic vision of the Department remains very clear: protecting and promoting peace on our island, providing a first class Consular and Passport Service to our citizens, supporting our diaspora communities, active and principled membership of the UN, the EU and other international fora, delivering a high-quality development programme, and expanding Ireland's presence and influence abroad, to underpin prosperity and security at home.

However, as this Statement recognises, we are operating in a significantly changed global context since our last Statement of

Strategy was agreed in 2021. This presents us with complex challenges, internationally and domestically. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, now into its second year, has had devastating consequences for the people of Ukraine, and has upended peace and stability in our European neighbourhood.

In addition, the outworkings of Brexit remain complex, as does the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, although we are successfully navigating our way through the challenges presented, with a clear sense of direction. Our membership of the EU has been absolutely central to our ability to manage these challenges and remains of fundamental importance to the future progress of our country.

Central to the response to both the security and economic challenges that Ireland is facing is our engagement with key bilateral

and multilateral partners. Cooperation with EU partners, the UK, the US, and other like-minded countries is an essential part of this Department's work at home and in capitals around the world. Equally, efforts around the table in the EU, at the UN and other multilateral fora, build Ireland's capacity to protect and promote our interests and values. All of this work will remain a central part of this Department's commitments to deliver for Ireland and Irish citizens in the period ahead.

The lifetime of this Statement of Strategy will also mark further progress in the implementation of the Global Ireland Strategy which has delivered considerable expansion of our global influence, including through decisions to open 22 new Diplomatic Missions. We will maintain this momentum through the expansion of the



Ireland House programme, implementation of our thematic and regional strategies, and our leadership role as part of Team Ireland.

Finally, I would note that the actions outlined in this strategy frame and guide the important work being carried out by almost 3,000 committed DFA officers in Ireland and across 98 diplomatic offices around the world. I look forward to working with them, as well as Seán Fleming T.D., Minister of State for International Development and Diaspora, and Peter Burke T.D., Minister of State for European Affairs, to implement this Strategy in the coming years.

**Micheál Martin, T.D.
Tánaiste & Minister for Foreign Affairs**

Foreword from the Secretary General

This Statement of Strategy outlines the Department's top goals, how we intend to achieve them and the outcomes through which we can measure progress. At a moment of great uncertainty and challenge in Europe and globally, it is essential that we be clear and focussed on our major priorities if we are to fulfil our responsibility to serve this country and its people.

The Department is now operating in some 100 locations around the world. Our staff are passionate about delivering the best possible public service for this country across the areas identified in the Tánaiste's message. They are also increasingly required to serve in challenging and unpredictable locations. I think in particular of our colleagues in Kyiv. I know that our teams - whether at home

or abroad - serve their country with pride, resilience and optimism about Ireland's future. I am grateful to each of them for the service provided and for the sacrifices and contributions made by the families of those who serve abroad.

In a year in which we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement and the 50th anniversary of Ireland's membership of the EU, the Department will continue to prioritise its central role in supporting peace and reconciliation on this island and advancing our interests and values in Europe.

Innovation will serve as a keystone of this new Strategy – with new technical and operational advances driving us to find

improved ways of working and delivering. I am particularly pleased with the ongoing advances in service delivery in our Passport Service, which issued over 1 million passports in 2022 and is expected to do so again in 2023. The Department will remain committed to further enhancement and reform of this service as well as maintaining an effective and responsive Consular Service.

It is important that the Department's workforce reflect the diversity of the people we represent. We will therefore continue to strive for high standards of equality, diversity and inclusion both in our workforce and our policies. For the first time in our history, 52% of our Diplomatic Missions will be led by women following the 2023 assignments.



We are also committed to finding the most environmentally sustainable ways of carrying out our business.

This Strategy has been prepared through consultation with all parts of this Department, at home and abroad, as well as inviting inputs from external stakeholders across Government and the State Agencies. I am very grateful for the inputs provided, and am pleased that the result is a Strategy with a high level of ambition.

Joe Hackett
Secretary General

Overview

Mission

The mission of the Department of Foreign Affairs is to serve Ireland, promote our values and advance our prosperity and interests abroad, and to provide the Government with the capabilities, analysis and influence to ensure that Ireland derives the maximum benefit from all areas of its external engagement.

CONSULTATION

The preparation of the Statement of Strategy has been informed by extensive internal consultation as well as consultation across Government Departments, with the Oireachtas and State Agencies.

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

This Statement of Strategy will provide the basis for the organisation and management of the Department over the 2023-25 period and will inform and guide the annual business planning and risk management process. The targeted actions identified through the business planning process will dictate the setting of individual and team objectives through the operation of the Performance Management and Development System.

Delivery of this Strategy will be subject to regular review and will be documented in an Annual Report reflecting the progress achieved in delivering on its strategic priorities. Previous Annual Reports may be accessed on the [DFA website](#).

The Department is committed to ensure an open and accountable approach in its engagement with the public and the Oireachtas. Full details on this and on the structures and assignments of responsibility for the Department can be found in its [Corporate Governance Framework](#).

HIGH-LEVEL GOALS

1. Supporting peace and reconciliation at home
2. Serving our communities
3. Driving the European agenda
4. Strengthening and protecting the global multilateral system
5. Enhancing Ireland's global engagement and prosperity
6. Strengthening DFA's effectiveness

Goal 1 Supporting peace and reconciliation at home



Unlocking the full potential of the Good Friday Agreement, contributing to the delivery of the Shared Island initiative, and strengthening our bilateral relationship with the UK

HOW WE ACHIEVE THIS

- » Support for the stable and effective operation of all the institutions of the Good Friday Agreement; sustained progress in implementing the Good Friday Agreement and subsequent agreements; and advancing reconciliation, including progress on legacy in line with the approach agreed at Stormont House
- » Deepen North-South cooperation, including through encouraging the early restoration and full use of the North South Ministerial Council; active support for the work of the North South Implementation Bodies to enable them to achieve their full potential; supporting the all-island economy and encouraging the building of active North-South links, as well as the effective implementation of the Windsor Framework
- » Strong support for, and engagement with, the Shared Island initiative
- » Active support for civil society and community organisations working on deepening links on the island of Ireland, through the Shared Island Civic Society Fund and the Reconciliation Fund; support for the work of the International Fund for Ireland; and the delivery of the end phase of the Decade of Centenaries programme
- » Deepen the bilateral relationship with the UK, reflecting our close political, economic, and people-to-people connections, enhance high-level political engagement (including through the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference and British-Irish Council, and with the devolved institutions), and develop a new Ireland House in London
- » Share lessons on peacebuilding through our mission network

OUTCOMES

- » Sustained peace, political progress, and enhanced reconciliation in Northern Ireland
- » Increased North-South and East-West cooperation, including through delivery of the Shared Island initiative so as to ensure strong co-operation between these islands
- » The further development of the all-island economy

Goal 2 Serving our communities



Supporting our citizens at home and abroad, including delivery of a first class Passport Service and Consular Service, strengthening our engagement with Irish diaspora communities

HOW WE ACHIEVE THIS

- » Provide a secure and timely passport service to our citizens
- » Meet the high demand for passports and Foreign Birth Registrations through continued reform and digitisation whilst ensuring high levels of security and data protection requirements
- » Deliver effective consular services and assistance to our citizens, including in a consular crisis, in line with the commitments in the Consular Strategy, especially through our mission network and our strengthened Honorary Consul network
- » Provide clear, concise and up-to-date travel advice to citizens to assist them in staying safe and informed while travelling, living or working overseas (including, where relevant, specific advice for women and LGBTI+ persons)
- » Strengthen our crisis management system further to ensure it is robust, responsive and sufficiently prepared to meet future risks

OUTCOMES

- » Modern and accessible passport and consular services and support for all our citizens across the globe while fully utilising digital platforms
- » Enhanced connections with diaspora communities reflecting their changing needs

Goal 3 Driving the European agenda



Shaping EU policies and ambitions to reflect Ireland's interests and values and contribute to deepening cooperation with our European partners

HOW WE ACHIEVE THIS

- » Promote Ireland's interests and values in the shaping and implementation of EU policies and ambitions, given the strategic importance of EU policies to protecting those interests and values
- » Support the EU's efforts to promote peace, stability, security, and sustainable resolutions to the war in Ukraine and other crises and conflicts in Europe and its neighbourhood, including through multilateral organisations such as the OSCE and the Council of Europe
- » Ensure the full implementation of EU-UK Agreements - the Withdrawal Agreement, including the Windsor Framework, and the Trade and Cooperation Agreement; contribute to the development of a cooperative and productive EU-UK relationship that promotes Ireland's interests and contributes to stability in relationships across these islands
- » Drive whole of Government coherence on EU issues and in the implementation of EU related matters in the Programme for Government
- » Build relationships and deepen alliances with EU member states and with the European institutions
- » Ensure Ireland's priorities are integrated in the development and implementation of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and in its external policies including Common Security and Defence Policy, development co-operation, humanitarian assistance, human rights, migration, and trade
- » Enhance bilateral cooperation with our partners in Europe by strengthening and leveraging our mission network, deepening new and existing alliances including through implementation of our Nordic, France, and Germany strategies

Goal 3 Driving the European agenda (continued)



- » Strengthen Ireland's relations with those countries aspiring to join the EU, support their EU-related reforms, and ensure Ireland's values are reflected in the EU's enlargement policy
- » Support the strengthening of the EU's leadership role in safeguarding a world order based on respect for international law
- » Act as a bridge in the transatlantic relationship between the EU and the US
- » Lead on preparations across Government for Ireland's EU Presidency in 2026
- » Implement the 2021 whole of Government *A Career for EU* strategy to build Ireland's presence and influence in the EU institutions
- » Lead communication and citizen engagement across Ireland on the EU and Ireland's EU priorities including through the Communicating Europe Initiative

OUTCOMES

- » Ireland's interests and values reflected in EU policies and in its relationships with bilateral and multilateral partners and the wider European neighbourhood
- » Strengthened relationships with Member States, the EU institutions and wider partners, contributing to the further promotion of Ireland's interests and values
- » A positive EU-UK relationship, promoting Ireland's interests and contributing to stability in relationships across these islands
- » Strong preparations led across Government for Ireland's Presidency of the EU in 2026, including a deepened programme of engagement on EU issues with citizens at home and more Irish representation in EU institutions

Goal 4 Strengthening and protecting the global multilateral system



Upholding the rules-based international order, with the UN Charter at its heart that underpins Ireland's security, and promotes stability, justice, equality and sustainable development

HOW WE ACHIEVE THIS

- » Uphold and strengthen the rule of law at the international level, as reflected in the Principles of the United Nations set out in its Charter, including the principles of states settling their disputes by peaceful means only and of refraining in their relations from the threat or use of force
- » Work to develop and strengthen effective multilateral institutions (i.e. UN, EU, OSCE, Council of Europe, OECD, WTO etc.) and use our membership of them and the full potential of our network of bilateral missions, to promote and protect Ireland's interests and values
- » Lead the implementation of the Government's Policy for International Development, *A Better World*, ensuring coherent delivery of Official Development Assistance across Government Departments
- » Ensure Ireland's international development programme makes a clear contribution to progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and the eradication of global poverty and hunger, with a strong focus on food security and nutrition, gender equality, reducing humanitarian need, and climate action
- » Lead on the scaling up of Ireland's international climate finance, and strengthen whole-of-Government efforts on climate diplomacy, with a focus on adaptation and progress internationally on loss and damage
- » Work to strengthen and reform UN peacekeeping and play an active role in the development of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy, including participation in UN-mandated, EU led, military crisis management missions, as well as in EU civilian missions, and through an active secondment policy
- » Drawing on our lived experience, promote effective action from conflict prevention and resolution to peacebuilding and post-conflict reconciliation, and the full engagement of women, youth and civil society in these processes
- » Active pursuit of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, including by contributing to integrated Governmental efforts on export controls, emerging technologies and space
- » Ensure that Ireland's security policy is fit for purpose in the modern European and global security environment, and develop an open and informed discussion of the State's international security policy, including through the organisation of a Consultative Forum
- » Promote Ireland's candidacy for the UN Human Rights Council in 2027-2029, and champion human rights, with a focus on accountability

Goal 4 Strengthening and protecting the global multilateral system (continued)



- » Working across Government and with our EU partners, develop our relationship with China based on a comprehensive analysis of Ireland's interests and values, a strengthening of our economic and systemic resilience and a focus on engaging with China as a key player on global issues, particularly climate change, global trade and investment and the multilateral system
- » Defend and promote a safe, secure, free and open global cyberspace, with robust telecommunication infrastructures and regulated by international law
- » Promote accountability for the most serious international crimes, including through active support for the work of the International Criminal Court
- » Support efforts to enhance international oceans governance and the protection of the global marine environment
- » Promote inclusive economic growth and free and fair trade through supporting initiatives that seek to foster trade and investment and the sustainable management of debt in developing countries

OUTCOMES

- » Ireland plays a role in defending and strengthening a stable and secure international environment based on respect for international law
- » Ireland's international security policy is fit for purpose in the context of the new European security environment
- » International humanitarian and human rights law is promoted and strengthened, and effective accountability mechanisms supported to punish serious violations
- » Ireland contributes to international peace and stability through active engagement in conflict prevention and resolution, disarmament and non-proliferation and peacebuilding
- » Renewed progress towards the eradication of global poverty and hunger
- » A framework is advanced for sustainable development, reinvigorating global commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, and addressing linked humanitarian, food, health, economic, peace and security, and climate crises
- » A strong network of bilateral and multilateral alliances for Ireland with our global partners

Goal 5 Enhancing Ireland's global engagement and prosperity



Strengthening and deepening our prosperity, our influence and our international reputation

HOW WE ACHIEVE THIS

- » Implement the Global Ireland strategy and its subsidiary whole of Government regional strategies (See Appendix 2 for details) for:
 - » Africa
 - » Asia Pacific
 - » Latin America and the Caribbean
 - » Middle East and North Africa (to be developed by end 2023)
 - » Nordic
 - » Small Island Developing States
 - » US & Canada
- » Continue to build strong, strategic political partnerships with the United States and a mutually beneficial two-way economic relationship
- » Delivering on the commitment to double our global footprint by opening new offices in Milan, Munich and Islamabad bringing the total number of new missions to 22 since 2018, and make recommendations to Government on further locations, particularly in the Western Balkans
- » Support implementation of the Government's economic objectives abroad, including trade, investment, education, tourism and research objectives. Coordinate whole of Government engagement at the OECD and support central Government economic policy work through the work of the mission network and effective communication of Ireland's economy
- » Work closely with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and all Team Ireland partners to implement the Trade and Investment Strategy including through co-chairing the HQ Markets Team, chairing of Local Market Teams abroad, and participation in the Trade & Investment Council, and through the work of the mission network, as well as to seize opportunities arising from the EU Industrial Strategy. This includes new Ireland Houses in New York, London, Tokyo and Abuja, and the delivery of the Digital Ireland House project
- » Play a leading role working with State Agencies and other partners, to deliver high-quality and targeted promotional activities in support of our shared objectives, including a strong presence at EXPO 2025 and major sporting events



- » Coordinate the annual St Patrick's Day programme of Ministerial visits to deepen existing bilateral relationships and forge new linkages across a range of countries and markets, and support the delivery of high level visits and trade missions throughout the year
- » Contribute to the global Team Ireland communications effort to increase visibility, raise awareness and enhance Ireland's reputation through the delivery of a global reputation and communications strategy for Ireland with Ireland.ie as the primary digital platform
- » Build public support in Ireland for international engagement through ongoing communications and public outreach initiatives aimed at communicating Ireland's foreign and development policy and objectives
- » Promote Ireland's culture by providing curated programming, sectoral expertise (including specialist Cultural Officers in priority locations) and strategic investment in flagship cultural centres and support Irish artists and creative professionals internationally

OUTCOMES

- » Mobilisation of our capabilities at home and abroad, working closely with Team Ireland partners, to support Ireland's sustained economic development
- » Promotion of Ireland as a place to trade with, visit, work, invest and study
- » Expanded global footprint supporting stronger and deeper bilateral relationships and engagement around the world, as per the *Global Ireland* strategy
- » Enhancement of Ireland's reputation, visibility and influence through wider and deeper international appreciation of our values, policies, culture and global impact

Goal 6 Strengthening DFA's effectiveness



Building our capability to serve and to deliver on our Goals

HOW WE ACHIEVE THIS

- » Provide effective Management Board leadership, strategic direction, budgetary oversight, risk management, policy development, business continuity, and oversight in line with the Department's Corporate Governance Framework
- » Implement Departmental strategies led by Corporate Services Division (Property Management Strategy, Security and Corporate Compliance Strategy, Digital Transformation Strategy) and Human Resources Division (Human Resources Strategy and Gender, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan)
- » Promote and deepen a culture of innovation and transformation in the Department to improve the effectiveness of our policies and processes
- » Contribute to public sector reform, including through the Civil Service Renewal 2030 initiative, and through the Civil Service Management Board
- » Deliver projects using best practice project management approach governed by the Programme Oversight Board, and in line with the Public Spending Code
- » Embed a culture of dignity and respect in the workplace (including in relation to health and safety issues), emphasising equality, including gender equality, diversity and inclusion, and promoting wellbeing and resilience of staff, including fostering work-life balance through implementation of the GEDI Action Plan
- » Promote and support policy development processes that reflect best practice; are innovative, transformative, efficient and result in effective, forward-looking and flexible policies, with robust implementation plans
- » Implement the Department's Climate Action Roadmap
- » Strengthen supports for our posted and local staff overseas
- » Implement the Learning and Development Framework, developing managerial capability, fostering capable and agile teams at home and abroad, and significantly enhanced foreign languages capability

Goal 6 Strengthening DFA's effectiveness (continued)



- » Maintain an effective Evaluation and Audit function that provides management with objective assessment, assurance, advice and insight regarding corporate performance, governance, risk management and internal control
- » Create a culture of responsibility on cybersecurity, data security and information security through appropriate supports, training, awareness-raising
- » Continue to build the resilience and preparedness of the organisation (staff, systems and structures) to be able to easily adapt to the changing geo-political climate. Focus on future-proofing the Department in terms of policy and organisation to meet new global risks including in the field of technology in international policy
- » Effectively manage our 178 properties

OUTCOMES

- » A Department that is responsive to national and global developments
- » A Department that contributes to an excellent public service
- » An open, accountable and sustainable Department delivering best practice in governance and organisational performance and ensuring good financial management
- » An adaptable and resilient global workforce in an integrated foreign ministry
- » A diverse and inclusive workforce, with improved gender balance across all levels of the Department, underpinned by a culture that respects and values all staff

Appendix 1 Public Sector Duty

In accordance with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014, the Department of Foreign Affairs is committed to promoting equality, preventing discrimination, and protecting the human rights of our staff, service users, and everyone who is affected by our work.

Much of the Department's work in this area is articulated in the Gender, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2025. The GEDI Action Plan was prepared by Human Resources Division in consultation with key stakeholders across the Department, including the Management Board Sub-Committee on Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI Sub-Committee), Strategy Governance and Change Unit (SGCU), and members of the Management Board, as well as engagement with external organisations. The targets, outcomes, and

actions identified in the Action Plan are designed to embed diversity and inclusion in the policies and practices of the Department, and to develop systems to have a meaningful impact on the working experience of staff and line managers.

Additionally, in preparing this Statement of Strategy, the GEDI Sub-Committee was consulted to identify human rights and equality issues relevant to the Statement, and to input into the actions which would address these issues. The work of the GEDI Sub-Committee is progressed by five staff groups- Gender, LGBT+, Multicultural, Parents and Carers, and Social Inclusion and Disability.

Developments and achievements in the areas of human rights and equality are monitored on a continual basis, and are documented in the Department's Annual Report.

Appendix 2 DFA Strategies

CORE

[Global Ireland – Ireland’s Global Footprint to 2025](#)

[The Global Island: Ireland’s Foreign Policy in a Changing World](#)

[A Better World – Ireland’s policy for International Development](#)

THEMATIC

[A Career for EU: Ireland’s Strategy to increase Irish representation in the European Union’s Institutions and Agencies](#)

[Gender, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan 2022–2025](#)

[Global Ireland: Ireland’s Diaspora Strategy 2020-2025](#)

[Ireland’s National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security](#)

[Irish Aid Global Citizenship Education Strategy 2021-2025](#)

[Reconciliation Fund Strategy for 2021-2024](#)

[TravelWise: Staying safe and informed while travelling abroad- Ireland’s Consular Strategy 2019–2022](#)

GEOGRAPHIC

[Ireland’s Strategy for Partnership with Small Island Developing States](#)

[Global Ireland - Ireland’s Strategy for Africa to 2025](#)

[Global Ireland Delivering in the Asia Pacific Region to 2025](#)

[Our Strategy in the Nordic Region 2020-2025](#)

[Global Ireland: Ireland’s Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean to 2025](#)

[Ireland in Germany](#)

[Ireland-Scotland Joint Bilateral Review: Report and Recommendations 2021–25](#)

[Ireland-Wales: Shared Statement and Joint Action Plan 2021–25](#)

[Global Ireland: Ireland’s Strategy for the US and Canada 2019 – 2025](#)

[Global Ireland - Ireland’s Strategy for France 2019–2025 ‘Together in Spirit and Action’](#)