



Irish Abroad Unit



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Note on the Emigrant Support Programme

Background

The Emigrant Support Programme (ESP) provides funding to not-for-profit organisations and projects to support Irish communities overseas and to facilitate the development of more strategic links between Ireland and the global Irish community. The Government has been providing financial support to organisations engaged in the delivery of services to Irish emigrants in Britain since 1984.

Since its establishment in 2004, the ESP has assisted 534 organisations in 36 jurisdictions with grants totalling €148.248 million. Grants ranged from small amounts for grass-roots groups (for example CAN\$2,000 to the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee of Halifax, Nova Scotia), to major allocations awarded to voluntary and community organisations operating on a large scale (for example GBP£400,000 to the London Irish Centre). The annual budget in recent years has remained steady at €11,595,000 per annum, and the fund is managed and overseen by the Department's Irish Abroad Unit.

Objectives

The nine key objectives of the Emigrant Support Programme as reconfirmed in *Global Irish: Ireland's Diaspora Strategy*, published in 2015, are:

1. Celebrate, maintain and strengthen the links between Ireland and the Global Irish;
2. Address the diverse and evolving needs of Irish emigrants, especially the elderly, disadvantaged and vulnerable;
3. Facilitate access to statutory and voluntary services in their country of residence for Irish emigrants;
4. Foster a more vibrant sense of community and of Irish identity;
5. Further the outcomes of the Global Irish Economic Forum;
6. Support business networks to connect Irish people to each other at home and abroad;
7. Research and define the emerging needs of Irish communities abroad;
8. Support development of new ways to communicate and connect with the increasingly diverse global Irish, including non-traditional diasporas;

9. Improve awareness and understanding of the emigrant and diaspora experience.

While the support of frontline welfare services continues to be the priority of the ESP, the expansion of the programme has enabled the Government to invest in a range of cultural, community and heritage projects, which foster a vibrant sense of Irish community and identity, as well as strategic capital projects.

Emigrant Support Programme 2017-18

Grant officers in Irish Abroad Unit are currently assessing 421 project applications from 263 organisations, amounting to €19.425 million¹. Grants are awarded in local currency (mostly British pounds and US dollars) and therefore funding is subject to currency fluctuations. This funding will be allocated and disbursed in 2017 for projects to take place during the 1 July 2017 – 30 June 2018 funding year. It is proposed, in order to minimise exposure to currency fluctuations, to make submissions to the Minister in a series of tranches between late June and late July, beginning with the United States welfare grants and followed by grants to Ireland based organisations, grants to “Rest of the World”, small British grants, grants to Canada, grants to Australia, the United States heritage grants and finally the remainder of the British grants.

Project Applications on Hand 2017-18

	< €10k	€10,000 - 21,000	€21,001 - €44,000	€44,001 - €99,000	> €100,001	Total
Britain	77	33	38	29	21	198
USA	28	21	12	18	17	96
Ireland	01	06	02	10	10	29
Australia & New Zealand	18	05	11	04	02	40
Canada	21	03	02	02	02	30

¹ Exchange rates as at June 2017.

Rest of the World	18	04	04	02	0	28
Total	163	72	69	65	52	421

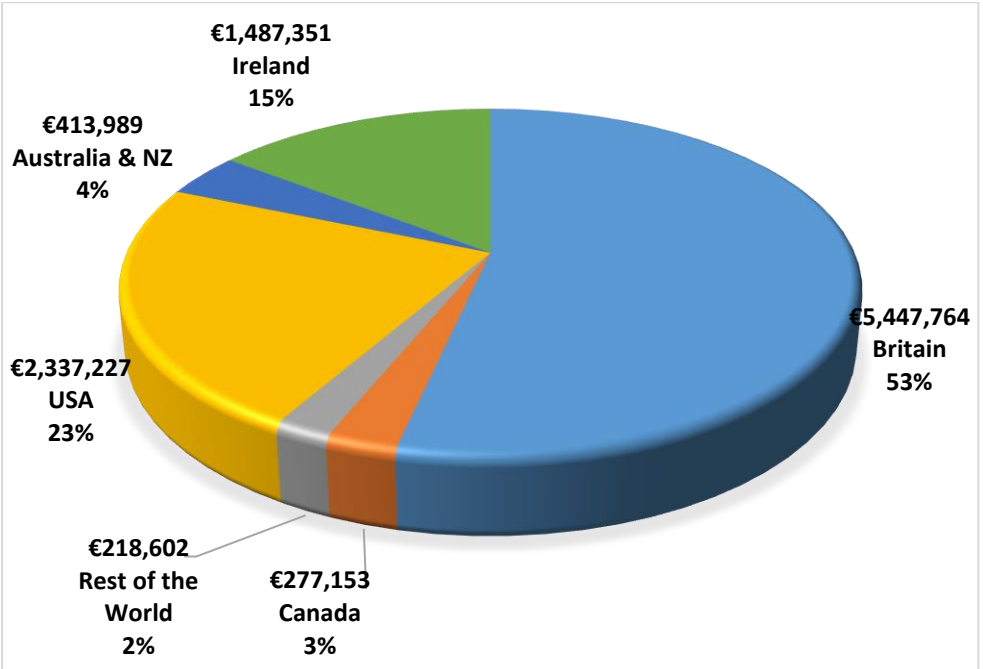
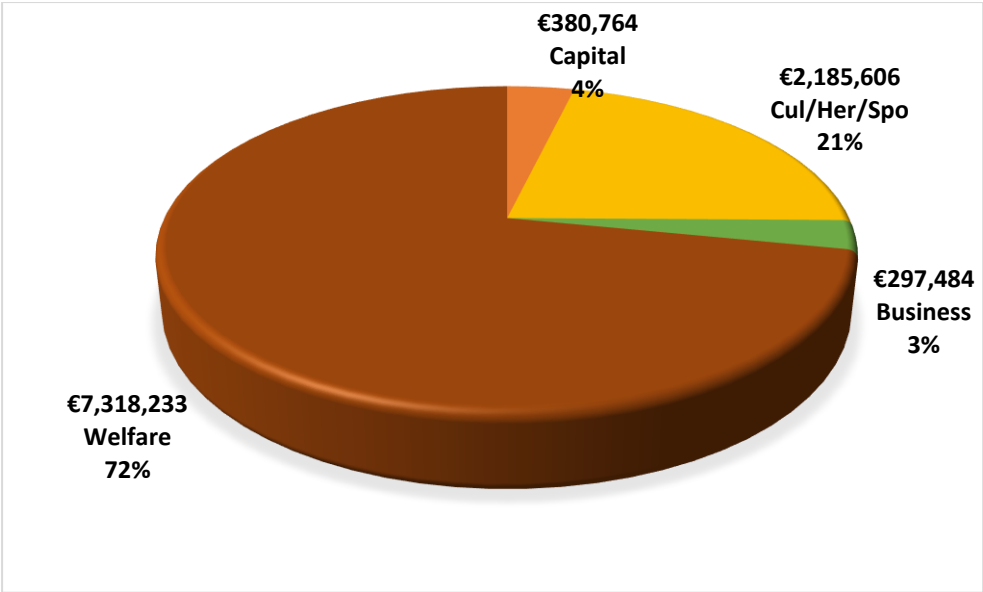
The number of grants managed by Irish Abroad Unit significantly exceeds that of any other individual business unit within the Department, including any business unit in Development Co-operation Division.

Emigrant Support Programme 2016-17

The Emigrant Support Programme disbursed grants to a total of €10.18m to 357 projects in 20 jurisdictions. The remainder of the €11.595m budget line was allocated to a) quality assurance (including auditing, monitoring and evaluation) and b) other global Irish community related programmes administered by the Department.

As set out in *Global Irish: Ireland's Diaspora Strategy* support for the most vulnerable members of our communities abroad remains at the heart of the Emigrant Support Programme. Projects funded are targeted at facilitating access to services linked directly to emigrant status and to meeting the welfare needs of emigrants rendered vulnerable by a range of factors including age, isolation, location, immigration status, employment status and health. Over 72% of the funding in 2016-17 was awarded to welfare related projects.

A geographical and sectoral breakdown of projects funded under **the Emigrant Support Programme in 2016-17** is set out below. 53% of funding was awarded to projects in Britain. The Irish community in Britain is unique and diverse. While the overall number of Irish-born people have fallen in recent years, the numbers in older age-groups – with particular welfare needs - have increased; 65% of Irish-born people in Britain having arrived before 1980.



Review of the Emigrant Support Programme

It is of critical importance that the systems and procedures of the Emigrant Support Programme are continually improved in order to ensure best practice grant management, to deliver most efficient and effective use of staff resources, to mitigate risk ² and to ensure transparency and accountability in the management of public money.³

An internal systems review has taken place in the first half of 2017. This included consultation with the Health Services Executive, the Charities Regulator and the Office of the Director for Corporate Enforcement, and a review of audits/recommendations already on hand from the C&AG, external audits of organisations funded through the ESP, and the Department's Evaluation and Audit Unit and Audit Committee. A number of immediate changes to processes and requirements have been identified and are being implemented in respect of the 2017-18 grant round, for which applications are now on hand. In addition, an External Review of the Programme by a qualified auditor (Tierney & Associates) is near finalisation. The Unit is operating a rolling workplan of tasks relating to improvements of the Programme. Given the reliance of many of the organisations on Government of Ireland funding, the reform of the Emigrant Support Programme is expected to be a medium-term project in change management for the organisations, our Missions abroad and for the Department at HQ. The implementation of a new Department-wide fit-for-purpose Grants Management System is a critical part of the improvements – this is an ongoing project in the Department to which Irish Abroad Unit is contributing.

Historically, the Emigrant Support Programme has awarded funding in response to requests in a demand driven way. This has led to a situation whereby the coherence of our funding has potential for improvement. Irish Abroad Unit has identified a number of areas where there is potential for increased co-ordination with national policy makers, including funding to projects in the welfare category working with: mental health, survivors of institutional abuse, travellers, prisoners, as well as broader strategic approaches to the Irish language as well as Irish culture more broadly. Some of these are identified in *Global Irish: Ireland's Diaspora Strategy*. This work will be taken forward over the next year.

² In line with the identified risk in the Department's High Level risk register of "Financial Fraud or non-compliant transactions in a partner or grantee leading to a financial loss or reputational damage, most particularly in any cases where we have failed to deliver on audit-recommended safeguards".

³ As outlined in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circular 13/2014 on Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds.

Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) and the Global Games Development Fund

The Emigrant Support Programme relationship with the GAA outside Ireland is based on the community rather than the sporting aspect. The GAA provides a strong community and social network and, probably more than any other single organisation, helps to sustain a strong sense of community and heritage among our overseas communities. The support provided by the Department aims to foster this key role provided by the GAA. This relationship is managed between the Irish Abroad Unit and Croke Park in Dublin Dublin with active cooperation on the ground between clubs, Embassies and Consulates.

Since 2007, a matched-funding partnership arrangement with the GAA has facilitated Emigrant Support Programme support for the GAA's Development Officers in the US and Britain. Since 2012, the grant funding provided was divided between support for the Development Officers in the US and Britain and a Global Games Development Fund. This Fund provides financial support specifically for projects and initiatives that increase or improve opportunities for the Irish and other communities abroad to play Gaelic Games. Over €3.7m has been provided to the GAA towards Games Development worldwide, over €2.3m of which was allocated to the GAA in Britain. Since 2009, in addition to the above, funding has also been provided to the GAA towards a number of major capital projects in New York, San Francisco, Chicago and London.

Irish Abroad Unit

19 June 2017

Overview of Emigrant Support Programme Funding 2004 - 2016

	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12	2010-11
Britain	€5,447,764	€6,654,858	€6,196,448	€6,778,994	€7,596,425	€7,825,234	€8,135,669
USA	€2,337,227	€2,561,112	€3,058,913	€1,571,726	€1,669,227	€1,541,501	€2,052,984
Ireland	€1,487,351	€1,497,737	€1,969,793	€1,386,661	€1,290,463	€1,140,783	€982,275
Australia	€413,989	€464,674	€401,366	€406,912	€385,582	€363,625	€388,505
Canada	€277,153	€223,472	€213,133	€125,993	€152,498	€138,244	€76,131
“Rest of the World”	€218,602	€148,316	€158,925	€269,563	€361,170	€287,978	€269,132
Total	€10,182,086	€11,550,169	€11,998,578	€10,539,849	€11,455,365	€11,297,365	€11,904,695

	2009-10	2008-9	2007-8	2006-7	2005-6	2004-5	Total
Britain	€8,459,319	€10,224,748	€11,485,864	€10,128,661	€7,082,081	€4,333,640	€100,349,705
USA	€4,950,661	€3,524,690	€1,570,837	€1,128,061	€762,623	€534,599	€27,264,161
Ireland	€1,029,232	€1,038,541	€426,884	€320,504	€313,395	€131,019	€13,014,638
Australia	€229,943	€162,883	€190,245	€141,825	€45,212	€48,000	€3,642,761
Canada	€104,819	€145,627	€336,008	€24,912	€14,599	€0	€1,832,589
“Rest of the World”	€110,686	€86,225	€152,151	€81,838	€0	€0	€2,144,586
Total	€14,884,661	€15,182,714	€14,161,989	€11,825,801	€8,217,910	€5,047,258	€148,248,441