



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha  
Department of Foreign Affairs

# **Global Ireland: Ireland in Malawi**

Mission Strategy  
2021–2026



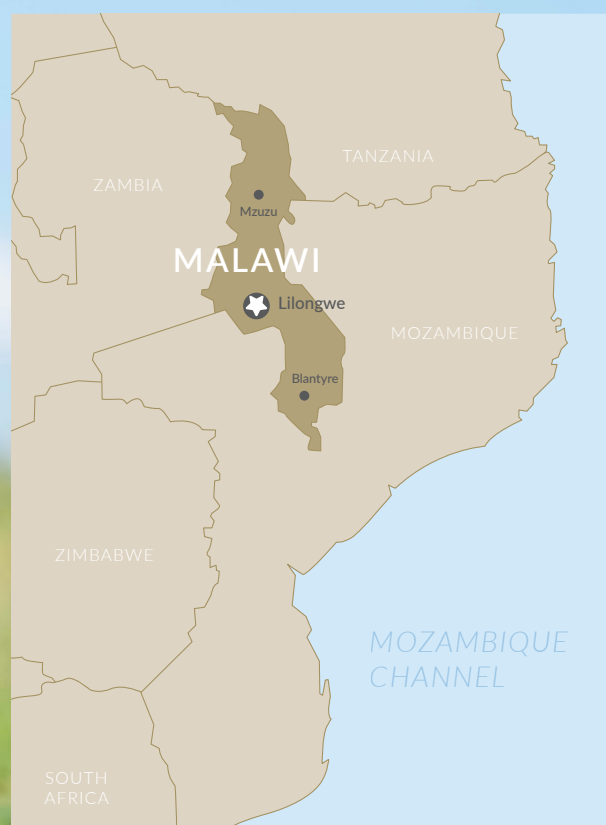


Cover Photo:  
COVID-19 Community Communication exercise,  
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Contents Photo:  
Farm attendant digs for sweet potato at the Bvumbwe  
Research Station in Thyolo © Hugh Rutherford for CIP  
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Mary Robinson, Former President of Ireland, Chair of The Elders and Adjunct Professor of Climate Justice, Trinity College Dublin visits Irish Aid funded programmes in Dedza, Malawi as part of her visit to Malawi in 2018.

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# Summary

## Our ambition is to advance Ireland's values and interests and strengthen Ireland's bilateral relations with Malawi

This Mission Strategy, covering the period 2021-2026, sets out the approach Ireland will take to deepening our relationship with Malawi and promoting our shared values and interests. The Strategy is framed by the priorities set out in 'The Global Island: Ireland's Foreign Policy for a Changing World, and 'A Better World, Ireland's Policy for International Development', and is well aligned with Malawi's national development plans and evolving political and economic priorities. The Strategy also draws upon Ireland's experience and learning from our longstanding relationship with Malawi, in particular since the establishment of our Embassy in 2007 and the setting up of our official development programme.

As one of a small number of countries with a resident embassy in Malawi, and a well-earned reputation as a reliable, responsive, and trusted partner, Ireland is well-positioned to make an important contribution in Malawi over the coming years. In keeping with the Government of Ireland's Strategy for Africa to 2025, we aim to deepen and strengthen Ireland's political, economic and cultural relationships with Malawi, with a view to contributing to peace, prosperity and sustainable development.

We will avail of opportunities to work in partnership with the leadership in Malawi. We will refocus and reorient our engagement nationally, and in international fora, to advance shared interests including regional peace

and security, human rights, effective governance, and inclusive economic growth. This will include leveraging our membership of the UN Security Council in 2021-22 to engage actively on issues relevant to Malawi such as the conflict in northern Mozambique, the role of women in promoting peace and security, and the conflict in DRC, where Malawian peacekeepers have played an important role.

As one of only two EU Member States resident in Malawi, we will promote and contribute to a more ambitious EU partnership with Malawi, and an effective Team Europe approach. There will also be opportunities for close collaboration with the Government of Malawi in the context of Ireland's membership of the African Development Bank.

This strategy is underpinned by six high-level outcomes:

1. **Strengthened political engagement**, social and economic development and an effective Team Europe partnership with Malawi;
2. **Empowerment of young women** through improved opportunities for social, economic, and political participation;
3. **Increased food, income, and energy security** for those most vulnerable to climate change, women in particular;
4. **Preventive**, timely, and adaptive response to **reduce the impact of humanitarian crises**, including global epidemics;
5. **Enhanced people-to-people, trade, cultural, and institutional links** between Ireland and Malawi;
6. Adept and **responsive passport, consular and diaspora services**.

# Chapter 1: Introduction

We will respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges and opportunities presented by the changing context, building on Ireland's experience in Malawi

## CONTEXT

As we begin implementing this strategy, the impact of COVID-19 on Malawi is becoming increasingly evident. The pandemic has exacerbated a range of existing challenges facing Malawi, including rapid population growth, an outdated agricultural sector and the impact of climate change, with accompanying unpredictable weather and extreme climatic events.

Nevertheless, there is cause for optimism. In 2020, a constitutional court ruling on the outcome of the previous year's Presidential race set a strong precedent for democracy on the continent, and marked the beginning of what may be a bold new chapter in Malawi's history. Hopes and expectations are high.

In this changing context, Ireland has the opportunity to do things differently in Malawi under this new strategy. By working in close collaboration with our network of Irish embassies in the region, Ireland will go beyond a development cooperation partnership by testing new ideas, new ways of working, new modalities and new partnerships to deliver on a broad set of social, economic and development objectives.

## IRELAND'S ENGAGEMENT IN MALAWI

Since 2007, the links between Ireland and Malawi have been strengthened, building on the relationships, goodwill and access that come from a responsive and well-aligned development cooperation programme. In addition, the small but vibrant Irish community continues to contribute to strong people-to-people links, and the legacy of Irish missionary work is well regarded. Malawian alumni of the Ireland-Africa Fellows Programme continue to make a positive impact on Malawian life following their periods of study in Ireland and maintain a close relationship with the Embassy.

To deliver on Ireland's development cooperation objectives in Malawi, we work with and provide funding to a variety of partners, including government institutions, UN agencies, international research institutions and NGOs working across Malawi, in areas including agriculture, nutrition, health, social protection, education, climate, gender equality, rule of law and effective institutions.

In recent years, this work has yielded notable results, including:

- » The development and piloting of flexible, **shock responsive, electronic cash transfers** – an investment which has informed national policy and the manner in which Government and other donors now approach humanitarian crises and poverty response.
- » Investment in research and **seed system development** has helped to increase the availability of clean, climate smart, **nutritionally diverse food crops**. This in turn has led to improved dietary diversity and more resilient and profitable livelihoods.



*Solfina, a member of the Kauma Stove Production Group © Robin Wyatt*

- » Championing innovative and **affordable energy solutions**. With **more than two million energy saving stoves** now in use across the country as a direct result of Irish support, there has been a related reduction in the rate of deforestation, and a reduction in the incidence of respiratory tract infections associated with cooking over open fires.
- » Building from Ireland's 'Proof of Concept' investment, Malawi went from being the only country in the region without a functioning national registry and ID system to having one of the most **modern and efficient biometric registration systems** on the continent. Ireland, alongside the EU, has made a significant contribution to access to justice.

While the **Irish business community's presence in Malawi** has been limited to date, **trade** between the two countries has increased modestly in recent years. In the cultural arena, in addition to the popular **St. Patrick's Day** events, we have recently added **St. Brigid's Day** celebrations to the annual event calendar. This has led to the emergence of an impressive network of women active in many spheres including the arts, law, business, and the military. As an active **Team Europe** member, Ireland participates in events such as Europe Day, the annual European film festival, and environmental awareness events.



## Chapter 2: Guiding Principles

Ireland's priorities in Malawi are guided by foreign policy and international development objectives and commitments and the Sustainable Development Goals

At the core of Ireland's foreign policy is the unity and coherence of our approach to advancing Ireland's values and interests internationally. Our people-centred vision is one of peaceful, inclusive, environmentally sustainable societies; where poverty, in all its forms, is eradicated; where everyone can share in prosperity; where human rights are promoted and protected, gender equality realised; and where no one is left behind. We will build on this vision for Malawi through the Mission Strategy 2021–2026 and its goal to **advance Ireland's values and interests** as set out in our global policies and priorities.

**The Global Island: Ireland's Foreign Policy for a Changing World** commits to a coherent set of priorities based on the interconnected themes of *Our Values, Our People, Our Prosperity, Our Europe, and Our Effectiveness*. Ireland's values and interests derive from our Constitution, as well as from the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the principles that underpin the EU. In Malawi, our shared values and interests will be expressed through our bilateral relationship with Government, our membership of the European Union and other multilateral partnerships, working collectively to advance peace and security, development, and human rights.



**Global Ireland 2025** sets out a whole of government programme to significantly increase Ireland's impact in the world by 2025. It highlights the geopolitical, social, environmental, economic and technological challenges that face the world. Through our engagement in Malawi, we will build on Global Ireland, sharing Ireland's own experience and journey of development and deepening linkages and connections between our two countries. We will support our citizens, diaspora and partners to build networks and opportunities that promote Ireland as a good place to live, work, study, do business, invest and visit.

**Global Ireland: Ireland's Strategy for Africa to 2025** strongly restates Ireland's commitment to Africa and our respectful, whole-hearted support for the sustainable development of African countries and their place as equal partners at the global table. It highlights the decisive role the continent can play in shaping the world in the coming decades. It recognises Africa as a contributor to global peace and stability and underlines the potential of African youth to create and harness change for the better. In Malawi, we will build on this strategy with a particular focus on strengthening political partnerships, and actively working with Malawi to play its role nationally and regionally, to promote a safe, fair, equal and just world.



### A Better World: Ireland's Policy for International

**Development** outlines Ireland's vision of a more equal, peaceful and sustainable world and charts a clear way forward to achieve this vision. The policy represents a significant milestone, positioning international development at the centre of our foreign policy. It sets out our commitment to gender equality, climate action, good governance and the reduction of humanitarian need. These priorities and associated interventions are central to the Mission Strategy. In addition, the commitment to doing things differently by investing in our capacity, strengthening coordination and coherence, scaling up our contribution and impact, improving how we research and learn, and effectively communicating what we do will underpin our efforts and inform our ways of working.

Malawi has recently approved a long-term vision, **Malawi 2063**, setting out 'the Malawi we want' 100 years after independence. From this, ten-year plans will be derived with five-year reviews. The long-term goal is to deliver an inclusively wealthy and self-reliant, industrialized upper middle-income country by 2063 with an economy based on manufacturing in agriculture and mining sectors, and with a strong tourism offer.

The Mission Strategy aligns with the emerging ten-year plan in areas such as strengthening public institutions, Public Financial Management and accountability, promoting regional links and trade, inclusive economic growth and sustainable growth in the agriculture sector.



## Chapter 3: Our Vision for Ireland in Malawi

**Ireland's Mission strategy 2021 – 2026 sets out our vision and our commitments over the coming period, as well as how we can maximise our long-term impact.**

The high-level goal of the Mission Strategy – to advance Ireland and Malawi's shared values and interests – reflects the overall ambition of Ireland's foreign policy.

To deliver this high-level goal, three strategic objectives with six interlinked outcomes underpin the Mission Strategy, setting out its key areas of focus and prioritisation, and the results that Ireland will contribute to over the coming period.

### THE CHANGE WE WANT TO SEE

This Mission Strategy commits us to build stronger political partnerships to address national, regional and global challenges; to support Malawi's efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals with a focus on the furthest behind first, women in particular; and to build mutually beneficial trade, people-to-people, diaspora, institutional and cultural links between Ireland and Malawi.

The Strategy includes a series of high-level outcomes aimed at building stronger political and diplomatic ties, and effective linkages between Malawian and Irish institutions, including on trade relations. We will bring our considerable diplomatic and development investments to bear across our areas of activity, but particularly in relation to empowering women and girls and supporting new approaches to addressing the impact of climate change on those most vulnerable. A priority consideration for all our programming will be to ensure that we are reaching the furthest behind first.

This Mission Strategy has an indicative annual budget of €17 million equating to €102 million over its timeframe. The Mission will seek to drive innovative and impactful programmes, with a focus on results, mutual learning and value for money. Our membership of the EU will be a key pillar of our approach to engaging politically and delivering effective programming in a coherent and joined-up manner with Team Europe in Malawi.

We will continue to work with a range of partners, maintaining a mix of government, multilateral, and academic institutions in addition to I/NGOs. We remain committed to supporting the transformation of the agricultural sector, strengthening country systems and supporting an increasing 'localisation' of delivery options, subject to improvements in the Public Financial Management (PFM) environment. At the same time, we will grow our engagement with private sector and social entrepreneurs.



# GOAL

To advance Ireland's shared values and interests in Malawi

## Strategic Objectives

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| To build <b>stronger political partnerships</b> with Malawi as the foundation to respond to national, regional and global challenges | To support Malawi's efforts to <b>achieve the Sustainable Development Goals</b> with a focus on the furthest behind, particularly women | To build mutually beneficial <b>people-to-people, diaspora, institutional &amp; cultural links</b> between Ireland & Malawi |
|--|---|---|

### Outcomes

- |   |  |   |   |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. <b>Strengthened political engagement</b> around social & economic development & an effective Team EU partnership | 2. <b>Empowerment of young women</b> through improved opportunities for social, economic & political participation | 3. <b>Increased food, income &amp; energy security</b> for those most vulnerable to climate change, women in particular | 4. Preventive, timely & adaptive response to <b>reducing the impact of humanitarian crises</b> , including global epidemics | 5. Enhanced <b>people-to-people, trade, cultural and institutional links</b> with Ireland | 6. Adept & responsive <b>passport, consular and diaspora services</b> . |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|

### Ways of Working

- |   |                                  |                            |                        |                                 |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| scale up political & policy influencing with Government bilaterally, and, with & through the EU | promote coherence & coordination | innovate, research & learn | communicate what we do | build our own skills & capacity |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|



## Chapter 4: Our People

We will serve the Irish community through the provision of high-quality consular, passport and diaspora services



Malawi is home to a small but vibrant Irish community and a significant number of Malawians who have spent time in Ireland. We will expand our outreach to the Irish community and those who share an affinity with Ireland, exploring innovative ways of engaging with our diaspora. The onset of COVID-19 brought into sharp relief the importance of having an agile and responsive consular team to provide efficient and empathetic service to our people and the extensive network of EU citizens. We will also continue to provide timely and effective visa services for those wishing to travel to Ireland.

In addition, we will continue to enhance our visibility and influence by sharing with Malawi key areas of our national experience and expertise, in particular in relation to education, governance, rule of law, health, food and agri-business, including through peer-to-peer contact with Government agencies and others.

### WHAT WE WILL DO

- » We will open new conversations with Malawian partners by developing innovative ways of sharing Irish culture and building cultural collaboration between Ireland and Malawi. This includes through effective promotion of St. Patrick's Day, St. Brigid's Day and Bloomsday.
- » We will develop links with future Malawian leaders through the formation of an alumni association for former students of the Ireland-Africa Fellows Programme.
- » We will establish links to enable inter-institutional lesson-sharing visits and secondments. For example, we will facilitate engagement between the Malawi Revenue Authority and Irish Revenue on domestic resource mobilisation, leadership and change management, and other areas of interest.
- » We will continue our support to the Irish diaspora through excellent customer service in the delivery of citizenship services.
- » We will continue to provide a high-quality visa service for Malawians and people of other nationalities seeking to travel to Ireland, thereby facilitating people-to-people contact, business interaction, international education and institutional links.





## Chapter 5: Our Values

Supporting effective governance, strengthened institutions and an empowered people, and assisting Malawi's efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals prioritising the furthest behind first, particularly youth and women

This will be supported through the Mission Strategy focus on:

### **Strengthened political engagement, social and economic development and an effective Team Europe partnership with Malawi**

In line with Ireland's Strategy for Africa to 2025, we will work to deepen and strengthen our already solid political relationship with Malawi. Political engagement and rights-based efforts have been underpinnings of previous strategies, especially in our work with and through the EU. This strategy will see us build on and enhance this experience through a renewed commitment to promote and support nationally owned and driven efforts to strengthen public institutions, resolve social and political tensions, deal with discrimination, prevent violence, sustain peace and stability, and embed the rule of law. A more coherent and comprehensive approach will see increased engagement around this agenda as both an end in itself and a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development.

### **WHAT WE WILL DO**

- » We will conduct more structured and regular bilateral engagements with the Government of Malawi, to communicate our objectives and identify opportunities for joint efforts on issues of national development and regional cooperation.
- » We will make the most of our period as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2021-22 to provide observations and inputs on Malawi-specific and relevant regional issues such as the conflict in northern Mozambique, the role of women in peace and security, and the conflict in DRC where Malawian troops have played an important peacekeeping role.
- » We will assess opportunities to engage with Malawi's evolving Peace Commission as a foundation for social cohesion and conflict prevention, and promote the role of women and youth as mediators and conflict monitors at local level.
- » We will work closely with Malawi in its efforts to reform governance, administrative structures and processes to maintain stability nationally. Specifically, we will provide funding for electoral reform measures placing a particular emphasis on advancing gender equality via the reform process.
- » We will provide financial and system-strengthening supports at national and sub-national level for better public financial management, service delivery and stability.





Matiness Gangata, a potato farmer from the Dedza district in Malawi © Hugh Rutherford for CIP (International Potato Centre)



### Empowerment of young women through improved opportunities for social, economic and political participation

Young girls in Malawi are disproportionately excluded from education while teen marriage rates are amongst the highest in Africa. Malawi's high fertility rate challenges its development ambitions. A key factor is a large unmet need for family planning services, particularly amongst adolescent girls, with early motherhood effectively eliminating opportunities for education and employment opportunities outside of subsistence farming. As they age, women's access to assets, such as land, lessens, and as their ability to farm or sell labour reduces over time, many of Malawi's women become increasingly vulnerable, particularly during crisis periods.

Against that backdrop, and notwithstanding the complexities, an approach to tackling gender inequality that keeps girls in school and enhances better access to services, including sexual and reproductive health services, can help level the playing field and improve women's health and well-being in the first instance, and dramatically improve their ability to participate actively in economic, social and political life. Our approach is informed by the understanding that equality is a win-win arrangement and that active engagement of men and boys will be needed to address norms, and for successful transformation.

#### WHAT WE WILL DO

- » Deepen our already strong relationship with the Ministry of Gender and key collaborators, expanding our agenda to include girls' education and access to sexual and reproductive health services and work to support the Ministry's role as co-lead on the International Action Coalition on Feminist Leadership.
  - » Ramp up engagement with young, alternative, female voices to enhance our understanding of challenges and opportunities while offering a platform and route to influence decision-makers. We will also continue to engage with the Malawi Irish Consortium for Gender-based Violence to strengthen its voice and impact.
- » Grow and use our St. Brigid's network of influential Malawian women from a cross-section of society to advance our understanding of the social, cultural and institutional barriers to women's empowerment in Malawi.
  - » Finance suitable partners to deliver a series of engagements designed to increase women's political representation, reduce child marriage and teen pregnancy, and reduce gender-based violence.
  - » Explore the potential to generate credible evidence of social protection mechanisms as a means to enhance and sustain girls education; and pilot old age pensions as a proof of concept that they can reduce pressure on young women to opt out of education, get married and bear large numbers of children (replacing the 'children as pensions' tradition).
  - » Scope opportunities to foster women's participation and representation in peace-building and conflict prevention processes for a more representative and nuanced approach to discussions that are otherwise entirely male driven.





Lezita Massa, a potato farmer from the Dedza district in Malawi  
© Hugh Rutherford for CIP (International Potato Centre)

### Increased food, income, and energy security for those most vulnerable to climate change, women in particular

As farm sizes continue to decline along with soil fertility and forest cover, Malawi's agricultural system is under severe pressure with ultra-poor rural households experiencing high rates of food and energy poverty and limited earning opportunities. The fragility of the system is a cause for concern as the pace of climate change increases.

Drawing upon learnings and our experience in Malawi to date, in particular with regard to the challenges facing female producers and processors of food, this Strategy will see the mission adopt a more integrated approach to addressing food and income poverty for ultra-poor rural women. This will take into account the role energy poverty plays as both a driver and impact of fragility in the agri-food system.

As a committed Team Europe member in Malawi, we will use our experience to inform the development and delivery of a coherent response to the planned Team Europe initiative around a Green and Resilient Economy that will see a joint focus on food, income and energy security.

### WHAT WE WILL DO

- » Scale up our investment in climate-smart agricultural practices and champion the potential for a sustainable food system-based approach to meet food and income needs from Malawi's agri-food sector.
- » Work with private sector and academia, collaborating where possible with relevant institutions in Ireland.
- » Invest in research and generate credible evidence around potential innovative options for alternative, affordable energy for the ultra-poor.
- » Leverage our knowledge and experience around what works in these sectors to support the development and implementation of an effective Team Europe contribution to a Green & Resilient Economy in Malawi.
- » Work with the Ministries of Agriculture & Food, and Trade & Industry at national and sub-national level, and invest in system strengthening to deliver climate adaptation commitments in a transparent and effective manner. This will include financial,





Boniface Bulayoni, from Ntcheu, received his first bank card and social cash transfer in December 2018, aged 71  
© Irish Embassy Malawi

technical, and systems support for research into climate-smart food crop diversification in line with a sustainable food systems approach, food safety standards, and business development in the food processing sector.

- » Grow our relationship with the Ministries of Energy & Natural Resources and Climate Change and provide technical support to enhance capacities for the growth and regulation of climate smart, affordable energy products locally.
- » Support the establishment of micro and small enterprises in the affordable energy and food processing sectors to provide off-farm alternative employment opportunities for ultra-poor rural women.
- » Use evidence around what works in the energy and agri-food sectors to inform and update Malawi's national adaptation planning processes. We will ensure that this is reflected appropriately in Ireland's, and Malawi's, contributions to global climate negotiating processes.

### Preventive, timely, and adaptive response to reducing the impact of humanitarian crises, including global epidemics

Over the past decade, Ireland has proven to be one of the more effective actors and advocates working to re-orient the efforts of government towards more efficient and affordable measures, such as flexible social protection mechanisms, as a means to prevent and respond to crisis situations, including COVID-19. For this strategy, our approach will see us maintain our role as an advocate for good humanitarian practice, working to prevent or reduce vulnerability in the first instance, support good preparedness and ensure humanitarian needs, when they do arise, are responded to in a timely, appropriate and effective manner, and with a strong eye on recovery.

As the most at risk during times of acute or chronic crisis, women, children and the elderly will represent the primary target group for our programming, in particular for crisis response and social protection related actions.

### WHAT WE WILL DO:

- » Work with government and other actors, and working through national humanitarian coordination structures, champion the need to maintain an emphasis upon, and resourcing for, prevention, mitigation and recovery measures that target the most vulnerable.
- » Deepen our relationship with Malawi's Department of Disaster Management Affairs and provide targeted supports to build their capacity at national and district level to implement the National Resilience Strategy and deliver on Grand Bargain commitments, in particular the humanitarian-development nexus, localisation, and better consideration and response to gendered needs in humanitarian prevention and action.

- » Draw upon sound evidence from our own engagements, and continue to be an advocate for preventative and appropriate interventions, in particular cash over in-kind.
- » Engage with national stakeholders to strengthen improved information-sharing and planning for chronic and sudden onset crises, and, ensure targeting prioritises those most in need such as women, children and the elderly.
- » Maintain our technical and financial support for shock-responsive social safety nets and invest in further system strengthening for social protection, in particular the use of cost-efficient, and effective technology for targeting, payments, and monitoring.
- » Work with international NGOs and other partners to develop a model of support for sustainable graduation for 'labour rich', resource poor households from social cash transfer programmes into a variety of off-farm activities in agri-processing and agri-business with an emphasis upon climate smart business models.



Kennedy Masamba, Agriculture Research Scientist,  
at the Bvumbwe Research Station in Thyolo, Malawi  
© Hugh Rutherford for CIP (International Potato Centre)



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## Chapter 6: Our Prosperity



We will advance Ireland's prosperity through business, institutional and people-to-people links

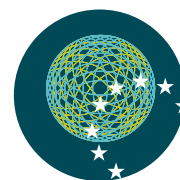
We will work to enhance Ireland's reputation as a valued partner for Malawi, contributing to mutual prosperity based on shared values and strengths. As part of this, we will seek to develop rules-based and principled trade and human capital development.



## WHAT WE WILL DO:

- » We will adopt a pro-active approach towards identifying trade opportunities for Ireland and Malawi, including possibilities for contracts funded by international financial institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the African Development Bank.
- » We will use our political dialogue to explore with government and relevant institutions ways of reducing barriers to trade, including via the important opportunities afforded by Malawi's active participation in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).
- » We will support Irish companies seeking to trade goods or services in Malawi. Where possible, we will draw upon our efforts to help to transform Malawi's agri-food sector, and explore opportunities to work with others to identify and communicate opportunities to Irish businesses.
- » We will seek out opportunities to promote Malawi as an attractive option for Irish institutions to explore and conduct placements and learning across a range of sectors.
- » We will continue to promote events like St. Patrick's Day, St. Brigid's Day and Europe Day to enhance awareness of Ireland as a dynamic and progressive market at the heart of Europe.
- » Working in partnership with the EU Delegation and EU Member States resident in Malawi and the wider region, we will explore opportunities to promote cultural exchange and increase the number of students from Malawi availing of third level education in Ireland.
- » We will explore creative ways to draw upon Ireland's missionary legacy and our current diaspora network, including Irish citizens in the UN, NGOs, the business community and the creative sector, to enhance awareness of Ireland's culture, interests and values.
- » We will work to develop links with business, research, and academic institutions in Ireland in relation to sustainable energy and food systems.
- » We will explore opportunities to enhance our collaboration with the many Irish organisations that have developed links with Malawi, particularly in the area of health, education and community development.





## Chapter 7: Our Place in Europe

We will work closely with the European Union and Member State partners to promote and advance our shared interests and values



Ireland is one of two EU countries with an Embassy in Malawi – this presents an opportunity to work closely with the EU Delegation on a shared agenda. We will work closely within the EU to shape EU policies and programmes, and promote and amplify Ireland's goals and objectives, towards achieving effective, inclusive, sustainable outcomes in Malawi.

Ireland's capacity to promote our values and advance our interests through the projection of our foreign policy is greatly enhanced by European Union membership. The social dimension of the European Union, with its focus on human rights, labour rights, gender equality, non-discrimination and environmental protection are a set of values shared by Ireland.

Building on our experience in responding to COVID-19 in Malawi as Team Europe, we will advance the recent high-level commitment by EU Member States to make 'Team Europe' the brand that enhances our impact and visibility in Malawi.

### WHAT WE WILL DO

- » Use our position in the EU to maximise opportunities for dialogue and influencing, including structures for political dialogue, bringing our understanding of local contexts, and domestic drivers of change.
- » In our engagement with national coordination and dialogue processes, we will strengthen our profile as Ireland, and as Team Europe, and collaborate to communicate consistent, evidence-based positions around what works in terms of climate smart adaptations needed to sustain and transform the agri-food and affordable energy sectors, placing a particular emphasis upon gender considerations.
- » As Team Europe, work towards joint programming around gender equality and transformation which is prioritised in the Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (2021 – 27). Explicitly we will contribute to the implementation of the two flagship Team Europe initiatives of Green Growth and Good Governance over the lifetime of the strategy.
- » Emerging from COVID-19, we will work as Team Europe towards a joint vision for recovery that is sustainable, human rights based, inclusive, green, and digital, ensuring gender equality is boosted and the furthest behind benefit. With the EU Delegation and the Embassy of Germany we will be active in the development of the next Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (2021–27) and will collaborate on joint engagements under the Team Europe priorities: Green and Resilient Economic Transformation; Democratic and Effective Governance; and Human Development.



## Chapter 8: Our Effectiveness

**We will mobilise our resources to enhance Ireland's profile and maximise opportunities to advance our values and interests**

A capable Team Ireland workforce capitalising on the Embassy's network and convening power, achieving greater influence and contributing to addressing challenges in Malawi is essential to delivering our objectives.

Delivering this strategy in the COVID-19 era will require sustained high levels of agility from all of the Embassy team.

The onset of COVID-19 has driven profound and protracted change to the way in which everyone works. Putting staff health and safety first, the Embassy has adjusted to new ways of working while sustaining productivity and delivering core services. We will continue to work to ensure our structures and processes are robust and fit for purpose. We will continue to appropriately manage risk and support agile and adaptive responses to changes in context. We fully expect the shape of the Embassy's work to change year-on-year over the period of the strategy.

Promoting coherence and coordination will continue to be a key component of our work, alongside an enhanced focus on innovation, research, and staff learning and development.

### WHAT WE WILL DO:

**Scaling-up political and policy influence.** Under this strategy, our approach to political engagement and influencing will continue to evolve around a core set of issues relevant for Ireland. We will adopt a systematic, interdisciplinary approach, combining innovative programming, evidence generation with well-targeted communications, political dialogue and stakeholder influencing.

Key to our taking a more comprehensive approach to influencing will be an increased emphasis on working collaboratively with our EU colleagues in the development of the next Multi-Annual Partnership programme, the delivery of shared initiatives under the Team Europe umbrella, while working closely with HQ colleagues to inform our engagement in Brussels.

**Promoting coherence and coordination.** In addition to a more-joined up approach to pursuing our agenda, we will work in a more collaborative way with our EU colleagues, as well as our HQ colleagues and optimise opportunities to inform and advance Ireland's and the EU's positions on globally relevant issues.

In country, we will work to support reform of national coordination processes and continue to step into lead roles in sector and donor coordination in respect of social protection, humanitarian response, and agri-food systems, and ramp up our engagement around gender equality and climate action.

**Innovation, research and learning.** Investing in research and piloting new ideas is a cornerstone of the Embassy's work. We will build on our experience to date and, informed by emerging guidance, we will strengthen our approach to evidence generation in keeping with the Department's, approach to Research, Evidence, Knowledge and Learning.

**Sharing and communicating what we do.** We will continue to build the profile of Ireland - including our EU identity - via well-crafted and targeted public diplomacy informed by a clear communications strategy to communicate credible, useful information generated via our programmatic and other engagements. We will continue to invest in the development of communications skills across the mission team.

**Building skills and capacity.** It is anticipated that staff numbers will remain at current levels, and while continuing to work on familiar themes (gender, climate, food, and governance) this new strategy outlines an adjusted and sharpened focus within these areas and to our overall ways of working that will need to be reflected in the range of skills employed by the team.







An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha  
Department of Foreign Affairs



**Irish Aid**

An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha  
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