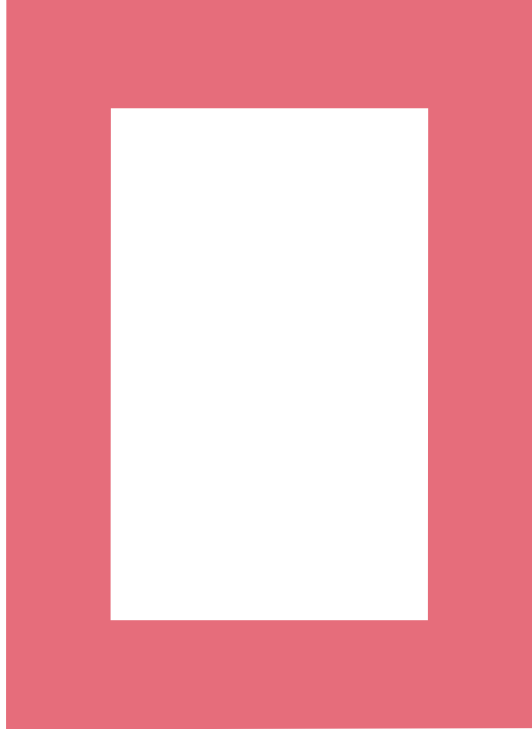


# Strategic Plan 2023 - 2028



Increasing Accessibility,  
Engaging Community.

**museum**  
National Museum of Ireland  
Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann

“ In a rapidly changing world, the biggest risk is not taking one. Museums that are taking risks are visitor centric, have participatory experiences, smart technology, a new generation of leaders, and are relevant and inclusive. As they ride the currents of change, they still are retaining their power of legitimacy as repositories of culture. ”

Eli Kuslansky, Principal and  
Chief Strategist, Unified Field.



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## Our Mission

The National Museum of Ireland is a leader in preserving and promoting Ireland's heritage across the island and the world. We contribute to the collective memory and identity of all people with Irish connections, nationally and internationally,

through our collections and programmes. We welcome over one million visitors annually to our four museums, providing opportunities to be inspired, engaged and informed through inclusive and accessible events and public programmes.



# Our Values

This strategic plan is informed by a commitment to our organisational values. These five values were developed through our fifteen-year Master Vision, published in 2017. They provide the principles through which we deliver our mission and vision.

## Stewardship

We are responsible for the professional care and interpretation of the national collections, informed by rigorous research, scholarship, and staff expertise.

## Innovation

We will increase our capacity to share our collections and engage new audiences across physical and online platforms by exploring innovative collaboration across sectors.

## Transparency

We will operate strong corporate governance and compliance principles with oversight by a voluntary Board underpinned by legislation and public policy. We will ensure that our decision making is clear and transparent by making our policies, procedures, and strategies accessible online.

## Accessibility

We are for everyone. We will ensure our collections and activities are wide-reaching and seek to engage people who visit our museums, connect with us online or through our public programmes nationally and internationally. We aim to provide universal access across all our sites and services.

## Collaboration

We will maximise our impact and increase our interaction at local, national, and international level by working with organisations and communities.

## Vision for 2028

**The National Museum of Ireland will be a place of sanctuary and surprise. Through greater accessibility to our collections, we will strengthen how our audiences can engage with their cultural heritage. We will offer unexpected and diverse public programmes and develop opportunities for increased research and collaboration.**

As we approach our 150th year in 2027, this strategy highlights the National Museum of Ireland's leading role at the heart of Ireland's cultural heritage and sets out a vision for the future.

It seeks to promote continuity and change. As well as conserving our collection and heritage we will expand our engagement with diverse Irish and global communities. We will achieve this by offering programmes that reflect multiple identities, and a wide variety of opportunities for public engagement. Through these actions, the National Museum of Ireland will be a recognised and trusted voice promoting the relevance, opportunities and value of cultural heritage in all our communities.





## Three Lenses

**Our strategy recognises the volatility of global, social, cultural, political, climate and economic conditions. It seeks to orientate NMI's ambition and vision within this context. We have selected three lenses through which to shape and view our work: community, planet, and shared knowledge.**

### **For communities:**

The National Museum of Ireland's collection is unique, with a significant number of objects and specimens either discovered or donated by our communities. These objects tell a fascinating story of the multiple identities of people living in Ireland, and of many different aspects of Ireland's cultural heritage. As the diversity of our communities broadens, it is vital that the NMI engages with the experiences of all communities, especially those which are historically marginalised in our collections.

Accessibility and inclusivity will be the bedrock of our work. This will direct our activities in capital programmes, acquisitions, collection care, interpretation, exhibitions, public programmes and visitor services. The museum will become a place where all feel welcome, comfortable, and invited to contribute in ways that are relevant to them and their communities.

Over the period of this Strategic Plan, we will:

1. Make accessibility to the collection the guiding principle of all strategy, policy development and operations at the NMI.
2. Prioritise opportunities to co-curate and collaborate with diverse communities through our public programmes, exhibitions and research.
3. Measure, assess and publish our activities in relation to equality and human rights both for people to whom we provide a service and our staff and wider team.
4. Deliver a digital strategy that enables local and global access to our collection and programmes online.
5. Prioritise the provision of accessible and adaptable cultural spaces for the wider community through our capital programmes on all our museum sites.



### For the planet:

NMI is a major repository for natural science collections and a custodian of our cultural heritage. These collections provide opportunities to understand the dramatic change in biodiversity and climate over the last century and its implication on our environment. Our folklife and maritime collections, as examples, provide an insight into intangible heritage practices that both sustain and activate our environment.

NMI will be a leader in supporting actions to address biodiversity loss and climate change through objectives that will underpin our operations and public programmes. Through this work we will provide opportunities for new research and programmes and advocate for habitats most vulnerable to climate change.

Over the period of this Strategic Plan, we will:

1. Promote action on biodiversity by providing greater access to our natural history collections and enable research that recognises this collection's potential as Ireland's first biobank.
2. Mobilise our collections and programmes to engage the public on the challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss.
3. Implement sustainable practices across all our operations from exhibition design and procurement to transport and energy use.
4. Demonstrate best practice in our capital development programmes from the perspective of sustainable design and building, aligning our work to the requirements and plans of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act (2021).
5. Deliver a 21st century Natural History Museum that is engaging to our visitors and relevant to biodiversity loss.

### **For shared knowledge:**

The National Museum of Ireland is part of a wide network of partners including national and international cultural institutions, research communities and public sector stakeholders. In a world which is becoming less connected and as nations become more insular, it is essential the NMI will look outwards cultivating local and global collaboration.

NMI will be a creative platform that collaborates through a variety of partnerships. Through these collaborations we will explore important narratives and themes within our collections, demonstrating points of intersection and opportunities for shared knowledge. These partnerships will strengthen relationships across geographical and cultural boundaries providing for the free flow of ideas, projects, and collections.

Over the period of this Strategic Plan, we will:

1. Promote public history, socially engaged practice and community knowledge through our exhibitions and public programmes.
2. Provide a platform for expertise within local communities, recognising that this will not always be through our existing collections.
3. Support greater staff engagement in research and learning through training and additional resources.
4. Prioritise projects that enable learning and skills-sharing for both graduate communities and Continuing Professional Development for the Museum sector.
5. Secure the development of a Collections Resource Centre that is a hub for research access, collections mobility, community engagement and wider national and international collaboration.

# Acknowledgements

NMI would like to thank the individuals and organisations that contributed to the development of this Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan was developed through a series of workshops and engagement with the NMI Board, NMI Staff and a wider stakeholder group across the public and private sectors. Thank you for your contribution and we look forward to working with you to realise our ambition.

## Image credits:

Members of the Dutch Stoereloer Artists Collective delivering a Little Houses workshop. (Page 2)

“A dress for Akumna” a collaborative project with the Nwanne Diuto African Women’s Group and artist in residence Anthony Haughey. (Page 5)

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