



LITERATURE IRELAND

Bringing Irish Literature to the World

Statement of Strategy 2022–2027



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Foreword from the Director

Literature Ireland – Bringing Irish Literature to the World establishes the strategies and policies that will guide the work of Literature Ireland in promoting Irish literature abroad in the period 2022–2027. It has been developed following consultation with key stakeholders, staff and the board of Literature Ireland.

We believe that Irish literature is of international cultural significance and should be more widely read and appreciated in translation. It has a significant part to play in increasing Ireland’s influence throughout the world.

Literature Ireland is committed to a core remit of working with foreign publishers and translators to ensure that the works of Ireland’s writers, in English and Irish, reach the world’s readers in the best possible translations.

Through support for Irish literature in translation we will foster the profile of Irish writers to help them achieve their full international potential, reach new and larger audiences, and access significant additional income streams. We will be the resource in Ireland for all international publishers, literary translators, journalists and festival programmers who engage with Irish literature.

This strategy statement sets out our shared values as an organisation: a dedication to excellence in our work and in the books that we support, a commitment to working in partnership with others and to seeking out opportunities for our writers and translators, and a belief in the importance of respect for all those we work with.

Sinéad Mac Aodha, Director

Mission and Values

Mission

The mission of Literature Ireland is to promote Irish literature abroad.

Values

Excellence

Literature Ireland is committed to excellence across its operations and programmes. We believe that writers and readers deserve excellent translations and so we will aim to achieve the highest standards in awarding grants, supporting writers and translators, and promoting Irish writing abroad.

Partnership

Literature Ireland is committed to working with a range of partners at home and abroad to realise its goals and to achieve ambitious targets for the global recognition of Irish literature.

Opportunity

We believe in the transformative power of Irish words. We are committed to creating the networks and building the connections through which imaginative relationships with Ireland can flourish.

Respect

We strive to foster a culture that exemplifies mutual respect and which values diversity, equality and inclusion. We are committed to ensuring that everyone we interact with – from Irish writers and their translators to their international publishers and readers – is treated fairly and with respect.

The Context

Irish literature is an extraordinarily valuable national asset. Its quality and reputation are exceptional for a relatively small country. Along with other cultural assets, it is a very important element in 'Brand Ireland'.

Literature Ireland is a small organisation with limited resources of staff and budget. The objectives set out in this statement of strategy are predicated on achieving a significant but not unrealistic increase in resources over the next five years.

Literature Ireland has an important role in promoting Irish literature in its core role of providing translation grants. There is a long-established high demand for Literature Ireland services.

There are a number of constraints to this activity:

- The current translation grant budget of €200,000 is approximately 40% below the total value of eligible applications received annually.
- The current average grant awarded at less than €2,000 is too low to attract publishers or appropriately support translators in their expert work. This needs to be brought into line with established good practise across Europe, where average translation grants range between €4,000 and €8,000.
- There is a need to provide greater support for specialist translators of Irish literature and to put programmes in place to attract and retain a new generation of translators.

Given the small size of the organisation, there is a need to review existing operations to allow staff to focus on the core activity of Literature Ireland.

High-level Goals

1. To promote Irish literature abroad.
2. To strengthen our capacity to deliver on our mandate.
3. To develop Literature Ireland's position within the Irish cultural sector.

Goal 1: To Promote Irish Literature Abroad

We will do this by:

Awarding translation grants to encourage publishers to place Irish books in the hands of readers around the world.

Measures of Success

- Increased translation grant budget to fund more grants of higher value.
- Wider geographic reach for Irish literature.
- Standardised approach to tracking and measuring the impact of the programme.

Creating demand for Irish literature by representing Irish writers and writing at key international publishing trade fairs.

Measures of Success

- Increased presence at important international book fairs.
- Continued involvement with national stands at major book fairs.
- Expanded global business-to-business network of publishers and literary agents.

Working with the Arts Council to Support Irish Writers in Developing their International Careers

Measures of Success

- More Irish writers' works in translations of the highest standard.
- More Irish writers in consideration for international prizes.
- Developing international residency opportunities for Irish writers abroad.
- Building more one-to-one relationships between Irish writers and their literary translators.

Promoting the best of contemporary Irish literature by developing targeted and engaging print and online content, including catalogues, podcasts and videos.

Measures of Success

- Global distribution of *New Writing from Ireland* and other print materials.
- Developing new publications and innovative online projects which showcase the best of Irish literature.
- Demonstrably increased engagement with Literature Ireland's digital platforms and projects.

Leveraging Literature Ireland's translation footprint to provide expert programming advice to literature festivals and other partners and working with Culture Ireland to support writers in accessing international platforms.

Measures of Success

- Development of an explicit, formal programming service offered by Literature Ireland.
- Increased support for Irish writers to attend events, festivals and showcases around the world.

Engaging with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Ireland's embassy network to explore how we can better support their mission of advancing Ireland's influence internationally.

Measures of Success

- A more formalised relationship between Literature Ireland and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- More strategic partnerships and cooperation with the Department and its missions.

Advocating for writers' and translators' fair payment and equitable treatment in line with Arts Council and EU policies.

Measures of Success

- Explicit signposting of Literature Ireland's conditions around the fair payment and treatment of writers and translators.
- Adoption of the relevant recommendations of the EU OMC group's 'Translators on the Cover' report.

Goal 2: To Strengthen our Capacity to Deliver on our Mandate

We will do this by:

Developing a new generation of expert translators committed to Irish literature.

Measures of Success

- Greater number of literary translators specialising in Irish literature.
- Increased number of residential bursaries awarded, especially for translators from outside Europe.
- Annual literary translation workshops offered in a variety of languages.
- Establishment of other professional development initiatives, such as mentorships, fellowships and conferences.

Promoting the translation of original works in the Irish language.

Measures of Success

- Increased number of Irish-language works in translation.
- Professional development opportunities and residencies for literary translators of works in Irish.
- Publication on a cyclical basis of promotional materials about contemporary writing in the Irish language.

Streamlining processes and maximising efficiencies to ensure Literature Ireland's ongoing excellence.

Measures of Success

- Cost–benefit analysis of subcontracting book fair administration.
- Review of mechanisms and resources required for reporting to stakeholders.
- Adoption of new technologies and customised systems.
- Culture of upskilling for staff.

Secure additional resources to support the planned growth in operations and programmes.

Measures of Success

- Recruitment of additional staff.
- Retention of experienced staff.
- Allocation to Literature Ireland of appropriate funds to cover increasing operational costs.
- Year-on-year increases to key programme budgets.

Goal 3: To Develop Literature Ireland's Position within the Irish Cultural Sector

We will do this by:

Developing a new communications and marketing plan.

Measures of Success

- Increased presence on a variety of social media platforms.
- Increased online audience engagement with Literature Ireland content.
- Development of a suite of media packages.

Communicating effectively and frequently with our stakeholders.

Measures of Success

- Improved feedback from funders on communications.
- Consensus with funders on Literature Ireland's priorities and direction.
- Developing new opportunities to collaborate with partners.
- Standardised approach to collecting and analysing audience engagement data.

Seeking opportunities to brief stakeholders on the nature and scope of Literature Ireland's work.

Measures of Success

- Meetings secured with key stakeholders.
- Production of targeted content to introduce Literature Ireland, explain its work and highlight its relevance to the Global Ireland strategy.

Developing partnerships to improve our visibility and impact in Ireland.

Measures of Success

- Increased number of translator-in-residence partnerships with Irish universities.
- Pilot Local Authority translator-in-residence partnership.

- Increased number of events programmed by Literature Ireland in Irish festivals.
- Development of projects to engage with linguistically diverse audiences in Ireland.

Implementation Plan

Responsibility for overseeing the implementation of this strategy rests with our board, who will review overall plan implementation and progress twice yearly.