



Four Centuries, One Vision

Centre Culturel Irlandais
Strategic Plan 2026-2028

(ancien: rue du Cheval vert.)



Centre
Culturel
Irlandais

“Few places have had as great an impact on my life and career as the Centre Culturel Irlandais. Over the years, my career has developed significantly in France, and the CCI has been at the centre of that. The CCI commissioned my most recent opera, The Curing Line, which was the winner of the 2025 Fedora Prize for Opera. Through the continued advocacy of the CCI, we are now bringing The Curing Line to the Théâtre de la Ville in Paris - a huge and unprecedented opportunity for an independent Irish music-theatre company.”

Michael Gallen, composer

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Serge Barichard, Président, Fondation Irlandaise

When Napoléon reconstituted the Fondation Irlandaise by imperial decree in 1805, it was in recognition of something that had already been true for more than a century: that the Irish presence in Paris was too important, too enduring, and too deeply woven into the relationship between Ireland and France to be left to chance.

That conviction has not diminished. If anything, it has deepened.

The Fondation Irlandaise is the trustee of Ireland's cultural presence in Paris. Responsible for the building at 5 Rue des Irlandais and its activities since 1805, the Fondation works to advance Ireland's creative and intellectual life in France and Europe, fostering artistic and academic excellence through international collaboration. In the stewardship of this remarkable site, the Fondation is proud to stand as partner to the Irish Government, enjoying a relationship built on shared conviction: that what happens at Rue des Irlandais matters, that it has always mattered, and that it will continue to matter

long after any individual strategy has run its course.

Ireland's Paris Project, the once-in-a-generation initiative to transform this site into a world-class space for Irish creative, educational and political exchange, represents the most significant chapter in that story for generations. It is the context in which this strategy has been written, and the horizon towards which it is deliberately directed. The work of 2026 to 2028 is to build the foundations that IPP requires; in governance, in partnerships, in artistic ambition and in institutional confidence. The Fondation Irlandaise stands fully behind that work.

This plan and its commitments are rooted in the understanding that the Fondation's role is not simply to preserve what exists but to ensure that this special place continues to grow, to evolve and to serve — the artists who come here, the communities who call it home, and the two nations whose relationship it embodies.



Niall Burgess, Ambassador of Ireland to France

It is almost 450 years since a small group of Irish students formed a community around the University of Paris which over time developed into the Irish College and later into the Centre Culturel Irlandais. We think of that as a beginning, but in fact even those pioneers stood in a recorded tradition that was already a thousand years old.

Its physical expression today is the Centre Culturel Irlandais – one of the most beautiful buildings in one of the most beautiful quarters of Paris. Ireland's presence in France is a part of our identity as a country, our past and our future. Throughout our history, some of our finest scholars, writers, entrepreneurs and dreamers have come to France and, in so doing, enriched both our societies. And just as our histories are deeply connected, our futures as flourishing and prosperous societies in a vibrant European Union are also intertwined.

No. 5 rue des Irlandais, our cultural flagship in Europe, is a cornerstone of that story, past and future. A shared asset for a shared island. Indispensable and non-negotiable. Every encounter, every exchange at the CCI contributes to a vital European conversation, sparks collaboration, builds trust and opens perspectives that amplify and enrich our voice. This strategy sets out how the Centre will do that. We are on the threshold of a new and exciting era in the storied history of this wonderful place.



Dearbhail McDonald, President, Strategy Committee

There is a moment that happens regularly at the Centre Culturel Irlandais — when someone visiting for the first time steps through the archway on Rue des Irlandais, looks around the courtyard, and realises what they are standing in. That Ireland has an acre here, in the heart of Paris, a few steps away from the Panthéon, in one of the world's great cultural capitals. It floors people every time. It should.

The Strategy Committee that contributes to this work is itself a small reflection of what the CCI represents: Irish people living in Paris who have made this city their home; people in Ireland for whom the connection to Paris and to France is a source of genuine pride and joy; and French members who understand the value of the ties that bind our two countries. We give our voluntary time to this work because we believe in it, because we have seen, up close, what the Centre means to the artists who come here, the communities who gather here, and the audiences who are surprised and moved by what they find here.

This strategy arrives at a moment of real excitement. Ireland's Paris Project, the once-in-a-generation capital development that will transform this site, represents an opportunity that none of us take lightly. To open this space fully to the world, in the heart of Paris, with the infrastructure and facilities to match the ambition that has always been here: that is what we are working towards.

Alongside that ambition sits a clear commitment to governance, to ensuring that the structures, the oversight and the accountability that such a moment demands are genuinely in place. The Strategy Committee takes that responsibility seriously, and this plan reflects it.

We are grateful to everyone who continues to contribute to its development - the team at the CCI, our colleagues in the Irish and French Governments, and all those who believe, as we do, that this Centre has so much more still to give.



Nora Hickey M'Sichili, Director, Centre Culturel Irlandais

It is no coincidence that nearly sixty international cultural centres have made Paris their home, more than anywhere else in the world. Paris is a global capital where artistic work is made, presented and debated at the highest level. Culture occupies a serious and visible place in public life here: as a means of engaging with the world, of testing ideas, and of shaping how we understand our place within it. The Centre Culturel Irlandais has always understood the importance of being part of that conversation. From the discussions that unfold after a late-night performance in the chapel, to the residency that changes the direction of an artist's practice, to the student whose time here leaves a lasting mark, this is a place where culture does its deepest work.

The CCI exists to create and nurture, to connect and exchange, to honour our heritage while embracing innovation, and to invest in and strengthen the foundations that make all of it possible. Everything we do is guided by a commitment to artistic ambition, openness, rigour and generosity

— values that run through every residency, every programme and every relationship we build, affirming our belief in culture as an essential space for exchange, imagination and shared experience.

This strategy is deliberately ambitious, responding to the scale of the opportunity this site in Paris represents — for artistic work, for meaningful exchange, and for deepening connections between Ireland, Europe and the wider world.

None of this would be possible without the support of the Fondation Irlandaise, the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Culture Ireland, and all the partners, funders and friends who believe in what this Centre can do. We have an exceptional team, a remarkable space, and a community of people who care deeply about this place. The coming three years will show what that combination can do.



About the Centre

The Centre Culturel Irlandais is Ireland's cultural home in Europe. Located in the heart of the Latin Quarter, a stone's throw from the Panthéon, it is open to the public year-round — a place of making, gathering, learning and interacting in one of the world's great cultural capitals.

The Centre's exhibition spaces and courtyard provide the setting for a rich and varied programme throughout the year spanning visual art, music, literature, film, theatre, dance and debate. It is a rich programme rooted in the full breadth and complexity of contemporary Irish culture, and one that draws audiences from Paris, from Ireland and from around the world.

The Centre also provides accommodation for Irish students and cultural professionals, fostering a vibrant residential community where conversation and exchange are part of daily life. The Artist in Residence Programme supports practitioners from Ireland in the development of their work, with some studio space available on site.

Three extraordinary collections form another key part of our Centre's work:

- The Médiathèque is a public multimedia library dedicated to contemporary Ireland — a resource for students, researchers and anyone curious about Irish life and culture.
- The Old Library is among the few surviving libraries of the communities who lived in this part of Paris before the end of the eighteenth century, housing more than 8,000 volumes of rare and historic significance.
- The Historical Archives of the Irish Colleges in Paris span the years 1316 to 1999, forming one of the most remarkable records of the Irish presence in Europe.

Our chapel, like the Old Library, dates back to the building's previous function as a seminary. Dedicated to Saint Patrick, it stands as a living connection to the centuries of Irish community life that have unfolded on this site. Irish scholars first sought refuge in Paris in the late sixteenth century, part of a broader wave of Catholic intellectual exile from an Ireland under increasing colonial pressure. The chapel has served their successors ever since — a place of spirituality and worship to this day, and, thanks to its remarkable acoustics, a venue for concerts and spoken word events throughout the year.

This building is a home to a programme of Irish language classes presented in association with NUI Maynooth, as well as seminars and small events — a quiet but telling sign of the range of communities for whom this Centre is a special gathering place throughout the year.

Our Mission

To excel as a contemporary centre of cultural engagement, artistic innovation and critical conversation, building on the Irish College’s four centuries as a focal point for Ireland’s presence and influence in Europe.

Our Purpose

- Nurture a creative community of artists, researchers, critical thinkers and students.
- Present rich programmes which showcase and explore contemporary arts, culture and society on the island of Ireland, in all its complexity and diversity.
- Develop relationships and create strategic partnerships with partner bodies and institutions in Paris, France and Europe.
- Animate, preserve and develop the unique heritage of the Irish College and its historic spaces including the Old Library, complemented by our Médiathèque which houses the largest collection of resources about Ireland in France.



A Trusted Steward of Public Investment

The Centre’s strategy is directly aligned with Irish national cultural and international policy priorities, through our work supporting:

- The Joint Plan of Action between France and Ireland which flags the Centre Culturel as a key organisation in the relations between the two countries.
- The Department of Culture, Communications and Sport, strengthening Ireland’s cultural infrastructure and international cultural reach.
- The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, advancing cultural diplomacy, European engagement, and Ireland’s values-led international presence.
- Culture Ireland, by enabling sustainable international careers and European mobility for Irish artists.
- The Arts Council of Ireland, through commitment to artistic excellence, professional development, and broad public access.
- The Shared Island initiative, reflecting the Centre’s role as a cultural space for the whole island of Ireland and its commitment to representing the full diversity of Irish identity and experience.

Through its governance, programming, partnerships, and student, researcher, and community engagement, the Centre acts as a trusted steward of public investment and a key delivery mechanism for Ireland’s cultural objectives in Europe. Its work reinforces Ireland’s reputation as an outward-looking, culturally confident nation.

About Ireland's Paris Project

Ireland's Paris Project is an ambitious initiative to transform our current Centre Culturel Irlandais into a world-class space for Irish creative, educational and political exchange.

This ambitious redevelopment project, supported by the Irish Government, and led by a dedicated a Project Director, Eliot Bonvalot, aims to make a powerful statement about Ireland's role in Europe. It aims to celebrate Ireland's artistic, intellectual, political, and educational heritage within this 450-year-old institution, ensuring the Centre is a dynamic venue for exchange between Irish people, be it home or abroad, with France, wider European and global communities — and by doing so amplify Ireland's voice on the world stage.



Paris is not an incidental choice. Not only for Ireland's historical links, this is also the city where the world comes to listen, home to UNESCO and the OECD, the city that inspired Joyce, Beckett and Eileen Gray, Europe's crossroads of ideas. Every concert, exhibition and conversation at the CCI builds trust, opens connections and strengthens the relationships that underpin Ireland's place on the international stage. With this project, we are not renovating a building. We are reinforcing Ireland's cultural voice in the world's cultural capital, ensuring that for the next generation and beyond, Ireland has a presence here that is equal to its ambition.

The Foundation has put an expert team in place to develop this specific project, supported by the expertise and advice of a Capital Development Committee and other external consultants.



Four Key Aims of this Project

- 01 Open a welcoming space of encounter
- 02 Support the creation and showcasing of Irish arts
- 03 Foster political dialogue with France and Europe
- 04 Cultivate academic and research exchanges

This strategy is the bridge to that future. The three years it covers are not a pause before the real work begins — they are where the real work begins. Building the institutional foundations, deepening the partnerships, strengthening governance and growing the artistic ambition that Ireland's Paris Project requires: all of it starts now. By the time this plan has run its course, the Centre will be ready, in every sense, for what comes next.

CCI in Numbers

The figures below reflect a decade of growth, artistic impact and community building at the Centre Culturel Irlandais. They tell the story of an institution that is welcoming to many, that is delivering real outcomes for artists and audiences, and that is ready for its next chapter.

217,000

attendees across cultural events between 2015 and 2024

882

events delivered over ten years, averaging around 90 per year

400

artists hosted in residence since 2002, since the residency programme began

11,000

annual visitors to our libraries

1,530

students engaged in educational activities in 2024

“A healthy cultural and creative life is important for both the individual and for society. Participation in cultural activities can enrich our lives. Providing opportunities for wider and richer cultural and creative participation can also contribute to community cohesion and reduce social exclusion and isolation, leading to more resilient and sustainable communities. In our increasingly diverse society cultural participation has an important role to play in promoting tolerance, inclusivity and social cohesion.”

Culture Ireland

Our Strategic Focus

Create and Nurture

From the moment an artist crosses the threshold at Rue des Irlandais, the Centre places itself in service of the work, providing time, space, curatorial dialogue, and access to one of the world's great cultural capitals.

The artistic programme that emerges from this commitment reaches audiences in Paris and far beyond, carrying Irish creativity into European and international conversation.

- Present a rigorous, year-round programme of exhibitions, performances, concerts, literature and debate that reflects the full breadth and ambition of contemporary Irish culture
- Sustain and develop an excellent residency programme, continuing to create a space for genuine creative exploration, supporting artists at pivotal moments in their practice, from early career to more established artists
- Further pilot the commissioning and co-production of new work of scale and ambition, particularly in these milestone years for the CCI
- Nurture long-term relationships with artists and between artists and key cultural connections, building a network that extends the CCI's reach and deepens its impact
- Stand as a place of refuge and welcome for artists, honouring the historic role of this building as a sanctuary and space for those who need it

Connect and Exchange

The CCI occupies a unique position, an Irish institution at the heart of Europe, embedded in the cultural life of Paris, with relationships that extend across France, the continent and the global Irish diaspora. It represents Ireland in all its complexity: a centre for the whole island, north and south, and for all the traditions and identities that Ireland can encompass. Due to its history and position between Ireland, France and Europe, the Centre can be a place where ideas meet, where disciplines cross, and where the dialogue between cultures produces something that neither could generate alone.

It is also a genuine home to many: our chapel community, Irish language learners, the alumni who return year after year, the diaspora who find something of themselves here. Local schools who explore the library to learn more about Ireland, and visitors to the neighbourhood who discover the Centre by chance and are drawn in - all of them are part of what the CCI is. This strategy commits to honouring and deepening every one of those connections, while seizing the exceptional opportunities the coming three years bring for Ireland's voice to be heard in Europe.

- Further embrace the full community of the CCI — artists, alumni, the chapel congregation, Gaeilgeoirí, diaspora and all those for whom this place is a point of connection, learning and belonging
- Deepen and diversify engagement with audiences in France and across Europe, developing outreach beyond Paris, reaching new communities and welcoming them as active participants in the life of the Centre
- Build the CCI's visibility and voice, strengthening and expanding communications in both Ireland and France ensuring the Centre is clearly recognised as a gateway connecting Irish culture, dialogue and academic research with Europe.
- Strengthen and deepen partnerships with French cultural institutions and networks, creating new opportunities for Irish artists to collaborate across disciplines, generating new work, shared learning and enduring artistic relationships that extend well beyond the Centre
- Position the CCI as a convening space for political, intellectual and civic dialogue, expanding the programme beyond the arts to engage with the ideas, debates and critical conversations shaping contemporary Europe, including through strategic initiatives such as the curators exchange programme and planned media partnerships
- Pilot academic and educational partnerships, from schools to universities, that connect new generations to the CCI's work and mission

Heritage and Innovation

For almost 450 years the Irish College, as it is still affectionately recalled by many, has been a place of learning, refuge, scholarship and creative exchange, accumulating a history that is inseparable from Ireland's relationship with Europe. That inheritance carries both privilege and responsibility: to steward it with rigour, to animate it with imagination, and to ensure that the past speaks meaningfully to the present and the future. The CCI is a rich resource, for artists, researchers and the general public, Irish, French and international, and this strategy commits to making that resource ever more accessible, relevant and alive through new innovative ways.

- Further activate the Old Library, the Chapel, the archives and the medieval manuscript collections as living resources for artistic programming, scholarship and public engagement, maintaining the contemporary critical perspectives and depth of engagement that distinguish the CCI's approach
- Widen access to the Centre, its rich collections and its work through new formats, cultural mediation, guided experiences and digital strategies — making the CCI's unique holdings available to scholars, artists and communities far beyond Paris
- Further activate the Médiathèque as a central platform for learning, research and cultural mediation, connecting collections to audiences through educational programmes, guided formats and digital access
- Explore the relationship between heritage and emerging technologies and what these mean for artists, archives and institutions like the CCI, positioning the Centre as a thoughtful and engaged participant in that conversation

Invest and Strengthen

An institution with ambitions of this scale requires the fundamental building blocks that are genuinely solid. This includes our much-loved building and our grounds and also involves supporting the team, modernising systems, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and operating with the transparency that both funders and the public rightly expect. With those foundation stones in place, the CCI can flourish — artistic ambition, European partnerships and heritage stewardship all pursued with confidence.

- While ensuring the full preservation of the Chapel, the Library and the building's aesthetic, transform the building where heritage meets modernity, offering a more audience-focused and welcoming space while improving overall comfort for residents, meeting relevant accessibility and safety standards, maintaining this heritage site as the welcoming and inclusive space the Centre is committed to being
- Modernise and clarify internal operations, simplifying structures, strengthening role clarity and building the efficiency and transparency that will underpin the next phase of the Centre's development and ensure delivery of this strategy
- Diversify and grow income streams through philanthropy, strategic space hire, partnerships and sponsorship, while remaining true to the Centre's mission
- Invest in the development, wellbeing and leadership capacity of staff, enhancing and empowering each team member's expertise and securing the funding and personnel needed to function in optimal circumstances
- Build the operational systems, digital infrastructure and planning capacity needed to support the Centre's growth and its readiness for the next phase of development
- Continue to strengthen governance frameworks across both the CCI and the Fondation Irlandaise, meeting the standards expected of an institution such as this
- Operate with transparency and public accountability, following the highest standards of governance befitting an institution in receipt of significant public investment



“Ireland’s global cultural presence – both historic and contemporary – is an asset out of all proportion to our size, and a distinctive national strength. The global impact of Irish culture is one of our greatest competitive advantages and a central means of connecting with new global audiences and publics as well as with the global Irish diaspora.”

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Key Cultural Opportunities

The next three years also see some landmark moments for the Centre, for our history and for Ireland itself.

2026

Ireland’s EU Presidency (2026)

From July to December 2026, Ireland will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, a moment of incredible national and international visibility. As a key part of the EU Presidency Culture Programme, the CCI will present an ambitious programme of events in France, highlighting Ireland’s creativity and cultural diversity on the European stage.

2028

450 Years of Irish Presence in Paris (2028)

The year 2028 marks 450 years since the establishment of the Irish College in Paris by Rev. John Lee in 1578. This anniversary celebrates centuries of learning, creativity and exchange between Ireland and France — a legacy continued today through the Centre Culturel Irlandais.

2027

25 Years of CCI (2027)

In 2027, the Centre Culturel Irlandais will celebrate 25 years of creativity, connection and collaboration. Since its opening in 2002, the CCI has hosted 882 events in ten years, supported over 400 artists-in-residence and welcomed hundreds of thousands of visitors. This milestone offers a moment for reflection and renewal, reaffirming CCI’s place as Ireland’s cultural home in Europe.

The Year of the Normans (2027)

2027 European Year of the Normans: CCI will join the Irish Government in celebrating this major European cultural initiative led by the Région Normandie. Through this trans-European programme of collaboration and commemoration, the initiative will explore the shared Norman heritage across Europe.





Measuring Our Strategic Impact

The Centre will monitor progress against each of its four strategic themes through a focused set of indicators. These will be reviewed annually as part of the CCI's business planning cycle, providing a clear traffic light system for the Board, the Strategy Committee and key funders.

Create and Nurture

- Number of artist residencies (including art forms undertaken) delivered per year, including those involving international collaboration
- Number of new commissions and co-productions completed, particularly in milestone years
- Percentage of resident artists progressing to significant platforms (festivals, venues, publications) within two years of their residency
- Diversity of artists supported across geography, discipline and career stage
- Artist satisfaction and impact, measured through annual independent survey
- Attendance by cultural professionals at exhibition openings (with targets set in advance, reflecting varying artist appeal)
- The share of works later re-presented in other cultural venues (theatres, private galleries, etc.) following the Centre's curatorial works, using its network

Connect and Exchange

- Number of active multi-year partnerships with French and European cultural institutions, events originating from these partnerships, number

- of co-curated events, and types of contributions provided by partners
- Growth in audience reach beyond Paris, including national outreach across France
- Number of civic and intellectual dialogue events delivered annually
- Growth in community engagement including the Centre's alumni, diaspora, chapel congregation, Irish language participants and other Irish groups and other Irish associations
- Communications reach across Irish and French cultural and state landscapes, measured through media coverage, mailing list expansion and digital engagement

Heritage and Innovation

- Number of students, teachers and school groups engaged annually drawing directly on the collections
- Growth in academic and research partnerships at third level and beyond
- Expansion of digital access to the collections, measured through online engagement
- Number of contemporary artistic or scholarly commissions responding to the CCI's heritage
- Engagement with emerging technologies, including at least one annual initiative exploring the intersection of heritage and innovation

Invest and Strengthen

- Financial resilience and progress towards diversified income streams and reduced dependence on any single funder
- Staff development and wellbeing, measured through annual review and team feedback
- Building accessibility and sustainability, progress against relevant standards
- Governance milestones met and operational readiness indicators aligned to IPP timeline, reviewed by the Strategy Committee



“The Centre Culturel Irlandais is a key partner of the Ministère de la Culture in Paris for residencies and the hosting of international professionals, fostering high-level immersive experiences and sustainable, structured cultural exchanges.”

Damien Roger, Ministère de la Culture

Fondation Irlandaise

Board

Members appointed by French ministries and institutions
Serge Barichard, President - Representative of the Cour des Comptes
Yves Gounin, Vice-President - Representative of the Conseil d’Etat
Gabriel Bourlaud, Representative of the Ministère des Affaires Etrangères
Joanna Dorsser, Representative of the Archevêché de Paris
Dominique Ponsot, Representative of the Cour de Cassation
Arnaud Teyssier, Representative of the Ministère de l’Intérieur

Members appointed by the Irish State
H.E. Niall Burgess, Ambassador of Ireland to France and Monaco
Dearbhail McDonald, Secretary
Michael McWilliams, Treasurer
Maeve Jennings
Una McMahon
Very Rev. Thomas O’Connor

Strategy Committee
H.E. Niall Burgess, Ambassador of Ireland to France and Monaco
Dearbhail McDonald, President
Serge Barichard
Yves Gounin
Maeve Jennings
Kara Lennon-Casanova
Una McMahon
David McNulty
Michael McWilliams
Cliona Ni Riordain
Cian O’Brien
Very Rev. Thomas O’Connor
Fiona Olivier
Bill Shipsey

Centre Culturel Irlandais Team

Director Nora Hickey M’Sichili	Accommodation and Room Rentals Patricia Costello Yann Le Cadre Stéphanie Nic Cárthaigh (weekend) Evelyn Doyle (weekend)
Chief Operating Officer Fanny Begueria	Building Management Benoit Audonnet
Communications and PR Rosetta Beaugendre Anne-Sophie Delhommeau	Administration Stephen Doyle
Development, Heritage and Libraries Carole Jacquet Marion Mossu	Technical Management Stéphane Gherbi

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