



**Drinks
Ireland**

A proud drinks industry at the heart of the Irish economy.



Pride of Place

**Policies for growth of the
Irish drinks industry 2025-2030**



ROOTED IN IRISH COMMUNITIES, BRINGING IRELAND TO THE WORLD

The drinks industry in Ireland is proud of who we are.

Proud of the thousands we employ making quality, premium products.

Proud of the tourists who visit the more than 30 visitor experiences linked to our distilleries and breweries country-wide.

Proud of the communities we support in every town and city in the land.

Proud, too, of the support we give to farmers, whose grain, milk and apples we buy.

Proud of the world-leading brands we make, which help put Ireland on the map.

And we are proud of the role we have played, and continue to play, in supporting moderation, as Ireland's attitude to alcohol changes and matures. Per capita alcohol consumption in Ireland has fallen 30% over the last two decades.

Our place is at the heart of Irish communities – rural and urban, North and South. Our place is beyond Ireland too – we are exporting to over 120 countries globally and we are exporting more each year. And for many throughout the world, our drinks are synonymous with this country and the great food and drinks and hospitality and conviviality we have to offer.

With this pride of place comes confidence in the future. Confidence that, with the right support and policies from Government, we can grow and thrive.

The right conditions for continued investment will lead to more exports.

Support for innovation and the right to responsible promotion – including the new and fast-growing zero alcohol category – will mean more choice for consumers, a continued maturity in our attitude towards alcohol, more jobs, exports and visitors and more tax revenues for the State. An expanding hospitality sector will bring more people together, and support more vibrant towns and cities.

The policies spelled out in this report are practical, balanced and considered. These are worthy policies which will support, in turn, a critical Irish industry.



Drinks producers are present
in every county on the island.

1. SPREADING PROSPERITY THROUGHOUT IRISH COMMUNITIES

Growing the rural economy



10,000 people



170,000
hospitality jobs



300,000
tonnes
of grain

An industry rooted in rural Ireland...

- Almost **10,000 people directly employed** in our manufacturing and visitor experience centres throughout Ireland.
- We help **support over 170,000 hospitality jobs**, 70% of which are based outside Dublin, thus supporting employment in every town and village in the country. We also support approximately **6,000 jobs in the off-licence sector** and many more in our visitor centres.
- We purchase **300,000 tonnes of grain annually**, use about **50,000 tonnes of apples** in cider production, and use cream produced from **300 million litres of milk**, supporting farming families across our island.

...that can strengthen those roots with:

- **A laser focus on the continued implementation of Food Vision 2030** and the recommendations of the Food Vision 2030 Tillage Group, which seeks a new Tillage Expansion and Sustainability Scheme.
- **Strengthened research** into the development of opportunities for **Irish grain usage in the drinks sector**, including the use of wheat for distilling and brewing and opportunities for specialist malt.
- **Improved broadband connectivity for rural based businesses**, with the provision of business supports to grow our rural presence.
- **Support for our Visitor Centres across the country**, providing employment and guaranteeing investment in every county.



Food Vision 2030



Strengthened
research



Improved broadband



Support for
our Visitor
Centres

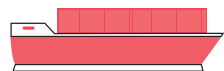


“I know the difference a company like our’s can make to a rural community. That difference is more than economic – we are the soul, the lifeblood of our communities.”

Pat Rigney
The Shed Distillery, Drumshanbo, Leitrim

2. BRINGING OUR BRANDS TO THE WORLD

Driving Exports



€2 billion



120 markets



Trend of premiumisation

An exporting industry...

- For the first time in 2022, the total value of all **drinks exports** approached **€2 billion**, with the value of Irish **Whiskey exports** from the all-island economy **exceeding €1 billion** alone.
- We are an export powerhouse, with products in over **120 markets around the world**. Our Irish brands are known the world over and can be some of the first touch points tourists have with Ireland before even arriving here.
- Our sector's export success can be attributed to the **trend of premiumisation of Irish drinks**, with overall value growing at more than twice the rate of volumes – a global example of how many people are drinking “less but better”.

...that can export even more with:

- **Increased investment** through state agencies such as Bord Bia, Enterprise Ireland and other bodies to support the export growth ambition of the sector. As well as solidifying our presence and opportunities in the EU & UK, **our key target markets include North America, India and SE Asia**.
- Support for the integrity of the EU single market, with **Ireland taking a leadership role at the heart of Europe**.
- Government and EU institutions to work with industry to support the **protection of our Geographic Indications (GIs)** for Irish Whiskey, Irish Cream and Poitín through securing GI recognition, certification trademark registration and engaging with the US authorities to **strengthen product protection**.
- **Securing ambitious trade agreements** that encourage trade relations through reduced tariffs and avoidance of tariff retaliation, and that protect our All-Island cross-border supply chains through appropriate rules of origin.



Increased investment



Leadership role



Product protection



Trade agreements



“Export success is hard won and needs to be protected. The route to market is challenging. Making the product is one thing, but success internationally means finding distributors in markets, working with them, testing and learning, failing quickly, learning quickly and responding to that.”

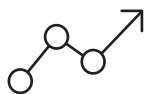
James Doherty
Sliabh Liag Distillers, Ardara, Donegal

3. NEW WAYS TO ENJOY WHAT WE MAKE

Inspiring Innovation



Hundreds of drinks brands



Incredible growth in number of distilleries



New innovations

An innovating industry...

- We **produce hundreds of drinks brands** and spirit expressions in Ireland **currently**, and deliver new ones to market every year.
- The last decade has seen incredible growth in the number of distilleries in Ireland – we've grown **from four in 2013 to almost 50** and the total number of distilleries, breweries and drinks manufacturers in Ireland has **now grown to 250**, spread across the island.
- **New innovations like zero-alcohol beer and spirits** are being brewed and distilled in Ireland, giving consumers new choices and options.



Access to finance



Expanded R&D supports

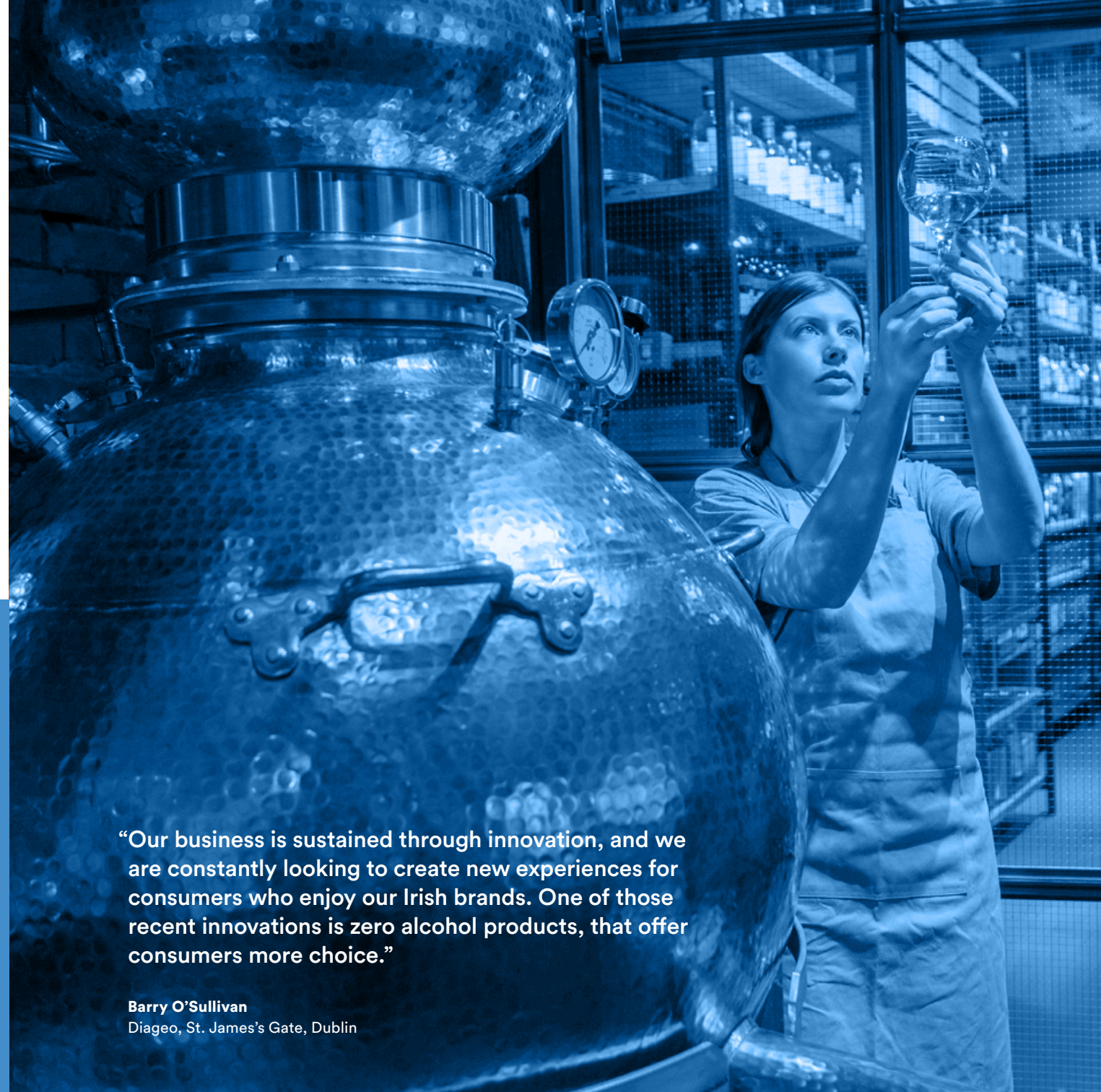
Responsible promotion



Bonded Warehousing

...that can innovate even more with:

- Improved **access to finance** for growing drinks companies by encouraging financial institutions in Ireland to provide competitive lending and developing tailored funds that better reflect the specifics and needs of our sector.
- **Expanded R&D supports** – ensuring continued benefit of the R&D tax credit, improved R&D tax credit administration, and introducing pro-forma R&D tax.
- Ensuring a **practical regulatory environment** that supports the right to build and grow the zero-alcohol sector through responsible promotion and advertising.
- **Reduced guarantees for Bonded Warehousing** for start-ups to ease cashflow and **ensure investment for business development**.



“Our business is sustained through innovation, and we are constantly looking to create new experiences for consumers who enjoy our Irish brands. One of those recent innovations is zero alcohol products, that offer consumers more choice.”

Barry O'Sullivan
Diageo, St. James's Gate, Dublin

4. FOSTERING CHANGE IN IRELAND'S DRINKING CULTURE

Promoting responsibility



30% less consumption



Zero alcohol innovations



Strict regulations

An industry committed to promoting moderation...

- Alcohol consumption in Ireland has **decreased by around 30%** in the last 20 years, with clear trends showing that **people are seeking more balance** in how they drink and choosing more premium products.
- Producers have responded to consumer demand by **launching new zero alcohol innovations**. Ireland is one of the fastest growing alcohol-free markets globally.
- We are subject to some of the **strictest regulation of advertising, promotion and sale in the world** – and also abide by our own codes, as part of our commitment to responsible drinking.



Evidence-based policies



Education and awareness



Promote moderation



Health labelling

...that can do even more with:

- Recognition that alcohol consumption has fallen by 30% in the last twenty years – to reach levels below those of the United States and many EU countries and that it continues to fall – and the **implementation of evidence-based policies** that reflect the reality of Ireland's changing relationship with alcohol, not out-dated stereotypes.
- **The promotion of education and awareness amongst consumers**, not restrictive over-regulation that impacts upon the vast majority of moderate consumers.
- The adoption of a **proper policy of engagement with the industry** which has the expertise and market insight to help promote moderation.
- The adoption of an **EU-harmonised approach to health labelling** which will protect the integrity of the Single Market, impact less negatively on small Irish producers and ultimately prove more effective in communicating with consumers.



“Ireland’s drinking culture has changed a lot in the last twenty years. Consumption has fallen significantly, and we see that consumers are finding more balance in how they socialise – Gen Z especially. Moderation is something that is here to stay.”

Sharon Walsh
Heineken Ireland, Shandon, Cork

5. DELIVERING ON OUR NATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE TARGETS

Embracing sustainability



Carbon emissions



Sustainability initiatives



Sustainable Together roadmap

A sustainable industry...

- We are committed to **mitigating our carbon emissions** and are leading on the sustainability agenda, from innovative sustainable brewing and distilling practices to advancing the circular economy, to **reduced and recyclable packaging**.
- Our industry provides funding for essential on-farm **sustainability initiatives** as part of the *Teagasc Signpost Programme* and other individual company programmes (regenerative agriculture, Spring Barley Scheme) to support farmers who strive to **reduce CO₂ emissions**, while ensuring a sustainable supply of Irish grain.
- Through its *Sustainable Together* roadmap, the Irish Whiskey industry is working together to make Ireland **the home of the world's most sustainable distilleries and whiskey brands**, making a net-positive contribution to the environment and forming an important part of a regenerative and circular economy in Ireland.



Grant support



Promote recycling



Promoting investment

...that can be even more sustainable with:

- The provision of greater levels of **grant support for sustainability investments** in distilling and brewing, focussing on energy/water efficiency.
- We have embraced **reduced packaging and light-weighting of glass bottles** but must ensure that any proposed EU legislation (e.g. Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation) supports our substantive and successful efforts to **promote recycling**, and **respects the IP embedded in our GI packaging designs**.
- Promoting investment and training **supports to drive circular economy initiatives**, particularly in packaging reduction and by-product usage.

“With a rich heritage comes a responsibility to future generations. We only have one planet.”

Helen Mulholland
Lough Gill Distillery, Sligo

6. BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

Supporting the experience economy



€4 billion



2.4 million
visitors



Cultural
life

An industry with people at its heart...

- We are at the **heart of the experience economy** which spends almost **€4 billion every year**, on purchases of goods and services, **including over €1 billion** from domestic food and drink suppliers.
- We have **created world class visitor experience attractions** catering to international and domestic visitors and bringing business to all parts of the island. Visitor numbers to our more than 30 distillery and brewery visitor centres have **reached 2.4 million** and will continue to grow.
- **We support hundreds of festivals, cultural events and sporting occasions** in communities throughout the country – vital elements of Ireland’s renowned cultural life.



Tourism strategy



European
style opening
hours



Excise
duty rates



Increase
funding

...that can deepen the connection with:

- The **promotion of the distillery and brewery experience** as part of a bespoke Food and Drink tourism strategy to be **developed by relevant agencies** in partnership with the industry.
- The rapid enactment and implementation of the **Sale of Alcohol Bill 2022**, allowing for more **European style opening hours of licenced venues**, thus helping to revitalise our towns and cities and the night-time economy.
- **Alignment of excise duty rates** on drinks products with European averages, thus supporting business in the wider experience economy.
- **Increased funding** for overseas promotion and product development.



“Our products are best enjoyed when shared. We must have policies in place that bring people together and build connections.”

Claire Tolan
Irish Distillers, Midleton, Cork



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