

NATIONAL PRINT

MUSEUM STRATEGY

2024-2028





FOREWORD

Since the transformative days of the European Renaissance, printing has been at the centre of social, political, and cultural change. The printing of text and images radically transformed the way generations began to see themselves, and it has galvanised society to question, to challenge, to educate, to learn, and to create.

Printing has brought the voice of the individual – their philosophies, scientific discoveries, artistry, and journalism – to the many, leading to community formation that has defied borders. The printed page was, and remains, a space of innovation, experimentation, the imagination, and at times, revolution. As in the case of Ireland, printing allowed us to explore and define our identity, to recuperate our national language and heritage, to express ourselves in word and image and declare our sovereignty. Yet, as demonstrated at the National Print Museum, while the printing press has nourished the local, with ever-growing literacies, it has informed and globalised the world.

The National Print Museum safeguards and celebrates this history so that everyone may know and be inspired by the extraordinary impact of printing on our lives. We preserve and honour the technologies and skills of printing, past and present, as a place of learning, inspiration, and (re)discovery. We are proud of our unique status as a living museum, where historical artefacts, representing past and recent print technologies, combine with intergenerational knowledge and skills to tell the story of printing in Ireland and the wider world.

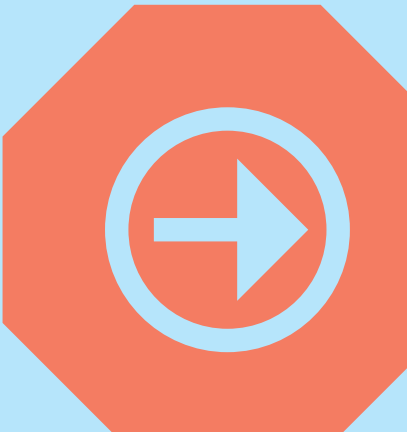
This new strategy is testament to our belief in the importance of that history and anticipates our role in the evolving story of printing. It brings our authority and passion into focus as we advance our role as a renowned museum, as an award-winning learning centre and as a popular visitor attraction.

Over the next five years, we look forward to expanding the story we tell and to innovating how we tell it, in a new physical home and on our digital platforms, as we invite more people to experience and explore the practices, impacts and possibilities of printing.

I would like to thank the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media for their on-going support of the National Print Museum and recognition of its role within the national cultural landscape. I would also like to acknowledge the Office of Public Works for the provision of space in Beggars Bush Barracks and the City of Dublin Education and Training Board for their sustained support of our formal learning programme.

With this strategy, we look forward to the future of the National Print Museum as one of Ireland’s most vital cultural institutions.

Pat Kerr, Chair
On behalf of the Board of Directors



INTRODUCTION

It is with great pride and pleasure that I introduce the National Print Museum's strategy 2024-2028.

The new strategy sets out our ambitions and priorities over a particularly exciting time in the Museum's development. We expect the next five years to be a period of change and challenge, but also one of opportunity.

As we journey towards our third decade of existence, we encounter one of the greatest challenges in the Museum's lifetime – securing a new physical home. This undertaking has motivated us to think about our future with a renewed sense of optimism and ambition, unconstrained by space or resources.

The collaborative process of developing this strategy began with reflections on past achievements and a fresh articulation of who we are, what we do, and why we do it. The result is our most ambitious strategy, where we seek to advance our position as a national heritage institution of relevance and value; expand and diversify our connection with individuals and communities; deepen our contribution to Ireland's cultural, heritage and educational landscape; and engage more people than ever before in the celebration of the story of printing in Ireland.

To achieve this ambition, we have identified four key priorities: Collection and Craft, Storytelling and Connection, Learning and Discovery, and Organisation and Impact. Alongside these strategic priorities, the Museum recognises and seeks to advance national policy priorities, specifically in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion and to climate action.

I would like to thank the members of the Board and Curatorial Committee, my colleagues and the volunteers at the Museum and the external stakeholders who generously contributed to the development of this strategy. I very much look forward to leading the National Print Museum into the next stage of its future, ever sure of our purpose: to celebrate and safeguard the story of printing in Ireland so that everyone may know and be inspired by the beauty and power of printing and its impact on our lives.

Carla Marrinan Funder
Chief Executive Officer



ABOUT US

The National Print Museum celebrates the story of printing in Ireland and its impact on our lives. As custodian of the national collection of printing heritage, we preserve the material objects, the stories and the craft of printing and bring history to life for our visitors.

We are a living museum, an active learning centre and one of Dublin's favourite visitor attractions. We invite people to enjoy the hands-on experience of our permanent collection, or to be inspired by the exhibitions, classes and workshops we offer onsite, online and around Ireland. We offer life-long and life-changing opportunities to learn, including an award-winning local training programme in cultural and heritage studies.

Our purpose is to celebrate and safeguard the story of printing in Ireland so that everyone may know and be inspired by its impact on our lives.

Our vision is of a future in which the beauty and power of printing continue to transform and enrich our world.

Our mission is twofold: to engage, educate and inspire others as a living museum of printing; and to preserve and share the craft, stories and objects that make up our unique heritage collection while supporting and showcasing the evolving culture and processes of design and print.



OUR VALUES

INVITING DISCOVERY

Printing is one of humankind's greatest inventions. It allows knowledge and ideas to be widely shared. We encourage curiosity and hands-on discovery in our visitors, and facilitating learning is at the core of what we do. We seek to explore new ideas and opportunities, to innovate how we work and what we do to discover new futures for print.

CARING FOR OUR COLLECTION, PEOPLE AND THE PLANET

We are custodians of the national collection of printing. We look after our visitors, our volunteers, those who learn with us and each other. We are mindful of our urgent duty of care to minimise our impact on the environment.

CREATING CONNECTION

We are dedicated to bringing the past to life and making it meaningful in the present. We do so with equal enthusiasm for all, from children to academic associates. We connect people with the processes, ideas and possibilities of printing. We also value our role as a partner and build trusted relationships with our communities.

INSPIRING DELIGHT

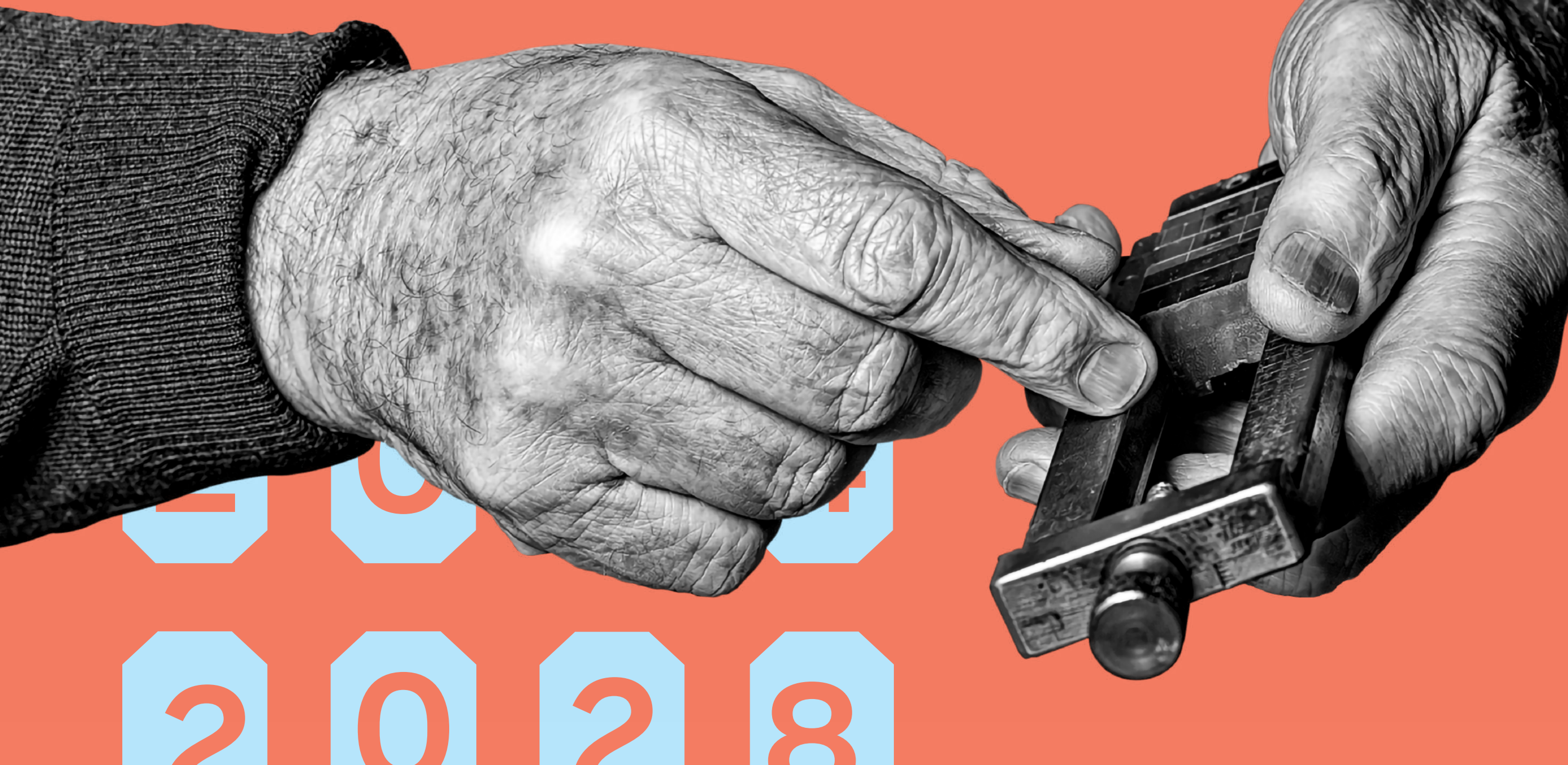
Our visitors have great fun visiting the Museum and we take pleasure in their enjoyment. We bring joy and inspire new understanding as we share our knowledge and passion for print. We also take care to engender a culture for our team that supports people, so they may be at their best at work, taking pride and delight in what they do.

The National Print Museum is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. It is governed by a Board of circa eight people (including the Chairperson) who are appointed for a term of three years, up to a maximum of nine years. The work of the National Print Museum is delivered by a small team, led by the CEO who has overall responsibility for the corporate management of the company. The Board and the team are supported by the Curatorial Committee who are responsible for the Museum's collection policy and management and for the curation of the Museum's temporary exhibition programme. The panel of volunteer printers and compositors, often referred to as the Chapel, are integral to the preservation of the collection, craft and stories of printing.

In collaboration with the City of Dublin Education and Training Board, the National Print Museum runs an award-winning, accredited Local Training Initiative in cultural and heritage studies.

The National Print Museum is fully accredited under the Heritage Council's Museum Standards Programme for Ireland.

LETTERPRESS PRINTING IS AT THE HEART OF THE NATIONAL PRINT MUSEUM'S COLLECTION. IN 2019, THE MUSEUM SUCCESSFULLY APPLIED TO HAVE LETTERPRESS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL INVENTORY OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE.



OUR AMBITION

By 2028, the National Print Museum will be well-known, much loved and sustainably supported as a heritage institution of relevance and value to the nation.

Our move to a new building will have transformed access to our collection and enabled us to realise our potential as a living museum, learning centre and visitor attraction.

Letterpress printing will continue to be the anchor of our collection, but we will have expanded the story we tell to show the art and power of printing through time, from its beginnings in China to the present day here in Ireland, and to imagine what is exciting and emerging for the future.

In terms of our collection, we will have preserved not only the material objects that are the tangible heritage of the printing industry, but also the associated stories, skills and crafts that contribute to Ireland's intangible cultural heritage. We will also have enhanced our collection through acquisition and with new technology.

Our permanent collection will be powerfully and imaginatively complemented by our temporary exhibition programme. Carefully curated collaborations with exceptional artists and leading organisations will be attracting audiences and attention, while also building new understanding and enthusiasm for printing.

Education and learning, sharing knowledge and facilitating research will continue to be a priority for us. We will have expanded our adult education programme, extended and deepened our engagement with primary and secondary schools, and built on our relationships with third-level institutions. Our public programme will be supporting people of all ages and with all levels of interest and experience to discover and enjoy printing.

With new interpretations of our collection, unique exhibitions and inviting engagement opportunities, we will have affirmed our place as one of Dublin's leading 'discovery' attractions, offering an exceptional visitor experience to everyone who comes to the Museum.

Year on year we will be warmly welcoming more people to the Museum and facilitating access and active engagement online. We will have expanded and diversified our connection with individuals and communities around Ireland and internationally. Our visitor experience and our geographic reach will be enhanced by new digital capacity and capability.

The National Print Museum will be proudly achieving all this by 2028 in a new home, having secured additional, on-going financial support, built our brand and organisational capacity, all the while steadfast in our commitment to safeguarding and celebrating printing in Ireland.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1 CRAFT AND COLLECTION

GOAL
To preserve and develop our collection and the heritage craft of printing.

2 STORYTELLING AND CONNECTION

GOAL
To interpret our collection and share the transformational story of printing with the widest possible audience.

3 LEARNING AND DISCOVERY

GOAL
To create and deliver accessible, inspiring and enriching cultural learning opportunities for all.

4 ORGANISATION AND IMPACT

GOAL
To build an effective, inclusive and sustainable organisation.

CRITICAL ENABLERS

Achieving our strategic priorities will be enabled by working in partnership with others, having effective communications and advocacy, and ensuring our financial sustainability and resilience.

POLICY PRIORITIES

Alongside our strategic priorities, the National Print Museum recognises and will seek to advance national policy priorities, specifically in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion and to climate action.





1 CRAFT AND COLLECTION

GOAL

To preserve and develop our collection and the heritage craft of printing.

Why this goal?

The National Print Museum is the repository of Ireland's national collection of printing heritage. Over the next five years, we will enhance the collection and improve physical and digital access, so that it may be enjoyed and appreciated nationally and internationally. Uniquely, we are a living museum. As such, we need to conserve the collection, ensuring its full working order, and preserve the associated stories and craft of printing. We are committed to keeping printing alive for future generations and look forward to maximising the opportunities presented by acquisitions and new technologies in the coming years.

OBJECTIVES

What we will do to achieve this goal

Conserve the collection on site and in storage with the highest standard of care.

Invest in a fit-for-purpose collection management system and the digitisation of the collection to improve access to collection information.

Enhance the collection with appropriate acquisitions and by utilising new technologies.

Ensure the continuation of traditional crafts and their oral histories through formal skills transfer programmes and other development initiatives.

OUTCOMES

What success will look like

More people are more easily and more effectively accessing our collection, which is stored to museum standards.

The collection is fully available online and is a valued international resource.

Our collection and supporting technologies now tell the full story of printing.

Printing is a living craft, widely practiced and appreciated.

2 STORYTELLING AND CONNECTION

GOAL

To interpret our collection and share the transformational story of printing with the widest possible audience.

Why this goal?

Our purpose is to celebrate and safeguard the story of printing in Ireland so that everyone may know and be inspired by its impact on our lives. This priority ensures that we deliver on that intention. Letterpress printing will remain at the heart of the story we tell as new physical and digital spaces allow us to expand our narrative and extend our reach, sharing printing's vivid history and showcasing its contemporary relevance. By doing so, we build our brand and advance our position as a national heritage institution of relevance and value, and as a must-see visitor attraction.

OBJECTIVES

What we will do to achieve this goal

Transform engagement with the collection through new and enhanced interpretation that reveals how print has shaped our world.

Curate compelling temporary exhibitions that present the beauty and power of printing in our everyday lives.

Build the brand of the National Print Museum, affirming its positioning as one of Ireland's leading cultural institutions and continuing its development as a must-see visitor attraction.

Continue to collaborate and build affiliations with exceptional artists and leading organisations in and beyond the Museum and cultural sector, in Ireland and internationally, to advance the Museum's profile, collection and programme.

OUTCOMES

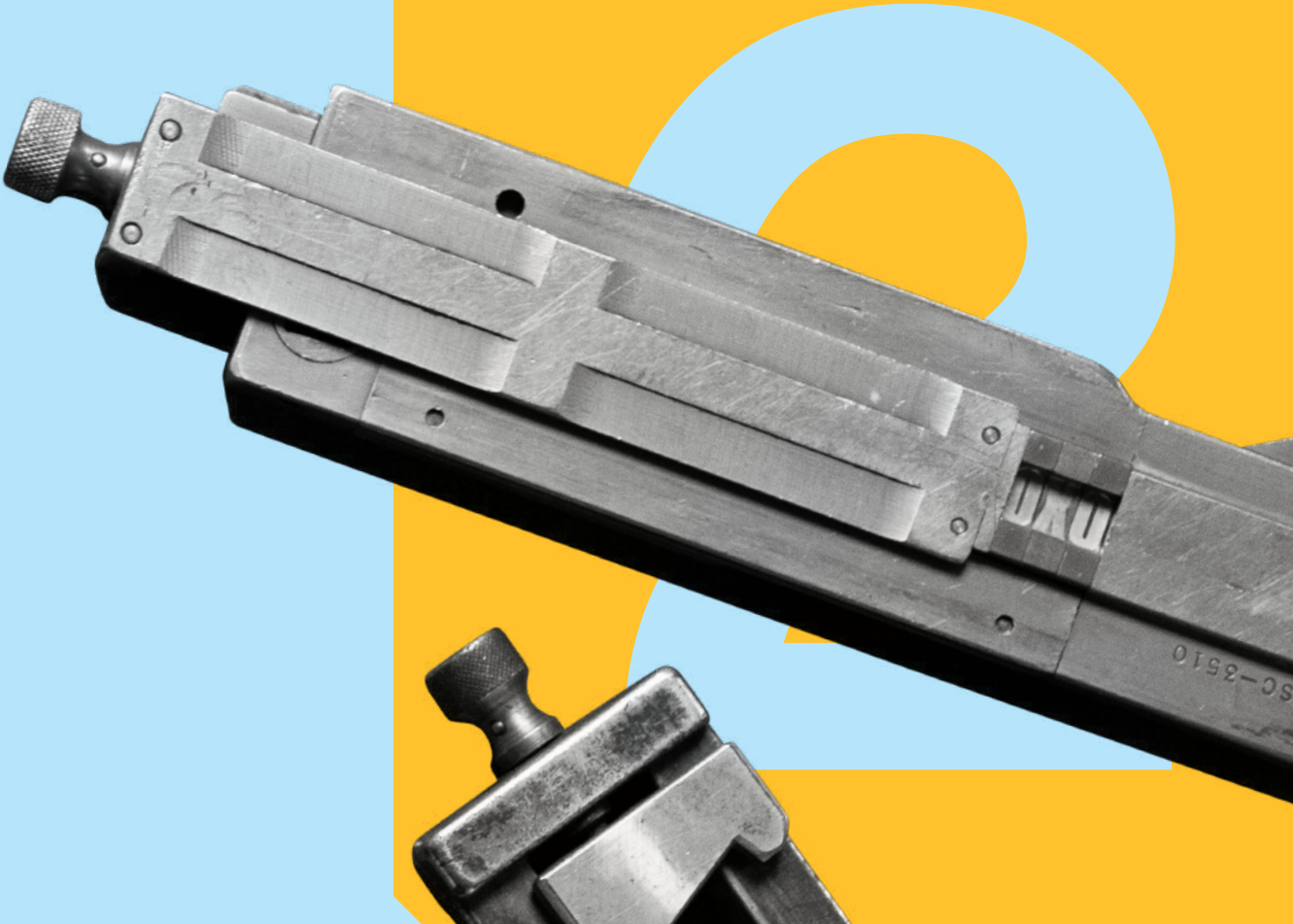
What success will look like

More people know and are inspired by the story of printing.

Our unique exhibitions are attracting attention and acclaim and are appealing to a wide variety of domestic and international visitors.

The National Print Museum is well-known, much-loved and highly respected as a living museum, learning centre and visitor attraction.

Our imaginative, mutually beneficial, creative partnerships are promoting new understanding of and enthusiasm for printing and elevating the perception of the Museum.



3 LEARNING AND DISCOVERY

GOAL
To create and deliver accessible, inspiring and enriching cultural learning opportunities for all.

Why this goal?
Museums serve society as places of education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge-sharing. We take our responsibilities in this regard seriously. We understand the life-changing possibilities of our excellent formal learning programme and see the joy of informal engagement with printing through our schools and public programmes. We recognise our role in scholarly research and the potential of closer associations with third-level institutions. We want the National Print Museum to be a popular, highly-regarded, inclusive source of life-long learning, research and discovery, with printing an inspiration for all.

OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES
What we will do to achieve this goal	What success will look like
Continue our accredited adult education programme, sustaining its standard of excellence and positive outcomes.	Cohorts of students are progressing with confidence and enhanced capabilities to employment or further education.
Promote the lifelong discovery of printing history and culture through our public engagement programme, creating more inclusive opportunities for participation.	More people across our communities and from a variety of backgrounds are engaging with printing.
Deepen and diversify our engagement with primary and secondary schools.	More children and young people are enjoying high-quality creative experiences through printing.
Expand opportunities for scholarly research, building on our relationships with third-level institutions.	The National Print Museum is an active centre of research and academic engagement.



4 ORGANISATION AND IMPACT

GOAL
To build an effective, inclusive and sustainable organisation.

Why this goal?
This strategy sets out ambitious plans for the future of the National Print Museum at a time of challenge as well as opportunity for the organisation. As such, we must ensure that our capacity matches our ambition and facilitates the management of change. Securing a new home is critical to our future, but must be supported by investment in people and by ensuring the Museum's economic sustainability.

OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES
What we will do to achieve this goal	What success will look like
Maintain the highest standard of governance and management as befits a publicly funded organisation.	The National Print Museum is fully compliant with the Charities Governance Code and fulfils all its statutory obligations.
Ensure the capacity, capabilities and culture of the organisation to deliver this strategy.	The National Print Museum is achieving its ambitions, having an increased staff complement, an active expert Board and a positive, empowering culture.
Secure a fit-for-purpose, long-term home for the Museum.	The National Print Museum is fulfilling its potential as a living museum, learning centre and visitor attraction in a suitable, permanent space.
Increase and diversify our funding base, building the financial capacity and resilience of the organisation.	The Museum is a well-resourced, financially stable organisation.
Remain alert to and effect national policies as an exemplar organisation.	The Museum is leading thinking and practice on the implementation of national policies.



IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The National Print Museum’s strategy will be realised through annual management plans in accordance with the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland. These plans will detail the actions to progress the objectives identified. Implementation will be monitored on an on-going basis internally, with formal annual reviews to consider progress made on strategic and policy priorities. We will conduct a mid-term review of this strategy in 2026.

A matrix of performance indicators, aligning with the outcomes stated here, will also be developed to robustly measure our impact and achievement.

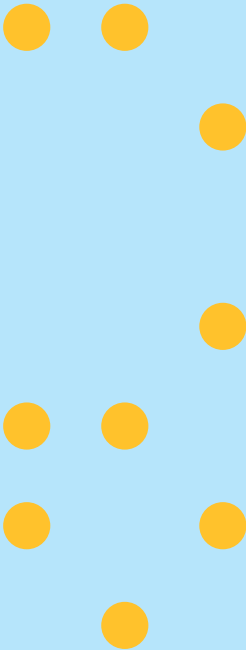
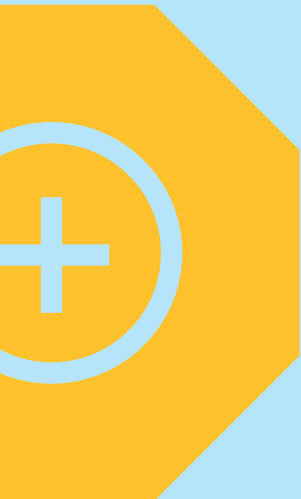
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The National Print Museum would like to thank all those who contributed to the development of this strategy, including consultant Janice McAdam who supported us in this process and the Heritage Council who funded its development through the Capacity Scheme.

The National Print Museum is funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and supported by the Office of Public Works. The Museum’s Local Training Initiative is funded by the City of Dublin Education and Training Board.

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2028

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NATIONAL PRINT MUSEUM STRATEGY 2024-2028



MÚSAEM
NÁISIÚNTA CLÓ
National Print Museum



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán
Department of Tourism, Culture,
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