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Design Policy Mapping in Europe

The following content is drawn from the “Design Policy Mapping in Europe” report. Access and download the complete report using the link:

https://madres.beda.org/en/publications/design-policy-mapping-in-europe/

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Sep 2025

Country Profile: Ireland

Country Size: 69,825 sq km
Citizens: 5,351,681 (2024) | Tendency: rising
GDP per Capita: 107,316.34 $ (2024) | Tendency: rising
EU Innovation Scoreboard: Strong Innovator (2025) | 138,6%
BEDA Member Organisations: Design & Crafts Council Ireland (DCCI), Institute Designers Ireland (IDI)

Dedicated design policy status

No standalone national design policy. However, multiple initiatives and strategies explicitly acknowledge design, with strong momentum around the planned *National Design Centre*. Previous initiatives include adoption of the *Policy Framework for Design in Enterprise in Ireland* (2016) as well as publication of the *National Design Strategy for Ireland* by The Design and Craft Council in 2016. Specific policy actions for design were being included in the governmental Action Plan for Jobs between 2015 and 2018.

Design in other policy agendas

- → **CCI Strategy** – *Digital Creative Industries Roadmap 2024-26* positions design (industrial, product, service, strategic, UX/UI, visual communication) as a **target sector** central to innovation spillovers and competitiveness. It lays out actions across industry collaboration (forums), skills & education, direct business support, internationalisation, and research/knowledge creation. It explicitly links design to ISO standards on innovation management and public-sector design principles. The Design & Crafts Council of Ireland strategy (2022-26) also embeds design growth goals. [Championed]
- → **Innovation Strategy** – *Impact 2030* mentions design only in the context of IPRs (baseline presence). [Mentioned]

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- → **Industrial / Development Strategy** – *Project Ireland 2040 / National Development Plan 2018–2027* commits to establish a **National design centre** as a centrally funded industrial/development intervention. The centre is intended as an incubation, training and demonstration facility with regional capacity to support market-led innovation in Irish enterprises and help firms scale internationally. This institutional investment is an industrial lever: it creates sustained demand for designer skills, anchors regional industry-design partnerships, provides training and pilot-demonstration pipelines, and signals government commitment to design as a route to competitiveness. [Championed]
- → **Circular Economy Strategy** – *Whole-of-Government Circular Economy Strategy Living More, Using Less* (2022–23) Circular design is a core principle: "good design preserves product value for as long as possible." The strategy commits to promoting durability, repairability, modular building design, systemic perspectives in material choice, and dedicated instruments (e.g. Climate Action Voucher for ecodesign). It also highlights the Rediscovery Centre as a national circular hub, and uniquely, it treats policy design itself as part of circular governance ("poorly designed policies could have negative outcomes"). [Championed]
- → **Digital Strategy** – *Designing our Public Services* initiative applies design principles to government innovation and citizen-centred services. [Championed]
- → **Architecture Strategy** – *Places for People* (2022) emphasises architecture and design as drivers of sustainable, resilient societies and cultural identity. [Championed]
- → **Culture Policy** – *Culture 2025* briefly acknowledges design. [Mentioned]

Observations

Ireland demonstrates one of the highest levels of awareness of design's value in Europe and one of the most comprehensive cross-sectoral integrations of design in Europe across multiple policy agendas – from CCIs and industrial development to circular economy, digital transformation and public service reform. This breadth of references suggests a strong mainstreaming of design as both an economic enabler and a tool for systemic innovation. The planned National Design Centre adds momentum and could provide a focal point for these dispersed initiatives. At the same time, greater coordination across agendas would help consolidate efforts, reduce fragmentation and ensure that design policy evolves from a collection of sectoral measures into a more cohesive national framework.

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