KICCI

Irish Business in Korea

A KICCI Consultation Paper.

June 2026

KICCI · OMBUDSMAN WHITE PAPER SERIES

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KOREAN-IRISH CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

한국-아일랜드 상공회의소

KICCI · OMBUDSMAN WHITE PAPER SERIES · CONSULTATION PAPER

Irish business in Korea

A consultation toward the Korean-Irish Chamber of Commerce and Industry's inaugural white paper to the Office of the Foreign Investment Ombudsman of the Republic of Korea.

Issued by the Korean-Irish Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Seoul.

June 2026.

Korean-Irish Chamber of Commerce and Industry · Seoul, Republic of Korea · info@kicci.ie · kicci.ie

FRONT MATTER

Reader's Note

KICCI writes this Consultation Paper for the Irish-affiliated companies operating in or trading with the Republic of Korea. Their conditions of doing business are its subject; their voice, gathered through the consultation, is its substance; their interests are why the Chamber exists. The paper is for them, with them, and on their behalf.

It is also read by a wider institutional audience. The Office of the Foreign Investment Ombudsman of the Republic of Korea, the Embassy of Ireland in Seoul, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Bord Bia, the peer foreign chambers, and the Korean and Irish ministerial counterparts share a common ground with the Chamber: their work shapes the conditions under which Irish business operates in Korea. The paper offers them a documented account of those conditions as the corporate community itself describes them.

Two editorial conventions govern the document.

Anonymisation. Companies and individuals are named only with explicit written consent. The default attribution is sector-level. Chapter 5 sets out the protocol in full.

Verification. Every statistic carries a footnote with source and methodology note. Institutional names and titles trace to a named institutional source. Korean primary law and Korean institutional terms appear in Korean (with romanisation and English) on first occurrence and by short title thereafter; the glossary at Annex C collects the apparatus.

The document is the Chamber's reading as it stands at the date of publication. The consultation it opens will sharpen, qualify, or revise the readings carried here, and the Chamber's work in the years that follow will carry them forward.

FRONT MATTER

At a Glance

What this is. KICCI's first consultation of the Irish corporate community in the Republic of Korea, opening in late June 2026 and closing in early autumn. The findings will inform the Chamber's first white paper, to be submitted to the Office of the Foreign Investment Ombudsman.

What we ask of you. A bilingual electronic survey of twelve to fifteen minutes. From respondents whose engagement supports it, a sixty-minute interview. From the few with a specific case to share, the willingness to describe it on the record. The default is sector-level attribution; named attribution requires your written consent.

What you get back. The white paper published openly, with a private companion briefing for participating companies on the same day. Annual tracking of the institutional response to the recommendations. A standing institutional voice for the Irish corporate community in this corridor, of which your participation is part.

The full mechanics live in Chapter 5; the full ask lives in Chapter 6. The reader in a hurry can turn there now. The reader with time will find the corridor in context first.

12–15 min

Median completion time for the bilingual electronic survey opening Section A of the consultation.

§ 5.4 · METHODOLOGY

~66

In-scope cohort of Irish-affiliated companies in the corridor, drawn from the 119-entry KICCI bilateral database, May 2026.

KICCI INTERNAL

FRONT MATTER

The Chamber's Mission

The Korean-Irish Chamber of Commerce and Industry exists to promote, develop, and strengthen trade, commerce, investment, and industry between Korea and Ireland.[1]

The Chamber pursues that purpose through four kinds of work.

It **convenes**: a standing platform where the Irish corporate community in Korea meets to share common concerns and advance its interests.

It **connects**: networking across the membership, the resident institutions of both countries, and the peer foreign chambers, through a calendar of events that gives the bilateral business community its rhythm through the year.

It **represents**: the collective voice of Irish business operating in Korea, and of Korean business operating in Ireland, carried into engagement with the institutions that shape the operating environment.

It gives **visibility**: to the corridor's companies, the opportunities the relationship holds, and Ireland's commercial presence in Korea as a whole.

KICCI works alongside the Embassy of Ireland in Seoul, the wider Team Ireland presence, the Irish community bodies in Korea, and the foreign chambers of commerce among which it takes its place.

Its mission: to be the standing home of Korean-Irish business, and to make the conditions of doing business in this corridor better documented, better understood, and better than they were.

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Chair's Introduction

On 10 June 2026, at the first European Union-Republic of Korea summit in three years, the two parties signed the EU-Korea Digital Trade Agreement. The day before that signature, the figures of the most recent EU survey of the relationship showed Ireland standing first among all Member States in services exports to Korea. A corridor that began with diplomatic relations in 1983 now sits inside an institutional relationship the European Union is actively deepening, and Ireland carries more commercial weight within it than the corridor's familiar figures suggest. This Consultation Paper is addressed to the companies that carry that weight.

The Korean-Irish Chamber of Commerce and Industry was constituted on 12 May 2026, the culmination of preparatory work begun by a founding group of Irish principals resident in Korea over the preceding months. This Consultation Paper is the Chamber's first instrument.

> *This Consultation Paper is addressed to the companies that carry that weight.*

This Consultation Paper is addressed to the companies that carry that weight.

KICCI is the standing bilateral chamber for Irish business operating in Korea. The Chamber convenes the corporate community on the conditions of doing business in this corridor, gathers its collective voice through structured consultation, and carries that voice into the institutions that shape the operating environment. KICCI was brought into being by the convergence of the Embassy of Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, and the resident Irish corporate community, around a common recognition that the corridor had grown beyond what the existing architecture alone could carry.

This Consultation Paper opens a structured conversation with the Irish-affiliated companies operating in or trading with the Republic of Korea on the conditions of doing business here. The findings will feed the Chamber's first formal white paper, *Irish Business in Korea: Operating Conditions, Market Access, and Bilateral Friction*, which the Chamber will submit, in due course, to the Office of the Foreign Investment Ombudsman of the Republic of Korea (외국인 투자 옴부즈만 사무소, OFIO). The Office is the institutional point at which for-

10 Jun 2026

The EU-Korea Digital Trade Agreement signed at the eleventh EU-Korea summit, Brussels — the first such summit in three years.

COUNCIL OF THE EU

12 May 2026

KICCI constituted at the inaugural general meeting, Seoul.

KICCI CONSTITUTION, ART. 4

Office of the Foreign Investment Ombudsman. Established 1999 under Article 15-2 of the Foreign Investment Promotion Act. Currently held by Mr Kim Doo-Sik, commissioned 25 June 2025.

eign-invested operating companies in Korea raise the grievances that statute alone cannot resolve.

The paper is structured in three parts. **Part I** sets out where the corridor stands in 2026: the economic relationship, the institutional architecture on both sides, and the bilateral interface. **Part II** describes the corporate community KICCI represents: the modes of presence, the working definitions, the sample frame, and the sector profiles, as our research stands at the date of writing. **Part III** sets out the methodology of the consultation, the Chamber's invitation to the Irish business community to participate, and the Chamber's commitment to what follows. The full institutional record of the bilateral corridor sits at Annex D, for the reader who wishes to consult it.

The Chamber expresses its institutional gratitude to Ambassador Michelle Winthrop, whose support has accompanied its formation, and to the Embassy team in Seoul, whose close reading of the first edition of this paper has materially strengthened the present one. The Chamber thanks Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland, the peer foreign chambers in Seoul, and the Korean institutional partners who have engaged with KICCI in its first months. And the Chamber owes its formation to the Irish community resident in Seoul, whose closeness and steady support have stood with KICCI from its earliest months. The work begins with this paper.

Carl Härtlein
Chair, Korean-Irish Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Seoul, June 2026

§ 1 · THE CORRIDOR IN 2026 · § 2 · THE ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP · § 3 · THE INSTITUTIONAL LANDSCAPE

Where the Corridor Stands.

What has shifted between 2023 and 2026, what the economic relationship now consists of, and the institutional landscape Irish business meets here.

PART I · § 1

The corridor in 2026

1.1 THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP

Ireland and the Republic of Korea established diplomatic relations on 4 October 1983.[2] In 2026 the corridor is institutionally complete at headline level: resident missions in Dublin and Seoul,[3 4] an Ireland House model in Seoul that co-locates the Embassy with the Korea offices of Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, and the Agriculture Counsellor of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine,[5 6 7] a functional treaty stock anchored by the Double Taxation Convention of 1990,[16] the Bilateral Social Security Agreement of 2007,[17] and the Working Holiday Programme of 2010,[18] and an active ministerial calendar that has carried four senior visits to Seoul in the last twenty-six months, alongside two dedicated agri-food trade missions.[23 24 25 26 27 19] The detail of this architecture is set out in Annex D; the body of this chapter records what has shifted, in the last three years, that bears on the operating environment Irish business encounters now.

1983

Diplomatic relations established 4 October 1983 — forty-three years of relations at the date of consultation.

DFAT; MOFA

1.2 THE EUROPEAN FRAMING

Ireland's commercial relationship with Korea is governed at the level above the bilateral by the European Union, through an architecture layered deliberately over fifteen years and still being built.

The Korea-EU Free Trade Agreement, in force since 1 July 2011 (provisional) and 13 December 2015 (full), provides the commercial substance: near-elimination of import duties, deep services liberalisation, and provisions on non-tariff measures, government procurement, intellectual property, and competition.[9] The Irish Government treats it as one of the four highest-value EU trade agreements for the Irish economy.[10] On that foundation the EU and Korea have layered three thematic partnerships covering the digital, green, and security agendas,[11 12 13] and have now added a fourth, commercially consequential, layer: the **EU-Korea Digital Trade Agreement**, signed on 10 June 2026 at the eleventh EU-Korea summit in Brussels, awaiting the consent of the European Parliament and the completion of both sides' internal procedures before entry into force. It establishes binding rules on cross-border data flows and data localisation, personal-data protection, electronic contracts and authentication, source-code protection, and on-

층위의 구조

An architecture in layers.

The Framework Agreement (2010) is the political envelope; the FTA (2011) the commercial substance; the Digital, Green, and Security and Defence Partnerships (2022–2024) the thematic layers; the Digital Trade Agreement (signed June 2026) the newest, most commercially consequential addition.

line consumer trust, and prohibits customs duties on electronic transmissions.[14]

For the all-island community the Chamber serves, the architecture has a parallel instrument. The United Kingdom-Korea Free Trade Agreement of 2019 is a continuity agreement, substantively replicating the Korea-EU FTA; Northern Ireland's commercial relationship with the Republic of Korea operates under it. Negotiations to upgrade that agreement concluded on 15 December 2025; the upgraded text, not yet public at the time of writing, carries a digital trade chapter and revised automotive rules of origin, and awaits signature and ratification on both sides.[15] The two frameworks are substantially parallel and converging. The Chamber will track both ratification processes for the white paper.

Annex D Table D.1 lists the instruments in full.

> *The political map has been redrawn on the Korean side; the Irish side has held continuity.*

Aug 2024

FIPA amendment introducing national-security screening and *ex officio* initiation, tightening the FDI gateway into Korean firms in designated strategic-technology sectors.

MOTIE

€53.5bn

Horizon Europe Pillar 2: programmatic access opened to Korean institutions from 1 January 2025; Korea the first Asian country to associate.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

1 Oct 2025

Ministry of Intellectual Property (지식재산부, MOIP) stood up at cabinet rank — the world's first stand-alone IP ministry of the post-TRIPS period.

WIPO; KIPO

1.3 WHAT HAS SHIFTED, 2023–2026

The two and a half years since the fortieth-anniversary window in 2023 have changed the operating context in four ways that bear directly on the conditions Irish business encounters in Korea.

The Foreign Investment Promotion Act amendment of August 2024 introduced explicit national-security screening for foreign investments in Korean firms holding designated high-tech strategic technologies, and empowered administrative agencies to initiate *ex officio* screening where a mandatory filing has not been submitted.[29] Korea's FIPA had previously been characterised by the OECD as among the most procedurally efficient FDI entry frameworks in the organisation. The 2024 amendment leaves the headline architecture in place and adds a national-security gateway that materially tightens the regime for inbound investment into Korean firms in semiconductors, advanced batteries, biotechnology, AI, quantum, and other designated strategic-technology sectors. Irish high-tech investors and Korean strategic counterparts considering Irish investment in such firms now operate inside this gateway.

The EU-Korea framework has deepened. The Republic of Korea's association with Horizon Europe took effect from 1 January 2025 under a Transitional Arrangement, with the formal Association Agreement signed in July 2025, making Korea the first Asian country to associate with the programme and giving programmatic access to the €53.5 billion Pillar 2.[30] The Digital Trade

Agreement followed in June 2026 (§ 1.2). For Irish medtech, biotech, fintech, and broader technology companies operating in Korea, the Horizon association establishes a shared funding architecture for joint EU-Korean research consortia that did not exist two years before; the Digital Trade Agreement, once in force, will give the data-dependent part of the Irish corporate presence a binding legal floor under its cross-border operations.

The Korean Intellectual Property Office (특허청, KIPO) was elevated to a stand-alone cabinet-level Ministry of Intellectual Property (지식재산부, MOIP) on 1 October 2025, by amendment to the Government Organization Act. This is the first re-ranking of a Korean IP authority in the post-TRIPS period and, by the record of the World Intellectual Property Organization, the world's first stand-alone Ministry of Intellectual Property.[31] For Irish patent-holders, trademark-holders, and trade-secret claimants prosecuting in Korea, the agency Irish business engages on filings is the same agency it has always engaged. The constitutional rank from which Korean IP enforcement now operates is materially higher.

The political map has been redrawn on the Korean side; the Irish side has held continuity. Korea has seen a presidential succession in June 2025 installing President Lee Jae-myung, and a new cabinet, with the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy under Minister Kim Jeong-kwan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under Minister Cho Hyun (in post since July 2025). On the Irish side, the coalition formed in January 2025 returned Mr Micheál Martin as Taoiseach, and the November 2025 reshuffle moved established figures between portfolios, with Mr Simon Harris remaining Tánaiste and becoming Minister for Finance, and Ms Helen McEntee becoming Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade.[32] The operating picture for 2026 is therefore a stable Irish institutional side engaging a substantially renewed Korean administration.

The chapter records what has shifted; the next chapter records what those shifts surround.

PART I · § 2

The economic relationship

2.1 THE BILATERAL TRADE BASELINE

Total two-way trade between Ireland and the Republic of Korea reached approximately €7.5 billion in 2024, the most recent year for which both components are published: €2.6 billion in goods and €4.9 billion in services.[33]

YEAR	GOODS EXPORTS	GOODS IMPORTS	SERVICES EXPORTS	SERVICES IMPORTS
2024	€888m	€1.7bn	€4.5bn	€0.4bn
2025 (goods only published)	€1.5bn	€2.2bn	n/a	n/a

Table 1 · Ireland–Republic of Korea bilateral trade. Total two-way 2024: €7.5bn. Source: CSO PxStat TSA10 (goods); BPA05 (services).

Read against the corridor's institutional benchmark of €5.2 billion in 2021 — the "over €5 billion" figure carried across Irish government materials, representing 401 per cent growth over the decade from 2011 — every year since has exceeded it. Irish goods exports to Korea grew from €683 million in 2021 to €888 million in 2024 and €1.5 billion in 2025. Irish services exports grew from roughly €3.0 billion in 2021 to €4.5 billion in 2024.[34] The corridor's trajectory is sustained growth, services-led.

Northern Ireland's goods trade with the Republic of Korea runs under the parallel UK-Korea FTA. Northern Irish goods exports to Korea reached approximately £35 million in 2024, led by medical and pharmaceutical products, professional and scientific instruments, beverages, and clothing.[35] The Chamber combines the Republic's and Northern Irish figures as the working all-island measure of the corridor.

2.2 WHAT IRELAND SELLS TO KOREA

Pharmaceuticals and life sciences are the consistent signature beneath the year-to-year swings the technology categories produce. Medical and pharmaceutical products stood at approximately €245 million in 2024, around

€7.5 bn

Total two-way Ireland–Korea trade, 2024 — €2.6bn goods, €4.9bn services.

CSO, 2024

21.6 %

Ireland's share of EU services exports to Korea, 2024 — the largest of any Member State, ahead of Germany, the Netherlands, and France.

EEAS, APR 2026

€4.5 bn

Irish services exports to Korea, 2024 — the corridor's load-bearing dimension.

CSO ITSS 2024

~58 %

Computer services as a share of total Irish services exports — the structural driver behind Ireland's lead in the EU.

CSO, 2024

28 per cent of goods exports; with organic chemicals, the chemicals-and-pharmaceuticals complex reached roughly 38 per cent.[36]

The 2025 figures record a structural surge in a second category: office machines and automatic data-processing equipment reached €686 million, approximately 45 per cent of the year's goods exports, driving the overall jump.[36] The classification is the CSO's SITC Division 75, which covers computers, computer peripherals, and parts and accessories for automatic data-processing equipment. The CSO's published bilateral commentary does not decompose the Ireland-to-Korea flow within Division 75 into specific product types; the surge is presented at category level. The Chamber will pursue the decomposition for the white paper proper.

The remaining basket spans dairy and food products, beverages (the spirits category in particular), agricultural technology and machinery, optical and medical instruments, and software-related goods. Since June 2024 the basket has also included beef, following the market opening recorded at § 1.3.

€5 tn

Net assets in Irish-domiciled fund vehicles — the structural reason Korean institutions hold Irish funds as a standing European exposure.

IRISH FUNDS / CBI

~3 %

Ireland's share of EU goods trade with Korea — small in goods, first in services. The aggregate conceals the single-country signature.

EEAS / EUROSTAT

2.3 WHAT KOREA SELLS TO IRELAND

Irish goods imports from the Republic of Korea in 2025 were led by office machines and automatic data-processing equipment (approximately €616 million, 28 per cent), road vehicles (€491 million, 23 per cent), medicinal and pharmaceutical products (€474 million, 22 per cent), organic chemicals (8 per cent), and specialised industrial machinery (4 per cent).[36] The composition is that of two technologically sophisticated economies with reciprocal demand for each other's output, including two-way trade within the pharmaceutical sector.

> *Ireland first among all twenty-seven Member States in services exports to Korea, with 21.6 per cent of the EU total.*

2.4 SERVICES — THE CORRIDOR'S LOAD-BEARING DIMENSION

Services are the corridor's largest component, and they are where Ireland's position in the EU-Korea relationship is exceptional. In 2024, Ireland's services exports to the Republic of Korea reached €4.5 billion against services imports of €0.4 billion.[37] Within the European Union, that performance places **Ireland first among all twenty-seven Member States in services exports to Korea, with 21.6 per cent of the EU total**, ahead of Germany (19.3 per cent), the Netherlands (17.5 per cent), and France (11.1 per cent).[38]

Germany's larger total services trade with Korea rests on its imports; on the export side, Ireland leads the Union.

Three drivers carry the lead.

The first is computer services. They are Ireland's single largest export category, at €278.7 billion in 2024, approximately 58 per cent of total Irish services exports; the CSO identifies rising computer-services exports as the principal driver of the €9 billion 2024 growth in Irish services exports to Asia, to €98.8 billion regionally.[58] These services reach Korean customers — corporate, public-sector, and consumer — through Irish-domiciled operating entities of multinationals whose EMEA headquarters sit in Ireland, under contracts written and billed from Dublin. The same composition that places Ireland first in the EU for total services exports places Ireland first in the EU for services exports to Korea.

The second is the international financial-services sector. Ireland is, after Luxembourg, Europe's largest domicile for investment-fund assets, with Irish-domiciled fund vehicles holding more than €5 trillion in net assets across over 9,000 funds and sub-funds.[57] The Korean financial-institutional community — the National Pension Service (국민연금공단, NPS), the Korea Investment Corporation (한국투자공사, KIC), and the principal Korean asset managers — holds Irish-domiciled fund vehicles as a standing feature of its European exposure, generating fund-administration, custody, and investment-services flows back to Irish counterparties.

The third is the intellectual-property channel. Charges for the use of intellectual property are a structurally large component of Irish services exports, because the IP-holding entities of multinationals sit in Ireland and license to operating companies worldwide. Korean licensees of those entities pay royalties through that structure.

The Korea-specific composition of these three drivers is not published at component level by the CSO or by Eurostat; bilateral services figures for Ireland-Korea are aggregate.[59] The Chamber records the structural drivers on the public record at the global level and notes the limitation. The consultation will surface the operational reading from the respondent population, and will sharpen the white paper's account of what Ireland's lead actually consists of and what its sustainability depends on.

2.5 FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT, BOTH DIRECTIONS

On the Eurostat record carried in the EU's 2026 survey of the relationship, Ireland's FDI stock in the Republic of Korea stood at approximately €1.9 billion in 2024, with Korea's FDI stock in Ireland at approximately €153 million.[38] Both figures warrant methodological care. The Irish outward stock includes the holdings of Ireland's large funds and financial sector; the operational footprint it corresponds to is the small population of established Irish-affiliated subsidiaries that Chapter 4 records. The Korean inward figure sits well below older Bank of Korea-based measures (approximately €570 million of stock as of 2018; approximately US$6.6 billion of cumulative investment as of 2019), a divergence that reflects differences of measurement frame, including the routing of Korean investment through intermediate jurisdictions.[40] The Chamber records both frames openly and will refine the FDI picture for the white paper.

The direction of travel is more legible than the stocks. SK Ecoplant's solid-oxide fuel-cell supply agreement with Lumcloon Energy of November 2023, underpinning Europe's first fuel-cell-powered data centre at Castlestown, County Offaly, is the corridor's most consequential recent transaction.[22] Korean financial institutions hold Irish-domiciled fund vehicles as a standing feature of the Korean institutional-investment landscape (§ 2.4). The FDI corridor sits at an earlier stage of development than the trade corridor, and the gap between the two is part of what this consultation is designed to understand.

2.6 THE CORPORATE FOOTPRINT AND THE MACRO FRAME

The economic relationship operates through a small corporate population. Embassy of Ireland and Enterprise Ireland intelligence of January 2026 records approximately 120 Enterprise Ireland-supported companies active in the Korean market, approximately 50 Irish-affiliated companies with some form of in-market presence, and approximately five established Irish-affiliated subsidiaries.[41] The population is wider than the export-led reading alone: it includes Irish brands manufactured in Korea, and non-Irish multinationals whose Korean operations carry Irish goods. Chapter 4 sets out the full taxonomy.

Around the bilateral relationship, the wider EU-Korea trade in goods reached approximately €124 billion in 2025, with an EU deficit of approximately €15 billion.[38] The European Union is the Republic of Korea's third-largest trade partner, after the People's Republic of China and the United States. Ireland's share of EU goods trade with Korea is approximately 3 per cent. Korea's own total exports exceeded US$700 billion for the first time in 2025.[38]

The corridor's character is the question. The Irish share of the EU aggregate is small in goods and large in services, and the Chamber reads the corridor at single-Member-State level rather than as a fraction of the EU total. Ireland's first place in EU services exports to Korea, against a 3 per cent share of EU goods trade, is the kind of single-country signature the aggregate conceals.[42]

The economic relationship has grown materially since the FTA's entry into force. Services lead the relationship and are growing fastest. Goods are volatile in their annual leaders and anchored beneath that volatility in pharmaceuticals and life sciences. The corporate footprint that carries these flows is small in number and high in operational density per company. The FDI register lags the trade register. The next chapter examines the institutional architecture that surrounds these flows.

PART I · § 3

The institutional landscape

3.1 THE KOREAN INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE

The institution to which the Chamber will submit its white paper is the Office of the Foreign Investment Ombudsman of the Republic of Korea (외국인 투자 옴부즈만 사무소, OFIO), established in 1999 under Article 15-2 of the Foreign Investment Promotion Act. The Office is currently held by Mr Kim Doo-Sik, commissioned by the President on 25 June 2025 after a career at Shin & Kim in international arbitration, trade law, foreign investment, and mergers and acquisitions.[44] The Office is housed at the 6th floor of Invest Korea Plaza in Seocho-gu, Seoul, alongside Invest KOREA, the inbound-investment one-stop centre of the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (대한무역투자진흥공사, KOTRA).

The principal Korean counterparts for foreign-invested commerce are:

- **The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy** (산업통상자원부, MOTIE), under Minister Kim Jeong-kwan. MOTIE supervises KOTRA, chairs the Foreign Investment Committee, and concludes Korea's trade agreements at ministerial level. The Korea-EU FTA on the Korean side runs through MOTIE's policy lead.
- **The Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (외교부, MOFA), under Minister Cho Hyun. MOFA is the custodian of the bilateral relationship as a diplomatic instrument and the Korean counterpart to Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Bilateral Economic Affairs Bureau (양자경제외교국) convenes the Joint Economic Commission on the Korean side.

Sectoral regulators that bear directly on the principal Irish corporate sectors:

- **The Ministry of Food and Drug Safety** (식품의약품안전처, MFDS) regulates medical devices, food, food supplements, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals. Irish MedTech, biotechnology, food, and beverage companies engage MFDS on Korean Licence Holder appointments, Korea Good Manufacturing Practice (KGMP) certificates, and clinical-data sufficiency.

OFIO — Office of the Foreign Investment Ombudsman. Article 15-2, Foreign Investment Promotion Act (1999). Mr Kim Doo-Sik, commissioned 25 June 2025. Housed at the 6th floor of Invest Korea Plaza, Seocho-gu, Seoul.

사단법인

Sadan beobin.

Korean non-profit corporation under the Civil Act — the legal status toward which KICCI's institutional pathway runs, in part through the KCCI directory of foreign chambers.

18

Registered bilateral chambers in Seoul. KICCI takes its place among them; the DCCK was inaugurated 26 May 2026, fourteen days after KICCI's constitution.

KCCI DIRECTORY

- **The Ministry of Intellectual Property** (지식재산부, MOIP), formerly KIPO until 1 October 2025, administers the Patent Act, Trademark Act, Design Protection Act, and Unfair Competition Prevention and Trade Secret Protection Act.
- **The Public Procurement Service** (조달청, PPS) operates KONEPS, Korea's e-procurement platform.

KOTRA, presided by CEO Mr Kang Kyung-sung since 11 November 2024, operates the network of overseas Investment Promotion Offices, holds the FDI notification statistics, and houses the Office of the Foreign Investment Ombudsman. **Invest KOREA**, KOTRA's inbound-investment one-stop centre, is the operational counterpart for project intake, foreign-investment notification, and incentive coordination.

The Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry (대한상공회의소, KCCI), chaired by Mr Chey Tae-won of SK Group, holds statutory standing under the Chambers of Commerce and Industry Act and maintains the registry of foreign chambers in the Republic. KICCI's institutional pathway to *sadan beobin* (사단법인) status runs in part through the KCCI directory.

At the metropolitan layer, **Seoul** maintains its own economic institutions: the Seoul Business Agency and Invest Seoul. Invest Seoul and IDA Ireland signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Dublin in March 2023, covering investment-network partnership, personnel and programme exchange, and the sharing of enterprise-policy practice.[45]

Ireland House Seoul. Embassy of Ireland · Enterprise Ireland · IDA Ireland · Agriculture Counsellor (DAFM). 13th floor, Leema Building, Jongno-gu. One of twenty Ireland Houses worldwide.

JEC cadence. Joint Economic Commission convenes biennially; sessions in 2017, 2023, next expected 2027. The cadence held with explicable interruptions.

3.2 THE IRISH INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE

The Irish institutional architecture was reorganised in 2025 in a way that matters for this corridor.

The Department of Foreign Affairs became the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade with effect from 26 March 2025; the trade-promotion and trade-diplomacy lead now sits with it.[46] The **Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment** retains the enterprise agencies (Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland), the EU trade-policy machinery, and the convening lead for the bilateral Joint Economic Commission. The **Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine** holds the market-access portfolio for Irish food exports. The **Department of Finance** holds the bilateral double-taxation convention. At the date of writing the four are held respectively by Minister Helen McEntee, Minister Peter Burke, Minister Martin Heydon, and Minister Simon Harris (also Tánaiste).[32]

In Seoul, the corporate community's direct counterparts at the Irish institutions:

- **Embassy of Ireland** — Ambassador Michelle Winthrop (since August 2022); Deputy Head of Mission Mr Cian Kearns, who holds the operational liaison portfolio touching the corporate community.
- **Agriculture Counsellor** — Mr John Higgins, the in-market anchor for the food and drink sector.[7]
- **Enterprise Ireland Korea** — directed by Mr Taewon Um; supports Irish-owned exporting and innovating companies across the seven priority sectors identified for the Korean market (agritech, animal nutrition and veterinary pharmaceuticals, medtech, education, ICT, fintech, digital).
- **IDA Ireland Korea** — Country Director Ms Suzie Lee (since January 2026); promotes Korean inward investment into Ireland.
- **Bord Bia** — covers Korea from the agency's Tokyo office.[47]

The Northern Irish picture has changed since 2024. Invest Northern Ireland opened a Seoul presence in late 2022 under the New Deal for Northern Ireland and has since withdrawn the in-market presence; Korea coverage now sits with Invest NI's North East Asia regional base in Tokyo.[48] The corporate substance the Seoul presence helped develop remains active: the Belfast Distillery Company's distribution of McConnell's Irish Whiskey through GoldenBlue; the Belfast wireless-sensor advanced-manufacturing company Sensoteq; the Belfast-Sejong Innovation Twins Roadmap of 29 April 2024.[49]

Around the institutional architecture sits the Irish community fabric in Korea: a small and closely integrated community that has held its rhythm in Seoul over years. The Irish Association in Korea is the resident community body; the Irish-Korean Professionals Network supports Irish professionals working in the corridor at corporate and academic level; the Seoul Gaels carry the Gaelic-games tradition. The annual St Patrick's Day programme, supported by the Embassy and the wider Team Ireland presence, is the calendar's set-piece, alongside the cultural, sporting, and social occasions that run through the year. The community is the human ground on which the institutional architecture sits.

> “
> *The corridor's formal architecture is substantially complete. The next increment lies in the operating layer.*

3.3 THE BILATERAL INTERFACE

The Korean and Irish institutional architectures meet at four points.

The **Joint Economic Commission** is the principal standing bilateral instrument, convening biennially between DETE and the Bilateral Economic Affairs Bureau of MOFA. The next session is expected in 2027 (the cadence is recorded at § 1.3 and Annex D § D.4). The **Korea-EU Joint Trade Committee** handles matters at the EU-Korea level when bilateral channels exceed their scope. **State visits and bilateral conferences** carry the set-piece register at the highest level; the most recent material instance is the March 2026 ministerial visit of Mr Sean Canney, Minister of State at the Department of Transport, for the St Patrick's Day programme, with bilateral aviation-agreement talks and the Hyundai Rotem engagement.[19] **Trade missions** operate cross-departmentally, with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's missions of September 2024 and June 2025 the most recent examples.[24, 27]

3.4 KICCI'S SEAT WITHIN THIS ARCHITECTURE

KICCI is the standing institutional vehicle for the collective voice of the Irish corporate community in the Republic of Korea. The bilateral chamber's seat is its own. The Embassy carries the diplomatic mandate; Enterprise Ireland supports Irish exporters and innovators in the market; IDA Ireland represents Ireland to Korean capital; the Irish Association and the Irish-Korean Professionals Network convene the resident community on matters of identity and professional engagement. KICCI convenes the corporate community itself, on the conditions of doing business in this corridor, and carries its collective view into the institutional channels that shape the operating environment.

The Chamber takes its place among eighteen registered bilateral chambers in Seoul.[50] The peer chambers — the European Chamber of Commerce in Korea (ECCK), AMCHAM, KGCCI, BCCK, FKCCI, SKBC, and the smaller bilateral chambers — have produced an established record of institutional submissions to the Korean foreign-investment authorities: the ECCK publishes an annual White Paper; AMCHAM publishes a Business Environment Insight Report; KGCCI publishes a Business Confidence Survey. The Danish Chamber of Commerce in Korea (DCCK) was inaugurated on 26 May 2026, fourteen days after KICCI's own constitution, joining the foreign-chamber community at the same moment.[60] KICCI takes its place among the bilateral chambers as a small chamber addressing the institutional reader through a structured policy submission for the first time.

The smaller bilateral chambers are the Chamber's direct peers, sharing the same scale of operation and the same daily working questions; the larger institutional chambers are partners whose long institutional record has shaped the standards a chamber of this kind operates to.

The corridor's formal architecture is substantially complete. The addition of a Korean-Irish chamber in 2026 is the most recent structural increment. The next increment lies in the operating layer: the conditions Irish business encounters day to day, which the consultation and the white paper that follows address directly.

§ 4 · THE CORPORATE COMMUNITY

The Irish Corporate Community in Korea.

The corporate community KICCI represents: the modes of presence, the four categories of Irish-affiliated business, the sample frame, and the sector profiles.

PART II · § 4

The corporate community

The corporate taxonomy and sector profiles set out in this part reflect the Chamber's research as it stands at the date of this paper. Both will develop materially in the weeks and months toward the white paper proper, as the consultation returns its evidence and the Chamber's intelligence work continues across the corridor. KICCI welcomes additions and corrections to its understanding of Irish-affiliated business activity in the Republic of Korea, and invites institutional partners and members of the corporate community to contribute through the Chamber's secretariat.

4.1 MODES OF PRESENCE

The Irish-affiliated corporate population in the Republic of Korea operates in four principal modes, catalogued in descending order of institutional density:

Established subsidiary. A company incorporated under Korean law, with Korean accounts, Korean tax registration, and Korean employment relationships. The deepest institutional footprint and the most direct exposure to Korean operating conditions. The Embassy and Enterprise Ireland working intelligence as of January 2026 places approximately five Irish-affiliated companies in this category.

Branch or representative office. A formal Korean presence held by a non-Korean parent company, registered with the relevant Korean authorities, with limited operational scope (typically business-development, market-intelligence, or liaison) compared to a fully subsidiarised operation. A number of Irish-affiliated companies hold this position with a sustained interest in the Korean market.

Commercial presence through a Korean distributor. A Korean intermediary (distributor, agent, or joint-venture partner) carries the operational presence; the Irish principal trades into the Korean market through that intermediary. This is the mode held by the majority of Irish-affiliated companies trading with the Republic of Korea on a sustained basis, particularly in MedTech, AgriTech, food and beverage, and machinery. Working intelligence places approximately fifty Irish-affiliated companies in this category alongside those in the first two.

~5 /50/120

Established subsidiaries / distributor-mode companies / EI-supported direct exporters. The four modes, in working figures.

EMBASSY / EI OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

네 가지 분류

Four categories of Irish-affiliated business.

One: Irish-headquartered. *Two*: Irish operational identity. *Three*: Irish brands with Korean manufacturing presence. *Four*: Irish-brand shopfronts. The taxonomy defines who the consultation reaches.

Direct export without local presence. The Irish company exports to Korean buyers without an in-country institutional footprint. Working intelligence places approximately 120 Enterprise Ireland-supported companies in this category at the time of the November 2023 Team Ireland Trade Mission Week.

4.2 WORKING DEFINITIONS: THE FOUR CATEGORIES OF IRISH-AFFILIATED BUSINESS

The consultation applies a taxonomy of four categories, codified in full in Chapter 5. The first two are the conventional reading of an "Irish company operating in Korea." The third and fourth extend the working definition to two populations the conventional reading misses.

Category one: Irish-headquartered companies. A company whose corporate headquarters sit in Ireland, present in Korea in any of the four modes above.

Category two: companies of Irish operational identity. Companies whose headquarters sit elsewhere for corporate-structuring reasons but whose operational identity is Irish: Irish-founded, Irish-staffed, Irish-managed in substance. The Chamber's methodology acknowledges the asymmetry this creates and reports the basis on which any individual company is included in the consultation sample.

Category three: Irish brands with Korean manufacturing presence. Irish companies whose products are manufactured in Korea, with or without any Korean sales presence. The relationship runs opposite to the export reading of the corridor, and it is substantial. Korea's cosmetics manufacturing sector is the category's anchor: Korea became the world's second-largest cosmetics exporter in 2025, on record exports of approximately US$11.4 billion, and its original-design manufacturers produce for hundreds of international brands.[51] The verified Irish case is Sculpted by Aimee, the Irish-owned cosmetics company (2024 revenue of €32.6 million, up 46 per cent), which has stated publicly that almost all of its products are made in South Korea, a manufacturing relationship dating to the brand's founding.[52] These companies generate Irish corporate value from a Korean production base; their concerns about operating conditions in Korea — manufacturing-partner relationships, quality regulation, logistics — are the Chamber's concerns.

Category four: Irish-brand shopfronts. Non-Irish multinationals whose Korean operations distribute Irish-origin products at scale, where Irish trade and employment depend on that distribution. The spirits trade is the category's anchor. Pernod Ricard Korea carries Jameson and the Irish Distillers portfolio: Jameson's Korean sales volumes grew at an average of approximately 52 per cent per year in the three years to March 2024, making it Pernod Ricard's fastest-growing brand in the market.[53] Diageo Korea distributes Guinness within its post-2023 import portfolio.[54] Trade statistics record origin rather than brand ownership: every case of Jameson sold in Korea

+52 %/yr

Jameson's Korean sales-volume growth, average per year in the three years to March 2024 — Pernod Ricard Korea's fastest-growing brand in the market.

PERNOD RICARD KOREA, MAR 2024

119 /66

KICCI bilateral database, May 2026: 119 entries; 66 in-scope for this consultation under the all-island Irish definition.

KICCI INTERNAL

~500 kt

Korea's annual beef imports — the market Irish suppliers entered in 2024.

DAFM, JUN 2025

Seven EI priority sectors. Agritech; animal nutrition and veterinary pharmaceuticals; medtech; education; ICT; fintech; digital.

enters the statistics as an Irish export, whoever's Korean subsidiary sells it. The parent companies are French and British; the production, employment, and export value are substantially Irish. The Chamber includes the category in its consultation scope.

The taxonomy's purpose is practical: it defines who the consultation reaches. Irish business in Korea is exporters and subsidiaries, and it is also Irish brands made in Korea and Irish products carried by others; a chamber that convenes all four categories represents the corridor as it runs.

> *A chamber that convenes all four categories represents the corridor as it runs.*

4.3 THE STARTING SAMPLE FRAME

The KICCI bilateral database holds approximately **119 entries** as of May 2026, of which approximately **66 are in-scope** for this consultation under the Chamber's all-island Irish working definition. The in-scope cohort is drawn from the operational rosters of the Embassy of Ireland in Seoul and Enterprise Ireland's Korea office, supplemented by the Chamber's own initial recruitment work from February 2026 onward, and by a discovery pass over the Northern Irish corporate presence in the corridor: the network formerly anchored by Invest NI's Seoul presence, the Belfast-Sejong Innovation Twins beneficiaries, and the all-island Irish whiskey trade.[55]

4.4 ANCHOR CASES

The consultation's qualitative spine is anchored by three to five detailed cases, selected from the respondents whose engagement during the survey indicates the willingness and the texture to support fuller treatment. Two sectors carry anchor-case interest in principle as of May 2026: medical devices and biotechnology, and agricultural technology and food machinery. A third candidate sits in category three of the taxonomy: the Korean-manufacturing relationship behind an Irish consumer brand, where the operating conditions of the corridor run through the production side. Further anchor cases will surface from the survey; the methodology chapter codifies the selection criteria.

4.5 SECTOR PROFILES

The initial taxonomy covers eight sectors, arranged in descending order of corridor relevance as the research stands at the date of writing. The taxonomy will refine through the consultation: sectors thinly represented may compress, sectors with material presence not anticipated in the list may add.

Medical devices and biotechnology. Irish MedTech and biotechnology companies engaging with Korea operate principally through Korean Licence Holders for medical-device registrations with MFDS, through clinical-data partnerships for biotechnology programmes, and through hospital-network distributors for in-market commercial delivery.

Food and beverage. Irish food and drink companies operate principally through Korean importers and distributors. The sector carries the corridor's strongest current institutional support: the resident Agriculture Counsellor (§ 3.2), Bord Bia's designation of Korea as a priority market for Irish food exports, and the two ministerial trade missions of 2024 and 2025 (§ 1.3). The beef opening of 2024 added a flagship category to a basket that spans dairy, prepared foods, and confectionery; Korea imports approximately half a million tonnes of beef a year, and Irish suppliers are building a position from the 2024 entry.[56] The spirits category is structurally distinct: Irish whiskey commands sustained Korean consumer demand through a dedicated commercial channel, running through the shopfront distributors (§ 4.2) and through independent importers for the Northern Irish and craft labels.[53] Bord Bia is the natural institutional point of reference for the sector's development.

Information technology, software, and digital services. Irish-founded technology companies trading into Korea operate across software-as-a-service platforms, digital-services platforms, and software for specialised industrial applications. Korean technology buyers are technically discerning and Korea's domestic technology sector is highly developed; Irish companies compete on technological differentiation. The sector's regulatory environment is the one the EU-Korea Digital Trade Agreement (§ 1.2) will most directly reshape once in force.

Financial services. Ireland is, after Luxembourg, the largest domicile in Europe for investment-fund assets.[57] The depth and breadth of the Irish funds industry is the structural reason the Korean financial-institutional community holds Irish vehicles as a standing feature of its European exposure: the National Pension Service, the Korea Investment Corporation, and the principal Korean asset managers hold Irish-domiciled fund structures, with the corresponding fund-administration, custody, and investment-services flows running back to Irish counterparties. Korea's institutional inflows into Ireland likely constitute the largest single component of the Korean corporate footprint in Ireland measured by capital deployed.

In the opposite direction, the reciprocal Irish presence in Korean financial services is smaller and institutionally distinctive. It concentrates in cross-border-payments fintech (TransferMate's partnership with MOIN, the licensed Korean cross-border payments operator, exemplifies the corridor's institutional weight in this sub-sector), capital-markets services, and project-finance arrangements at the energy and infrastructure boundary. The November 2023 SK Ecoplant / Lumcloon Energy fuel-cell partnership (§ 2.5) sits at this boundary, and the sub-sector is one that will grow as Korean industrial capital looks for European hosting in energy-intensive sectors. The EU-Korea Digital Trade Agreement (§ 1.2), once in force, will carry into the data-flow and electronic-payments architecture on which cross-border financial services depend.

Agricultural technology and food machinery. Irish AgriTech, animal nutrition, and food-machinery companies operate principally through Korean distributors with sector knowledge of Korean agricultural producers and processors. The category includes veterinary-pharmaceutical companies, food-ingredients suppliers, and machinery suppliers to Korean food manufacturers.

Professional services and consulting. Irish-founded professional-services firms with Korean operations, ranging from legal counsel to management consulting to industry-specialist advisory. The mode of presence is generally subsidiary or branch, given the requirements of client confidentiality and locally-licensed practice in regulated services.

Aviation, transport, and logistics. The corridor's most institutionally active item as of 2026 is the bilateral air services framework under negotiation between the Irish Department of Transport and the Korean Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, alongside Ireland's rail-carriage order with Hyundai Rotem (§ 1.3). Beyond aviation and rail, Irish logistics and shipping companies operate in the corridor at a smaller order of magnitude.

Education, language training, and higher-education partnerships. Irish educational institutions operate in the Republic of Korea principally through institution-to-institution partnerships, student-mobility programmes, and English-language training arrangements. The Ireland-Korea English Language Student Alumni Network and the Student Ambassador Scholarship scheme announced during the November 2023 Team Ireland Trade Mission Week sit institutionally in this sector.

4.6 THE CORRIDOR'S CHARACTER

The corporate community KICCI represents is concentrated in the technology-and-life-sciences sectors, with food and beverage the rising third pillar. The pattern reflects Ireland's wider export profile to the Asian economies and the fit between what Ireland makes and what Korea buys. The corridor's character is distinguished by this concentration: a small number of companies operating at sustained institutional weight in technically sophisticated sectors, with each company carrying more weight than in a broader trading relationship. The taxonomy's third and fourth categories add a further signature: a corridor whose value runs in both directions through manufacturing and distribution relationships, alongside the conventional export channel. The consultation will report the respondent population's actual composition by sector, and the reading will sharpen with it.

§ 5 · METHODOLOGY · § 6 · OUR INVITATION

The Consultation.

The methodology of the consultation, the Chamber's invitation to the Irish business community to participate, and the Chamber's commitment to what follows.

PART III · § 5

Methodology

5.1 THE HYBRID APPROACH

The methodology has three components: a written survey across the corporate population, deeper interviews with respondents whose engagement warrants fuller treatment, and detailed anchor cases that bring abstract findings to ground. The three operate in sequence: the survey opens the consultation across the corporate population; the interviews develop the patterns the survey surfaces; the anchor cases ground the abstract findings.

삼중 구조

A three-part instrument.

Survey across the population; interviews with willing respondents; anchor cases that ground the findings. Three components operating in sequence.

5.2 ANONYMISATION — THE PROTECTIONS THAT GOVERN THIS CONSULTATION

Three rules govern every named entity in the paper.

First rule. No company is named without written consent from a person authorised to give it on behalf of the company. The default attribution is sector-level. Example formulation: *"an Irish medical-device manufacturer with a Korean subsidiary established before 2020"*.

Second rule. No individual is named without explicit written consent. The default is role-level: *"the Korean general manager of an Irish food-ingredients company"* as the form, with the individual's name held in the Chamber's consent record only.

Third rule. Where a case is sufficiently distinctive that sector-and-role attribution would identify the company, the case is either anonymised further (through composite construction across two or more respondents, declared in the methodology) or held back from publication.

Three rules of anonymisation. No company named without written consent; no individual named without written consent; identifying cases anonymised further or held back. The Chamber binds itself to these rules.

5 sections

Survey structure: Company profile · Operating experience · Specific incidents · Remedies · Engagement.

§ 5.4

> *The respondent who shares with the Chamber shares with an institution that has bound itself to these three rules.*

5.3 THE SAMPLE FRAME

The starting sample is the 66-entry in-scope cohort within the Chamber's bilateral database of 119 entries (§ 4.3). The Chamber will seek to widen the sample frame beyond the in-scope cohort, drawing on the institutional knowledge of the Embassy of Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, and the European Chamber of Commerce in Korea.

Companies whose Irish presence is limited to a domiciliation arrangement, without substantive Irish operational identity, workforce, or headquartered functions, sit outside the primary sample. Companies in the taxonomy's third and fourth categories (Irish brands with Korean manufacturing presence; Irish-brand shopfronts) are within the consultation's reach, with their categorisation reported. The Chamber's methodology document codifies the inclusion and exclusion criteria in full.

~60 min

Each interview, semi-structured, conducted by the Chair, with Korean-language portions where the respondent prefers Korean.

§ 5.5

Triangulation rule. No finding rests on a single respondent. One controlled exception, explicitly labelled, where a single account raises a question of wider significance.

5.4 THE SURVEY

The survey is electronic and bilingual (English and Korean), with the respondent answering in the language of their choice. Expected completion time is twelve to fifteen minutes for the median respondent. The instrument is structured in five sections.

Section A — Company profile. Sector, mode of presence, year established in the Republic of Korea, headcount, ownership structure, principal corporate language.

Section B — Operating experience. Closed-format questions across the friction taxonomy (procurement and tendering; regulatory approvals and certification; intellectual property; market access and distribution; banking and financial infrastructure; talent, visas, and human resources; tax and corporate compliance; the cultural and institutional friction layer), with a five-point severity scale and a free-text field for each category. Respondents may skip categories that do not apply.

Section C — Specific incidents. Optional free-text field for the respondent to describe an incident they consider representative or instructive. Used to surface anchor-case candidates and to ground the category-level findings.

Section D — Remedies. Free-text field for what the respondent thinks would help: practical, institutional, regulatory, bilateral.

Section E — Engagement. Whether the respondent is willing to be interviewed in depth, and whether the respondent consents to being named in the paper (the default is no).

The survey reaches the corporate community principally through direct, personalised outreach by the Chair. The white paper will report the response achieved, and the methodology, openly.

5.5 THE INTERVIEW PROGRAMME

A programme of in-depth interviews follows the survey, conducted with respondents who indicate in Section E that they are willing to take part. Where the willing respondents allow, the interviews are chosen for sector coverage, for the friction patterns the survey surfaces most strongly, and for narrative texture: those whose Section C free-text suggests a case specific enough to survive anonymisation.

The interviews are semi-structured, conducted by the Chair, with a native Korean speaker from the Chamber's network conducting the Korean-language portions where the respondent prefers Korean. Each interview runs approximately sixty minutes and produces a written record anonymised at the point of writing, with the consent record held separately. The interview protocol is structured in four sections: context (the company in the Republic of Korea); the specific case the respondent is willing to discuss (anchored in the Section C narrative); the wider pattern (the interviewer surfaces patterns observed in the survey and invites reaction); and remedies.

5.6 QUALITY CONTROLS

Two controls operate.

Triangulation. No finding enters the paper that rests on a single respondent. Each friction-category finding is supported by the survey signal (closed-format scale plus free-text), interview corroboration, and where possible documentary evidence (regulation, court judgement, public reporting). One controlled exception applies: a single respondent's account may be carried, explicitly labelled as such, where it raises a question of wider significance that the consultation's evidence does not yet settle and that merits attention beyond this paper.

Institutional cross-checks. Where a finding has institutional implications, the Chamber invites the relevant Korean institution (KOTRA, MFDS, MOTIE, the KCCI) to comment in writing on the draft language before publication. The invitation is recorded; the response, where given, is reflected in the final language; where the institution declines to comment, the paper notes that the invitation was made and the institution chose to make no comment.

5.7 LIMITATIONS THE PAPER ACKNOWLEDGES

Five limitations bear on the consultation, each acknowledged openly.

Sample size. The Irish corporate population in the Republic of Korea is small. A survey of thirty to forty companies, even at the targeted response rate against the extended frame, is a small-N study by quantitative standards. The findings are characterised as patterns surfaced by a structured consultation, with the institutional weight of the Chamber's outreach supplementing the statistical reach of the sample.

Self-selection. Respondents who agree to participate are systematically more likely to have grievances to report than those who decline. The methodology mitigates this through personalised outreach (which invites participation regardless of grievance) and through the institutional weight of the addressee (which lifts response rates beyond the grievance-driven subset). The residual self-selection bias is acknowledged openly.

Anonymisation cost. Anonymisation protects respondents and reduces the specificity the Office of the Foreign Investment Ombudsman can act on. The white paper sits at the boundary: specific enough to be actionable; anonymised enough to be defensible. The Office is offered, under separate confidential cover, a more detailed companion brief on cases where the respondent has consented to specific disclosure.

Sectoral coverage. The survey will reach sectors in proportion to their presence in the database. Sectors thinly represented may carry systemic issues the consultation undersamples. The Chamber's recommendations chapter proposes the annual repeat of the consultation as the corrective.

Time horizon. The white paper reports the state of operating conditions in 2026. The annual repeat establishes the trend line over time.

PART III · § 6

Our invitation

6.1 PURPOSE

The consultation has a single purpose: to surface the operating conditions Irish business encounters in the corridor. KICCI, as the collective institutional voice of the corporate community, gathers what individual companies experience separately and articulates it as a single account.

The findings will inform the Chamber's white paper to the Office of the Foreign Investment Ombudsman of the Republic of Korea, carrying forward what the consultation surfaces — the friction taxonomy, the sectoral patterns, the anchor cases — into the institutional channels that can act on it.

6.2 WHAT THE CHAMBER ASKS

KICCI asks three things of the Irish corporate community in the Republic of Korea.

Participation in the consultation survey: a bilingual electronic instrument of twelve to fifteen minutes.

Depth, from respondents whose engagement supports it: a sixty-minute structured interview, conducted by the Chair.

Evidence, from the few who can offer it: the willingness to describe a specific case on the record, anonymised by default.

The mechanics are set out in Chapter 5.

6.3 WHAT THE CHAMBER COMMITS TO

Anonymisation. The protections of Chapter 5 govern every contribution to this consultation.

Reporting. The findings are reported back to the corporate community as soon as the white paper is published, with a private companion briefing for participating companies on the same day the Chamber reports institutionally.

Three asks. Participation in a twelve-to-fifteen-minute survey · a sixty-minute interview from those whose engagement supports it · a specific case on the record from the few who can offer one.

Three commitments. Anonymisation by default · published findings with a private companion briefing for participants · annual tracking of the institutional response.

Jun → Oct 2026

Survey distribution late June; collection across the summer; interviews from September; close in early autumn. Synthesis and white-paper drafting through the closing months of 2026.

§ 6.4

Action. The white paper's recommendations chapter carries specific institutional asks to the Office of the Foreign Investment Ombudsman, the wider Korean institutional architecture, the Irish Government, and the bilateral institutional framework. KICCI will track the institutional responses and report the results to the corporate community on an annual basis.

kicci.ie/consultation. The registration link, survey access, and Chamber's institutional contact. Companies that consider themselves Irish-affiliated within the Chamber's working definitions are warmly encouraged to make contact.

6.4 PROCESS AND TIMELINE

The consultation runs from late June 2026 into early autumn. Survey distribution from late June; collection across the summer and into September, allowing for the limited availability of respondents over the holiday months; in-depth interviews from September; the survey closing in the early autumn. The Chamber synthesises the findings thereafter, and the white paper drafts through the closing months of 2026, with the Chamber's intellectual-integrity and tone audits applied before publication.

6.5 THE INSTITUTIONAL CALL

Irish business in the Republic of Korea has, for forty-three years, operated through a corridor of substantial institutional weight and sustained commercial reciprocity. The corporate community is small enough that each company carries a meaningful share of the corridor's institutional voice; it is large enough that no single company sees the whole pattern. KICCI exists to convene that voice into a single institutional document, addressed to the institutions that can act on it.

The Chamber invites the Irish corporate community in the Republic of Korea to participate in this consultation. The registration link, the survey access, and the Chamber's institutional contact are published at `kicci.ie/consultation` and circulated to companies on the outreach list directly. Companies that have not received a direct invitation by the end of June 2026, and that consider themselves Irish-affiliated within the Chamber's working definitions, are warmly encouraged to contact the Chamber.

The work begins.

ANNEX A

Statistical sources and definitions

Every figure cited in this paper carries a footnote naming the source, the year of publication, and where relevant a methodology note. The Chamber maintains a fuller statistical source register behind the paper.

The principal sources cited or consulted:

Source	Use
Central Statistics Office of Ireland (PxStat TSA10; BPA05; ITSS)	Irish goods trade by partner country and commodity group; Irish services trade by partner country
Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, Ireland	Bilateral trade headline figures; Korea–EU FTA economic impact
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ireland	Bilateral relations record; historical instruments
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Ireland	Trade missions; market access; attaché network
Office of the Revenue Commissioners, Ireland	Double-Taxation Convention text
Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Korea (EEAS)	*2026 EU-RoK Trade and Investment Relations* booklet: EU-Korea trade, services by Member State, FDI
European Commission / DG TRADE / EUR-Lex	Framework Agreement, FTA and Digital Trade Agreement texts and press record; beef market access
Council of the European Union	EU-Korea summit record, June 2026
Eurostat (Comext; BoP)	Bilateral goods and services trade cross-check; FDI by Member State
Bank of Korea	Foreign investment statistics by origin country
Korea Customs Service	Korea total exports and imports
Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA)	FDI notification statistics; inward-investment register
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)	Northern Irish goods trade with Korea
UN Comtrade	Multilateral cross-check
OECD	Korean investment policy reform; FDI restrictions index

Table A.1 · Principal statistical sources cited or consulted.

Definitional notes. *Irish company*: the consultation's working taxonomy of four categories is set out in Chapter 4. *Operating in Korea*: the three substantive modes are subsidiary, branch or representative office, and commercial presence through a Korean distributor. *Reference year*: the paper reports the state of operating conditions in 2026; the statistical baseline is the most recent year for which authoritative data is available (2024 for combined goods-and-services figures; 2025 for goods trade). *Statistical frames*: EU-comparative figures cite the Eurostat frame carried in the EEAS booklet; the bilateral time series cites the Central Statistics Office of Ireland; the two frames differ at the margin on levels and vintages and are not mixed within a single comparison.

Currency convention. EUR is the headline currency. Korean Won values are recorded where the source publishes them. US Dollar values are converted using the European Central Bank euro reference rate annual average where conversion is required.

ANNEX B

Bibliography

The bibliography of peer-reviewed sources, working papers, and institutional reports cited or consulted in this Consultation Paper is curated under the Chamber's research apparatus and develops as the consultation proceeds. The intellectual frame runs across four sub-themes: foreign direct investment friction and host-country institutional quality; foreign-chamber advocacy as institutional actor; ombudsman institutions in the Republic of Korea and the OECD; and the Korea–European Union economic relationship.

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Reif, L. C. (2020). *Ombuds Institutions, Good Governance and the International Human Rights System.* Second edition. Brill Nijhoff.

ANNEX C

Glossary

Korean institutional terms appear in this paper with Korean script and romanisation on first occurrence. The glossary below collects the Korean institutional terms, the institutional abbreviations, and the legal-and-regulatory shorthand cited in the body.

Korean institutions and primary law.

- 외국인투자 옴부즈만 사무소 (*Oegugin Tuja Ombudsman Samuso*, OFIO) — Office of the Foreign Investment Ombudsman of the Republic of Korea
- 외국인투자 촉진법 (*Oegugin Tuja Chokjin-beop*, FIPA) — Foreign Investment Promotion Act
- 외교부 (*Oegyobu*, MOFA) — Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea
- 양자경제외교국 (*Yangja Gyeongje Oegyo-guk*) — Bilateral Economic Affairs Bureau, MOFA
- 산업통상자원부 (*Sanup Tongsang Jawonbu*, MOTIE) — Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy
- 식품의약품안전처 (*Sikpum-uiyakpum Anjeoncheo*, MFDS) — Ministry of Food and Drug Safety
- 특허청 (*Tuk-heo-cheong*, KIPO) — Korean Intellectual Property Office (transitional brand)
- 지식재산부 (*Jisik Jaesan-bu*, MOIP) — Ministry of Intellectual Property (cabinet rank from 1 October 2025)
- 조달청 (*Joldae-cheong*, PPS) — Public Procurement Service
- 대한무역투자진흥공사 (*Daehan Muyeok Tuja Jinheung Gongsa*, KOTRA) — Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency
- 대한상공회의소 (*Daehan Sanggong Hoeuiso*, KCCI) — Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- 나라장터 (*Nara Jangteo*, KONEPS) — Korea's e-procurement platform
- 사단법인 (*sadan beobin*) — Korean non-profit corporation under the Civil Act

Foreign chambers of commerce in the Republic of Korea.

The principal foreign bilateral chambers registered with the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry, with the abbreviations used in this paper:

- AMCHAM — American Chamber of Commerce in Korea
- AustCham — Australian Chamber of Commerce in Korea
- BCCK — British Chamber of Commerce in Korea
- CanCham — Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Korea
- DCCK — Danish Chamber of Commerce in Korea (inaugurated 26 May 2026)
- ECCK — European Chamber of Commerce in Korea
- FKCCI — French-Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- ITCCK — Italian Chamber of Commerce in Korea
- KGCCI — Korean-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- SJC — Seoul Japan Club
- SKBC — Swiss-Korean Business Council

The register further includes the Dutch Business Council Korea, the Indian Chamber of Commerce in Korea, the Korea-Iran Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the New Zealand Chamber of Commerce in Korea (the Kiwi Chamber), the South African Chamber of Commerce in Korea, the Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Korea, and the Turkish Chamber of Commerce in Korea. Other bilateral business bodies active in Korea include the Norwegian Business Association Korea, the Spanish Chamber of Commerce in Korea, the Finland Chamber of Commerce in Korea, and the Singapore Chamber of Commerce in Korea.

Other abbreviations.

- DAFM — Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Ireland
- DETE — Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, Ireland (renamed from Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2025)
- DFAT — Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ireland (renamed from Foreign Affairs, March 2025)
- DTA — EU-Korea Digital Trade Agreement (signed 10 June 2026; pending ratification)
- EI — Enterprise Ireland
- FDI — Foreign direct investment
- FTA — Free Trade Agreement (Korea–EU FTA, in force 13 December 2015)
- IDA — IDA Ireland (Industrial Development Authority)
- JEC — Joint Economic Commission
- KICCI — Korean-Irish Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- MoEF — Ministry of Economy and Finance, Republic of Korea
- OECD — Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- WHP — Working Holiday Programme (Korea–Ireland, effective 9 March 2010)

ANNEX D

The bilateral corridor — institutional reference record

This annex carries the full institutional record of the bilateral architecture, for the reader who wishes to consult it. Chapter 1 of the paper presents only the elements that bear on the operating conditions Irish business encounters in 2026; this annex carries the architecture in full.

D.1 DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND RESIDENT MISSIONS

Ireland and the Republic of Korea established diplomatic relations on 4 October 1983.[2] The Korean Embassy in Dublin opened on 10 July 1987 and continues to operate from 72 Merrion Square South, Dublin 2.[3] The Embassy of Ireland in Seoul opened on 2 September 1989, four months after the Irish Government's April 1989 decision to open a resident mission; Mr Richard Ryan was Ireland's first resident Ambassador to Korea.[4]

The Embassy operates from the 13th floor of the Leema Building in Jongno-gu, Seoul, alongside Enterprise Ireland's Korea office, IDA Ireland's Korea office, and the Agriculture Counsellor of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. The co-location is the Seoul expression of the Irish Government's *Ireland House* model under the Global Ireland strategy: diplomatic missions and Irish state agencies co-located in a single location in key markets, working collaboratively to maximise collective impact and presenting a uniform brand abroad.[5] Seoul is one of twenty Ireland Houses worldwide.[6]

Seoul holds one of only around ten dedicated Irish agriculture posts worldwide, established in the 2019 expansion of the Department's attaché network.[7] Bord Bia, the Irish food board, complements the Agriculture Counsellor's presence with in-market coverage run from the agency's Tokyo office.

D.2 THE EUROPEAN FRAMING — INSTRUMENTS TABLE

Instrument	**Concluded / signed**	**In force**	**Operative scope**
EU-Korea Framework Agreement	Signed 10 May 2010	1 June 2014	Political relationship: Strategic Partnership; cooperation dialogue

Instrument	Concluded / signed	In force	Operative scope
EU-Korea Free Trade Agreement	Signed 6 October 2010	Provisionally 1 July 2011; fully 13 December 2015	Commercial relationship: tariffs, services, IP, government procurement
EU-Korea Digital Partnership	November 2022	Operational	Digital-technology cooperation: semiconductors, AI, networks, data
EU-Korea Green Partnership	May 2023	Operational	Climate, energy transition, environment
EU-Korea Security and Defence Partnership	November 2024	Operational	Security cooperation framework
EU-Korea Digital Trade Agreement	Signed 10 June 2026	Pending ratification	Binding digital-trade rules: data flows, localisation, e-commerce
UK-Korea Free Trade Agreement (continuity)	Signed 22 August 2019	1 January 2021	Northern Ireland's commercial relationship with the Republic of Korea
UK-Korea Free Trade Agreement (upgrade)	Negotiations concluded 15 December 2025	Signature and ratification pending	Modernised UK-Korea framework: digital trade, revised rules of origin

Table D.1 · The instrument architecture — EU and UK frameworks with the Republic of Korea bearing on Irish business, June 2026.

D.3 THE BILATERAL INSTRUMENT STOCK

The treaty stock between Ireland and the Republic of Korea is functional, consistent with a small Member State's participation in a relationship principally governed by the European framework. Three instruments are in continuous force, and a fourth is in late-stage negotiation.

The **Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion** was signed in Dublin on 18 July 1990 and has been in force continuously since.[16] It allocates taxing rights between the two jurisdictions and provides relief from double taxation for income and capital gains taxable in both. The Office of the Revenue Commissioners holds the authoritative Irish-side text.

The **Bilateral Agreement on Social Security** was signed in October 2007 and entered into force in January 2009, given effect on the Irish side by Social Welfare (Agreement With the Republic of Korea on Social Security) Order 2008.[17] Its scope covers State pensions, widows' pensions, guardian's payments, invalidity pensions, and their Korean counterparts. Social-insurance contributions paid in one country count toward benefit entitlement in the other. An Irish national posted to Korea by an Irish employer can remain in the Irish social-insurance system for up to five years under detached-worker rules, avoiding double contributions; the symmetric provision applies to Korean nationals posted to Ireland.

The **Working Holiday Programme** took effect on 9 March 2010, with a reciprocal annual quota of up to 800 places in each direction.[18] The programme operates as a government-to-government executive instrument under domestic law on both sides.

A **bilateral air services framework** is in late-stage negotiation between the Irish Department of Transport and the Korean Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport. Direct scheduled passenger services between Dublin and Seoul are not currently operated; annual passenger numbers on indirect itineraries are reported to exceed 22,000.[19] The launch of a non-stop service is anticipated in 2026 at the earliest, with 2027 the more realistic horizon. Korean Air is publicly identified as the most likely operator following its acquisition of Asiana Airlines. On the institutional record retrievable in June 2026, no earlier bilateral aviation instrument has been identified; the framework under negotiation has the character of a first agreement.

D.4 THE 2023 INFLECTION — JOINT ECONOMIC COMMISSION AND TRADE MISSION WEEK

The Joint Economic Commission convened in Seoul on 31 October 2023, the first session since 2017. The JEC is one of three Irish standing Joint Economic Commissions, alongside those with the People's Republic of China and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and convenes between the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment and the Bilateral Economic Affairs Bureau of the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[20] The Commission's intended cadence is biennial. The gap between the 2017 and 2023 sessions reflects the COVID-19 period; a further delay in 2025 reflected wider contextual factors and institutional bandwidth on both sides; the next session is expected in 2027.

The Team Ireland Trade Mission Week took place in Seoul from 1 to 3 November 2023, led by the then Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar.[21] The Taoiseach met President Yoon Suk Yeol. Two corporate Memoranda of Understanding were signed during the mission, in the fintech and energy sectors.[22] The Minister for Further and Higher Education announced an Ireland-Korea English Language Student Alumni Network and a Student Ambassador Scholarship scheme. The mission also carried the political commitments that opened the Korean market to Irish beef.

The Taoiseach extended an invitation for a reciprocal state visit to Ireland by President Yoon. On the institutional record retrievable in June 2026, no such visit took place before the change in the Korean presidency in 2024-2025.

D.5 THE 2024–2026 MINISTERIAL RECORD

When	Engagement
March 2024	Mr Ossian Smyth, Minister of State, represented Ireland at the third Summit for Democracy in Seoul during the St Patrick's Day programme.[23]
September 2024	Ministers Charlie McConalogue and Martin Heydon led an agri-food trade mission to China and Korea. On 6 September 2024, from Deoksugung Palace (덕수궁) in Seoul, they officially launched Irish beef onto the Korean market, and a Joint Declaration of Intent on Sustainable Farm Systems was signed with Vice-Minister Park Beomsu.[24]
March 2025	Ms Hildegarde Naughton, Minister of State attending Cabinet with responsibility for Disability, represented the Government in Korea for St Patrick's Day.[25]
April 2025	Mr Timmy Dooley, Minister of State for Fisheries and the Marine, led Irish participation at the tenth Our Ocean Conference in Busan, announcing Irish commitments of €23.86 million.[26]
June 2025	Minister Martin Heydon led a six-day agri-food trade mission to Korea and Japan: twenty-two Irish companies, with Bord Bia and Enterprise Ireland, timed to the Seoul Food & Hotel exhibition.[27]
March 2026	Mr Sean Canney, Minister of State at the Department of Transport, visited Seoul for St Patrick's Day: bilateral aviation-agreement talks toward direct Dublin-Seoul flights, and engagement on Ireland's approximately €150 million rail-carriage order with Hyundai Rotem.[19]

Table D.2 · State-level engagement in the corridor, 2024–2026.

The beef sequence within that calendar is the corridor's clearest recent market-access story. Political commitments were secured during the November 2023 mission; Korea approved seven Irish processing plants in May 2024 and formally opened its market in June 2024, making Ireland one of only four EU Member States whose beef holds Korean market access (with Denmark, the Netherlands, and France); the first commercial shipments, by ABP Food Group under a long-term agreement with the premium importer K Meat, arrived from August 2024; and the ministerial launch followed in September.[28]

NOTES

Footnotes

1 Constitution of the Korean-Irish Chamber of Commerce and Industry, adopted 12 May 2026, Article 4 (Objectives). The Mission passage distils Article 4; the Constitution holds the formal mandate.

2 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland, "Ireland's Relationship With The Republic Of Korea", ireland.ie; Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Ireland, "Bilateral Relations", overseas.mofa.go.kr; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, country page for Ireland, mofa.go.kr. All sources record diplomatic relations as established on 4 October 1983 (1983년 10월 4일).

3 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, country page for Ireland, mofa.go.kr (recording the Korean Embassy in Dublin as opened on 1987년 7월 10일); Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Ireland, "Location/Contact", overseas.mofa.go.kr.

4 Embassy of Ireland in the Republic of Korea, "Embassy History", ireland.ie; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, country page for Ireland, mofa.go.kr (recording the Embassy of Ireland in Seoul as opened on 1989년 9월 2일).

5 Government of Ireland, *Global Ireland: Ireland's Global Footprint to 2025*, gov.ie; the Ireland House model description follows the Government's canonical framing of the strategy.

6 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland, "Ireland Houses around the world", ireland.ie (twenty Ireland Houses worldwide as of 2026).

7 Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, agri-food attaché network: ten dedicated Irish agriculture posts worldwide following the 2019 expansion, gov.ie; Mr John Higgins is the current resident Agriculture Counsellor in Seoul.

8 EU-Republic of Korea Framework Agreement, signed 10 May 2010, in force 1 June 2014, EUR-Lex.

9 EU-Republic of Korea Free Trade Agreement, signed 6 October 2010, provisional application 1 July 2011, full entry into force 13 December 2015, EUR-Lex.

10 Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, Ireland: positioning of the Korea-EU FTA among the four highest-value EU trade agreements for the Irish economy, enterprise.gov.ie.

11 EU-Republic of Korea Digital Partnership, signed November 2022; Digital Partnership Council operational since 2023; European Commission and EEAS materials.

12 EU-Republic of Korea Green Partnership, signed May 2023; operational programme to 2028; European Commission and EEAS materials.

13 EU-Republic of Korea Security and Defence Partnership, signed November 2024; Korea among the first two Indo-Pacific countries to conclude such a partnership with the EU; European Commission and EEAS materials.

14 EU-Republic of Korea Digital Trade Agreement: negotiations concluded March 2025; signed 10 June 2026 at the eleventh EU-Korea summit, Brussels; European Commission materials, June 2026; Council of the European Union press record.

15 UK-Republic of Korea Free Trade Agreement (continuity), signed 22 August 2019, in force 1 January 2021; upgrade negotiations concluded 15 December 2025, signature pending; UK Department for Business and Trade materials, December 2025.

16 Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income and Capital Gains between Ireland and the Republic of Korea, signed 18 July 1990 in Dublin; Office of the Revenue Commissioners, Ireland, revenue.ie.

17 Bilateral Agreement on Social Security between Ireland and the Republic of Korea, signed October 2007 in Ireland, entered into force January 2009; Social Welfare (Agreement With the Republic of Korea on Social Security) Order 2008, irishstatutebook.ie.

18 Working Holiday Programme between Ireland and the Republic of Korea, effective 9 March 2010; Department of Justice (Ireland) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Korea) materials.

19 Department of Transport (Ireland), St Patrick's Day 2026 Ministerial visit to Seoul, gov.ie; Korean and Irish press coverage of bilateral aviation-agreement talks; Ireland's approximately €150 million rail-carriage order with Hyundai Rotem; indirect-itinerary passenger figure reported in Irish aviation press, 2025.

20 Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, Joint Economic Commission communiqué, 31 October 2023, enterprise.gov.ie; the JEC is one of three Irish standing Joint Economic Commissions (with the People's Republic of China and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia).

21 Department of the Taoiseach, Team Ireland Trade Mission Week to the Republic of Korea, 1-3 November 2023, gov.ie.

22 Trade Mission Week corporate Memoranda of Understanding: TransferMate / MOIN (fintech, cross-border payments) and SK Ecoplant / Lumcloon Energy (solid-oxide fuel cells; underpinning Europe's first fuel-cell-powered data centre at Castlestown, County Offaly), press records, November 2023; SK Ecoplant agreement records of the period.

23 Department of An Taoiseach and Department of Foreign Affairs, Ministerial representation at the third Summit for Democracy, Seoul, March 2024, gov.ie.

24 Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, agri-food trade mission to China and Korea, September 2024; official launch of Irish beef onto the Korean market on 6 September 2024 at Deoksugung Palace; Joint Declaration of Intent on Sustainable Farm Systems with MAFRA Vice-Minister Park Beomsu, gov.ie.

25 Department of An Taoiseach, St Patrick's Day 2025 Ministerial representation, Seoul, gov.ie.

26 Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and Department of Foreign Affairs, the tenth Our Ocean Conference, Busan, April 2025; Irish commitments of €23.86 million, gov.ie.

27 Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, agri-food trade mission to Korea and Japan, June 2025, with Bord Bia and Enterprise Ireland; timed to Seoul Food & Hotel exhibition, gov.ie.

28 Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Irish beef market access to the Republic of Korea: political commitments November 2023; approval of seven Irish processing plants, May 2024; market opening, June 2024; first commercial shipment by ABP Food Group under long-term agreement with K Meat, August 2024; ministerial launch September 2024.

29 Republic of Korea, Enforcement Decree of the Foreign Investment Promotion Act, amendment of August 2024: explicit national-security screening for foreign investments in firms holding designated national high-tech strategic technologies; *ex officio* screening empowerment. Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy materials.

30 European Commission and the Republic of Korea, Horizon Europe association: Transitional Arrangement effective 1 January 2025; Association Agreement signed July 2025; first Asian country to associate; programmatic access to the €53.5 billion Pillar 2.

31 Republic of Korea, Government Organization Act amendment of 2025: elevation of the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO) to the Ministry of Intellectual Property (MOIP), cabinet rank effective 1 October 2025. World Intellectual Property Organization records the elevation as the first stand-alone Ministry of Intellectual Property in the post-TRIPS period.

32 Government of Ireland, formation of the coalition Government and Cabinet appointments, January 2025; November 2025 reshuffle: Mr Simon Harris (Tánaiste, Minister for Finance); Ms Helen McEntee (Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade); Minister Peter Burke (Enterprise, Tourism and Employment); Minister Martin Heydon (Agriculture, Food and the Marine), gov.ie.

33 Central Statistics Office of Ireland, *Goods Exports and Imports* (PxStat TSA10) and *International Trade in Services* (ITSS) for 2024 and 2025, cso.ie.

34 Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, Ireland, bilateral trade benchmark of "over €5 billion" for 2021, enterprise.gov.ie; CSO time series for 2011–2025 (goods) and 2011–2024 (services).

35 Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), Northern Irish goods exports to the Republic of Korea, 2024, nisra.gov.uk.

36 Central Statistics Office of Ireland, *Goods Exports and Imports* (PxStat TSA10), composition by SITC, 2024 and 2025 vintages, cso.ie.

37 Central Statistics Office of Ireland, *International Trade in Services 2024*, Table 3 (services trade by partner country), cso.ie: Ireland-Korea services 2024 — exports €4,487 million, imports €377 million, surplus €4,110 million.

38 Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Korea, *2026 EU-RoK Trade and Investment Relations*, April 2026, eeas.europa.eu (Eurostat and Bank of Korea data). Services by Member State, 2024: Ireland €4,487 million in exports (21.6 per cent of the EU total, the largest Member-State share), Germany €4,006 million (19.3 per cent), the Netherlands €3,639 million (17.5 per cent), France €2,302 million (11.1 per cent). EU-Korea services trade 2024: €32.9 billion; EU surplus €8.6 billion. FDI 2024: EU stock in Korea €53.0 billion (24.4 per cent of Korea's total, Bank of Korea frame); Korea's stock in the EU €41.8 billion; Ireland's outward stock in Korea €1,881.9 million and Korea's stock in Ireland €153.2 million (Eurostat frame). Goods 2025: EU-Korea trade approximately €124 billion, EU deficit approximately €15 billion; Korea's total exports above US$700 billion for the first time.

39 Central Statistics Office of Ireland, *International Trade in Services 2024*, cso.ie: Ireland's services exports to all Asian markets in 2024 €98.8 billion, of a services-exports total of €483 billion; goods-exports total €224 billion (CSO, *Ireland's Trade in Goods 2024*).

40 Older record: Korean FDI stock in Ireland approximately €570 million as of 2018 and cumulative Korean investment approximately US$6.6 billion as of 2019 (secondary attribution, pending primary confirmation against CSO *Foreign Direct Investment in Ireland* and Bank of Korea statistics).

41 KICCI strategic notes, January 2026, recording operational intelligence from the Embassy of Ireland in the Republic of Korea and Enterprise Ireland's Korea office: approximately 120 Enterprise Ireland-supported companies engaged in the Korean market; approximately 50 Irish-affiliated companies with some form of in-market presence; approximately five established Irish-affiliated subsidiaries. The figures are operational estimates rather than published statistics.

42 Jung, J. (2023). "Heterogeneity in the Korea-EU FTA effects: time, country pairs, and direction of trade." *Open Economies Review* 34(2). The Chamber's reading of the corridor at single-Member-State level takes this peer-reviewed analysis as its grounding for examining Ireland's bilateral position in its own right.

44 Office of the Foreign Investment Ombudsman, published profile; Korea Times coverage of the June 2025 commissioning of Mr Kim Doo-Sik; Shin & Kim corporate communications. Predecessor: Dr Kim Sung-jin (2018-2021).

45 Money Today (머니투데이), 20 March 2023, Dublin-datelined coverage of the Seoul Mayor's visit to Ireland: Memorandum of Understanding between Invest Seoul (서울투자청) and IDA Ireland, signed 16 March 2023 at IDA headquarters.

46 Irish Statute Book, S.I. No. 106/2025, Foreign Affairs (Alteration of Name of Department and Title of Minister) Order 2025, in operation 26 March 2025, irishstatutebook.ie; Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Trade and Promoting Ireland", ireland.ie; Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment renaming per S.I. No. 172/2025; the Market Diversification Action Plan was launched jointly by the two departments in August 2025 (enterprise.gov.ie).

47 Bord Bia coverage of Korea from the agency's Tokyo office (manager responsible for Japan and the Republic of Korea), per Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine trade-mission materials (September 2024; June 2025), gov.ie.

48 Invest Northern Ireland's Seoul presence (two staff co-located with the British Embassy Seoul, funded under the New Deal for Northern Ireland): UK Government announcement, gov.uk. Withdrawal: Invest NI's published international office network ("Our international teams"; Asia Pacific pages, investni.com, as of June 2026) lists Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Tokyo, Singapore, and Sydney, with no Seoul office; the Seoul listing was carried until early 2025 and removed thereafter; Korea coverage sits with the North East Asia regional directorate in Tokyo.

49 Belfast City Council, *Belfast's Korean innovation twin* (29 April 2024), belfastcity.gov.uk; Connected Places Catapult UK-Republic of Korea Innovation Twins Programme, funded by the UK Department for Science, Innovation and Technology.

50 Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry, directory of foreign chambers operating in the Republic of Korea, accessed May 2026; cross-referenced against the chambers' own institutional materials.

51 The Korea Times, "Korea becomes world's No. 2 cosmetics exporter as trade surplus tops $10 bil.", 22 May 2026, koreatimes.co.kr: record cosmetics exports of approximately US$11.4 billion in 2025; Korea overtook the United States as the world's second-largest cosmetics exporter.

52 Irish Examiner interview with Ms Aimee Connolly (Sculpted by Aimee): almost all of the brand's products are manufactured in South Korea, the brand's highest-concentration production base, with the remainder from Italy and Taiwan; the Korean manufacturing relationship dates to the brand's founding. Revenue and growth: The Irish Times and RTÉ, 24 October 2025 (2024 revenue €32.6 million, up 46 per cent; headcount 49 to 91). The identity of the Korean manufacturing partner is not public.

53 Pernod Ricard Korea statements at the "Jameson Madang" launch, Hongdae, March 2024 (Korean business press, etoday and Seoul Economic Daily): Jameson Korean sales volumes grew at an average of approximately 52 per cent per year over the three years to March 2024.

54 Diageo, "Diageo agrees sale of Windsor Global to PT W Co., Ltd." (completed 27 October 2023), diageo.com; Diageo Korea corporate page (import and distribution portfolio including Johnnie Walker and Guinness), diageo.com. Bushmills, the principal Northern Irish distillery, has been owned by Proximo Spirits since 2014 and is imported into Korea by FJ Korea (에프제이코리아).

55 The KICCI bilateral database holds 119 bilateral entries as of 20 May 2026. The consultation's primary sample frame is the 66-entry in-scope cohort produced by the Chamber's scope-filter pass of 19 May 2026 and the all-island refresh of 20 May 2026.

56 Korean beef-import volume (approximately 500,000 tonnes a year; approximately 92 per cent from the United States and Australia in 2024): Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine trade-mission materials, June 2025, gov.ie.

57 Irish Funds (the representative body for the Irish funds industry); Central Bank of Ireland fund-statistics releases. Ireland is, after Luxembourg, the largest European domicile for investment-fund assets, holding approximately 6.5 per cent of global investment-fund assets, with net assets exceeding €5 trillion across more than 9,000 funds and sub-funds as of early 2025; Irish-domiciled private-markets funds stood at approximately €317 billion in mid-2024.

58 Central Statistics Office of Ireland, *International Trade in Services 2024*, cso.ie: computer services €278.7 billion (the single largest export category, approximately 58 per cent of total Irish services exports of €483 billion); business services €94.5 billion; financial services €26.9 billion; the principal driver of the €9 billion 2024 growth in Irish services exports to Asia (to €98.8 billion) was rising computer-services exports.

59 Central Statistics Office of Ireland, *International Trade in Services 2024*, Table 3 (services trade by partner country, cso.ie): publishes Ireland-Korea services trade at aggregate level only, without breakdown by service category. Eurostat's bilateral services-trade releases for the Member-State / Korea relationship are likewise at aggregate level.

60 Danish Chamber of Commerce in Korea (DCCK) inauguration: The Korea Herald, 21 May 2026, interview with inaugural Chair Mr Jan Benggaard ahead of the launch; launch date 26 May 2026. Inaugural Chair: Mr Jan Benggaard, President of Oerlikon South Korea, Danish national, resident in Korea since 1998. Predecessor body: Korean-Danish Business Network (KDBN), operated under the Trade Council at the Danish Embassy in Seoul, now subsumed into the DCCK. Founding cohort of thirty-four members including Maersk, Novo Nordisk, Lego, CS Wind, and Copenhagen Offshore Partners.

NOTICE

Legal disclaimer

This Consultation Paper is a preliminary document, issued to open the Chamber's consultation and to inform it. It is the Chamber's preliminary reading at the date of publication; its findings, figures, and characterisations are provisional and subject to revision as the consultation proceeds. The figures it cites are drawn from the public and institutional sources identified in the footnotes; they are working figures rather than audited statistics. Nothing in this paper constitutes legal, tax, regulatory, or investment advice, and no person should act, or refrain from acting, on the basis of it without taking appropriate professional advice. The views expressed are those of the Korean-Irish Chamber of Commerce and Industry and do not represent the position of any government, agency, or institution named in the text. The Chamber has prepared this paper in good faith and accepts no liability for any loss arising from reliance on it.

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The Korean-Irish Chamber of Commerce and Industry is the working representation of Irish business in Korea, and of the bilateral commercial relationship at the level of the firms that animate it.

KICCI

KOREAN-IRISH CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

한국-아일랜드 상공회의소

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