



At a glance

1. In 2013 Ireland will hold its biggest ever tourism initiative – The Gathering Ireland 2013.
2. *It is a year of Irish connections*
3. *When the people of Ireland will reach out to 70m diaspora around the world and inviting to come to Ireland in 2013 and join in the celebrations specially organised in their honour*
4. So whether Irish born, Irish bred or Irish in spirit – all are welcome to experience Ireland at its very best.
5. It is a countrywide initiative led by the people of Ireland
6. Where Irish people, businesses, organisations and communities will be the main organisers.
7. A year-long celebration of all things great and unique about Ireland and our people.
8. A chance for people at home and abroad to join in, to reunite with friends, family and colleagues.
9. Targeting an additional 325,000 overseas visitors and €170m tourism revenue
10. A chance for a people and a country to relive a glorious past and look forward to a vibrant future
11. Packed calendar of local gatherings and events alongside international festivals, concerts, sporting events, music, drama, literature, dance and loads more
12. Some new events and some familiar but with a much enhanced programme
13. Play your part, make the year your own and host your own Gathering
14. The Gathering Ireland 2013 – making it a year to remember
15. For more visit www.thegatheringireland.com

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Irish translation of The Gathering Ireland 2013?

The official translation for The Gathering Ireland 2013 as Gaeilge is **Tóstal Éireann 2013**.

Where did the idea for The Gathering Ireland 2013 come from?

The idea for The Gathering Ireland 2013 originated at the first Global Irish Economic Forum which took place in Farmleigh in 2009. The objective of the Global Irish Economic Forum was to develop a link with our 70m Diaspora and provide a platform to contribute towards Ireland's renewal. The Gathering Ireland 2013 delivers on both of these objectives.

What is The Gathering Ireland 2013?

The Gathering Ireland 2013 is about the people of Ireland throwing open their arms and inviting anyone with a connection to Ireland to come and visit.

It's about asking anyone who has Irish blood, a link to Ireland, or even just a love of our country – to join us for a series of amazing and diverse events throughout 2013 being organised by the people of Ireland in their honour.

It is an unprecedented year-long celebration of all that is great about Ireland where the Irish people themselves will be the main organisers.

2013 is the year when towns and communities throughout Ireland will be rolling out the red carpet to ensure visitor's experiences are better than ever.

What can people expect from The Gathering Ireland 2013?

In 2013 communities, villages and towns throughout Ireland will be organising exciting local festivals and gatherings to welcome people from all over the world. Organisers can pledge their gathering on www.thegatheringireland.com which will ultimately populate a map of Ireland highlighting their location.

These local festivals and gatherings will be supported by a packed calendar of national and international events which will take place throughout the year focusing on Irish culture, music, the arts, sports & heritage.

The calendar is constantly growing. Among the established festivals that will offer enhanced programmes as part of The Gathering Ireland 2013 are:

- New Year's Eve Festival
- St. Patrick's Festival
- Galway Arts Festival
- Cork Choral Festival
- Dublin Horse Show
- Bloom
- Wexford Opera Festival
- Temple Bar Trad Fest

A number of new festivals and events will also be created exclusively for the Gathering. Discussions are currently taking place around the following:

- *love:live music*, an International Music Day which will attract music lovers from around the world in association with Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann and the Arts Council.
- A new International GAA event with finals held in Croke Park in August.
- A Festival of Football involving overseas clubs and players competing in matches taking place at parks and stadiums around Ireland. Discussions are also taking place to hold a Diaspora World Cup in Ireland.
- Bringing Riverdance back home and introducing a new show with John McColgan and Moya Doherty
- An expanded and multi-venue Christmas and New Year's Festival will end the year with a bang.

Visit www.thegatheringireland.com for the latest news on confirmed events.

Who's invited?

The people of Ireland will be reaching out to their friends, family and loved ones living overseas and inviting them to share in the specially organised gatherings, events and festivals taking place in their honour.

Irish people living overseas will also invite their friends, family and colleagues to come to Ireland in 2013.

There are 70m people around the world that are Irish born, Irish bred or Irish in spirit. So anyone who has an affinity with Ireland or feels a connection to Ireland through business, education or a love of Irish culture or music are invited to join the celebrations in Ireland in 2013.

So what is different about 2013?

2013 is going to be an incredible year in Ireland. Whatever your interest there will be something for you with a packed calendar of local gatherings and events alongside international festivals, concerts etc specially organised in honour of our Diaspora.

The Gathering Ireland 2013 is a unique chance for everyone to join a countrywide, citizen-led initiative reaching out to Ireland's global diaspora and bring them home for an unprecedented year-long celebration. It also offers an opportunity for each and every one of us to play our part in Ireland's renewal; to make a significant contribution to our journey of recovery.

The Gathering Ireland 2013 is unique concept, the scale of which has *never* before taken place in Ireland.

What are the benefits and who will benefit?

Everyone will benefit from The Gathering Ireland 2013. One of the objectives is to revive the sense of pride in our country and give a platform and opportunity to the people of Ireland and their diaspora to show their friends, family and loved ones what they are proud of. It offers Irish people and the Irish diaspora the chance to develop long lasting relationships and a deeper connection with the landscape, culture and country.

It will contribute to restoring Ireland's image internationally as a welcoming country where visitors will receive the 100,000 welcomes that the people of Ireland are renowned for, delivering an authentic experience which differentiates Ireland from other destinations.

The Gathering Ireland 2013 will aim to build a relationship between Ireland, its Diaspora and other business sectors, creating a foundation that Tourism Ireland and Failte Ireland can build on and exploit in the coming years.

Nationally success is an additional **325,000 overseas visitors** to Ireland which will generate an additional **€170 million** in revenue to the Irish economy in 2013 and create 2720 new jobs.

Locally, success can be different between communities.

There are so many facets to this initiative and therefore various stages of success from buy-in at national and local levels to the number of e-invites issued, number of events pledged and the number of Diaspora motivated to travel.

Already, people are engaging on the Gathering Ireland 2013 Facebook pages and visiting the website. People are talking to the Project Team and to each other.

How will we motivate people to get involved?

Momentum and support has been growing. The Gathering Ireland 2013 was launched internationally in 27 cities to 17,000 influencers at 40 events during the St Patrick's Week celebrations and was launched to the tourism industry in April. The new website went live in early April and the Facebook pages and Twitter are a hive of activity.

The Gathering Ireland 2013 community meetings will take place nationwide from May through to October and online supports will be made available to mobilise and facilitate public support for and participation in the initiative.

What will the Project Team do to help people get involved?

Meetings will take place in communities nationwide in summer and autumn 2012 and online supports will be made available. Workshops will be held and 'How To' Guides produced (How to organise an event, How to source local funding etc). E-invites and posters will be made available and organisers will have the facility to pledge their events on www.thegatheringireland.com which will ultimately populate a map of Ireland with the location of all the gatherings and events.

Who's supporting The Gathering Ireland 2013?

Delivery of the full potential of The Gathering Ireland 2013 can only be achieved with the support of some of the most influential Irish and Irish connected organisations and individuals.

- A voluntary 'Council of Champions' has been established, comprising of individuals of significant standing who have the networks, expertise and experience required to activate support and enhance the capacity of The Gathering, including:
 - **Moya Doherty** (Riverdance Producer and co-founder)
 - **Kingsley Aikens** (diaspora specialist and former CEO of the Worldwide Ireland Funds)

- **Mark Mortell** (Director at Fleishman Hillard International Communications, Dublin and former Fine Gael Adviser)
- **Loretta Brennan Glucksman** (Chair of The American Ireland Fund)
- A number of well-known Irish personalities have pledged their support, including Pierce Brosnan, Liam Neeson, Maeve Binchy and Paul O'Connell.

Growing lists of partner organisations are now on board including:

- **CCMA - County and City Managers Association representing the 32 local Authorities around Ireland & the Irish Local Development Network representing the 52 local development companies,**
- **Scouting Ireland, Chambers Ireland**
- **Irish Country Women's Association, ICMSA- Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association, Irish Farmers' Association**
- **Comhaltas Ceoltoirí Eireann, Conradh Na Gaeilge, Ireland Reaching Out, Certificate of Irish Heritage,**
- **Irish Sports Council, IRFU, FAI, GAA, Horse Racing Ireland**
- **Google, Facebook, Microsoft, Hewlett Packard, KPMG, PwC**
- **Irish Hotels Federation, The Doyle Collection, Manor House hotels of Ireland, Irish Tour Operators Association, Restaurants Association of Ireland, Bed and Breakfast Ireland, All Hallows College, Vintners Federation of Ireland and Good Food Ireland.**

How can people in Ireland be part of it?

The Gathering Ireland 2013 is a people's project. It's all about you, your family, your neighbours, your sports club, your college – in fact, whatever community or group you belong to – planning special events that will highlight what is great about that community and Ireland as a whole.

There are so many ways to get involved; whether it is organising family or clan gatherings; school or work reunions; sports competitions; community celebrations or business events.

The Gathering Ireland 2013 wants to make sure everyone tells their family, friends and connections that 2013 is the perfect time to come to Ireland to join in celebrating the best of what Ireland has to offer.

So how do I go about organising a Gathering?

Gathering Community Meetings will take place in each county from the start of June right through to autumn so that people can find out more about The Gathering and how they can get involved. At the meetings people will be encouraged to think about what Gatherings they could organise and who they can invite from overseas. They can then pledge their Gatherings online either on the night or after the meeting.

To support people who wish to organise a Gathering there will be a range of useful tools and supports available online following the meeting to help them to organise their Gathering. The tools and supports will include a series of *How to Guides*, *Ask the Expert* and *Checklists & Tips* for organising Gatherings.

If somebody is not available to attend the Community Meeting or if they have an idea now for a Gathering they can always go on to our website www.thegatheringireland.com for more information.

How can tourism businesses in Ireland be a part of it?

The Gathering provides a platform for Irish tourism businesses and communities to connect with their own local communities and networks around the world. Tourism businesses are being asked to embrace The Gathering Ireland 2013 brand and help spread the word by including information on The Gathering Ireland 2013 in their sales presentations.

They are being encouraged to support their local community events and link in with their local Steering Group. Tourism businesses can also organize their own gatherings and invite past or loyal customers.

How can people overseas be a part of it?

We need everybody to tell family, friends and connections whether through business, associations, clubs or socially that now is the time to plan for 2013, **the** year to visit Ireland or come home.

If you can help influence a club, meeting, conference or any type of event, no matter how big or small, to take place in Ireland, we will support you to do it through online toolkits and supports. We need you to inform *your networks* to help spread the word of The Gathering Ireland 2013 and get people talking about it!

The Gathering Ireland 2013 is a unique opportunity for you to reconnect with your heritage. It is a chance to help lay the foundations for a better future for Ireland, leaving a lasting legacy in the

country of your origin. There will never be a better year to re-connect or indeed experience for the first time all that is great about our wonderful country.

How can Tourism Businesses Overseas be a part of it?

Tourism Businesses overseas are being asked to embrace the brand, spread the word and invite their clients to join in the celebrations in 2013. They can benefit by facilitating ground arrangements for overseas based event organisers and or create new packages around international events and gatherings.

So what can we all do now?

- 1) **Start the conversation** with your families and friends and tell them about The Gathering.
Everyone can be part of it!
- 2) **Start thinking** about what you can do.
- 3) **Listen out** for news of when your Gathering Community Meeting will take place and do come along.
- 4) **Check out our website** www.thegatheringireland.com and register for updates. A bigger and better website will be launched mid-April with toolkits and supports for industry: marketing tools; online promotion; 'how to' guides and expert advice.
- 5) **Find us on Facebook**, like our page and share it with friends
www.facebook.com/thegatheringireland
- 6) **Follow us on Twitter** www.twitter.com/gatheringIRL
- 7) **Watch our new video** www.youtube.com/gathering2013 and stay tuned for our exciting TV advert- it's going to be something really special.