



University of Wales Trinity Saint David

International Business Report

Ireland's Biopharmaceutical Manufacturing Industry and a Critical Evaluation of Pfizer Ireland

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Ireland offers an excellent environment to an international business report since its biopharmaceutical manufacturing base is both national and international in terms of location and operation respectively. The pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical activities in the country are highly concentrated, a significant portion of its export of goods is produced by medical and pharmaceutical products, and numerous of the most significant drugmakers in the world employ Ireland as a manufacturing hub and regulatory gateway to foreign markets (CSO, 2026a; IDA Ireland, 2025a). The industry is not just significant to the Irish manufacturing. It is at the heart of Irish trade performance, regional labour, FDI and the reputability of Ireland long-standing FDI model.

The report states that Ireland has a competitive edge in biopharma which is not just based on tax reputation. Its advantages may be better seen as a combination of high manufacturing power, institutional stability, labour, access to the EU market, depth and path-dependent clustering of suppliers. That reading is more consistent with the international business literature on location-specific benefits as agglomeration and subsidiary embeddedness than a simple tax-arbitrage reading may be (Dunning, 2000; Andersson, Forsgren and Holm, 2001; Siedschlag et al., 2013). However, these advantages are currently accompanied by some major challenges, such as the threat of U.S. tariffs, Pillar Two tax reform, skills shortage, energy-cost issues and increasing competition with the United States and Asia. Pfizer Ireland is selected as the target foreign multinational due to its integration of size, embeddedness over historical and strategic breadth in APIs, sterile injectables, biologics and vaccines. That is why it is an efficient prism through which one can evaluate whether Ireland is still a desirable destination in terms of high-value pharmaceutical production.

Chapter 2: Industry and country overview

The biopharmaceutical manufacturing industry in Ireland is small-molecule active pharmaceutical ingredients, finished dose medicines, biologics drug substance, aseptic fill-finish, vaccines, process development and selected research and business-support activities. The nation has long since left the status of a low-cost export-processing country. According to IDA Ireland, pharmaceutical companies are present in Ireland, with more than 90 companies and approximately 50,000 people working in the industry, whereas 75 large pharmaceutical plants and about one third large biologic manufacturing and aseptic fill-finish plants are located in the country (IDA Ireland, 2025a; IDA Ireland, 2025b).

This is what makes Ireland unique as a small economy: it is not merely a sales market by the biopharma companies but one of the largest production sites in the world.

Some economic significance of the industry is observed in terms of trade information. Medical and pharmaceutical products exports were reported by the Central Statistics Office to have increased by EUR99.7 billion in 2024 to EUR138.6 billion in 2025, with 53.2% of all Irish goods exports being made up in 2025 (CSO, 2026a). This was the highest level of exports of medical and pharmaceutical products in March 2025, which nearly doubled to EUR23.6 billion, nearly two-thirds of total monthly goods exports, as companies rushed to move goods, in case the U.S. would impose possible tariffs (CSO, 2025a; Reuters, 2025a). These figures demonstrate why the industry cannot be regarded as a single manufacturing industry among others. It has a material impact on the growth statistics, domestic and foreign finances in Ireland.

The industry is also important due to the kind of value that it generates. In biopharma, capital intensity, high regulation, specialised engineering, process control and high entry barriers are combined. It endorses high-productivity workforce, pulls in investment in utilities and industrial infrastructure, and creates sharing of knowledge into validation and quality systems, automation, clean utilities, supply-chain management and life-science services. It is mentioned that the industry currently has a total of over 90 firms and is able to employ more than 80,000 people in the area, both directly and indirectly, reflecting the scope of the impact of the sector on the ecosystem past factory doors (BioPharmaChem Ireland, 2025a).

Structurally the industry is multinational to a large extent. The larger players are Pfizer, Johnson and Johnson innovative medicine and Johnson and Johnson med tech, Eli Lilly, MSD, AbbVie, Bristol Myers Squibb, Roche, Novartis, Takeda, Sanofi, AstraZeneca, Amgen and Regeneron and GSK, and indigenous companies which include Chanelle Pharma and specialist Irish-origin process and development companies which act in smaller niches. Foreign MNCs however have the strategic centre of gravity. This is important since competition in Ireland does not take the form of a typical competition between formidable domestic players and foreign entrants. This is primarily competition among multinational operating models that hold various product portfolios, technological depth and international network position.

Relativism in that area is different. Eli Lilly, Regeneron and Amgen are companies that are closely linked to sophisticated biologics and next-generation capacity. The merger of MSD and Pfizer brings

together mature manufacturing depth and export positions that are of significance around the globe. Both Johnson and Johnson and AbbVie have wide-ranged therapeutic portfolios and network diversification. The native companies bring agility, formulation and support services expertise, yet they are not comparable in the scale, regulatory scope or capital intensity of the biggest MNC plants. The competitive implication is that the success of the industries in Ireland will not rely as much on national ownership but rather whether or not the country will continue to be the desirable node in the multinationals production systems.

Pfizer is in a very significant place in this environment. According to Pfizer, it has approximately 3,700 employees working in six locations in Ireland and has invested approximately USD8 billion in Ireland since it opened its operations in Ringaskiddy in 1969 (Pfizer, 2025a). Its Irish presence includes active pharmaceutical ingredients, sterile injectables, vaccines, biologics and shared services; Pfizer Ireland also characterises the country as one of the world-leading manufacturing bases where most of its latest medicines are exported (Pfizer Ireland, 2025a). This is a strategic strength that Pfizer has in Ireland as compared to a firm that uses the country as a one product line firm. It also implies that Pfizer is highly susceptible to the Irish model strengths and weaknesses.

It should also be taken with caution the attractiveness of the industry. The export boom in 2025 does not necessarily imply that every company is as successful. Part of the growth was associated with front-loading before a potential trade cut-off, and not underlying demand of a steady nature (Reuters, 2025a; Reuters, 2025b). Moreover, multinational activity tends to distort the headline GDP of Ireland and therefore sectoral scale can appear even more dominant in macro statistics than it is in the domestic economy (Reuters, 2025c). In the case of business analysis, it is essential that the industry should be assessed in terms of national significance and operational sustainability.

Another more academic interpretation of the industry is that Ireland is viewed as a biopharma hub within global production systems and not as a national success storey. Gugler and Keller (2015) demonstrate that clusters are capable of acting as knowledge-based locations of host in MNE innovation strategy, whereas Sparke, Malmberg and Malpass (2023) emphasise that bio-pharma hubs are constantly recreated by state policy, infrastructure, and conjunctural global demand. That is important in this case since the competitiveness of Ireland is not fixed. It is pegged on whether the nation continues to transform foreign investment into sustainable production, supplier richness and mandate-retention benefits as opposed to its historic fame.

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Table 1. Relative positioning of selected firms in Ireland’s biopharmaceutical manufacturing industry

Firm		Ownership / origin	Core manufacturing role in Ireland		Competitive strength	Positioning insight
Pfizer Ireland		US	APIs, sterile injectables, vaccines, biologics		Scale, embeddedness, diversified product base	Historic anchor investor with broad network role
Eli Lilly Ireland		US	Biologics and high-value drug substance		Advanced biologics capability	Strong in next-generation capacity and expansion logic
MSD Ireland		US	Vaccines, biologics and process-intensive manufacturing		Portfolio breadth and quality systems	Benefits from deep regulatory and production experience
Johnson & Johnson Janssen		US	Drug products and medtech-linked health manufacturing		Global brand, diversified portfolio	Strong network resilience through multiple business lines
Chanelle Pharma		Ireland	Veterinary specialised pharmaceutical products		Local agility and indigenous ownership	Important domestic presence but

far smaller
global reach

Source: author synthesis based on IDA Ireland (2025a; 2025b), Pfizer (2025a), Pfizer Ireland (2025a) and company operations disclosures.

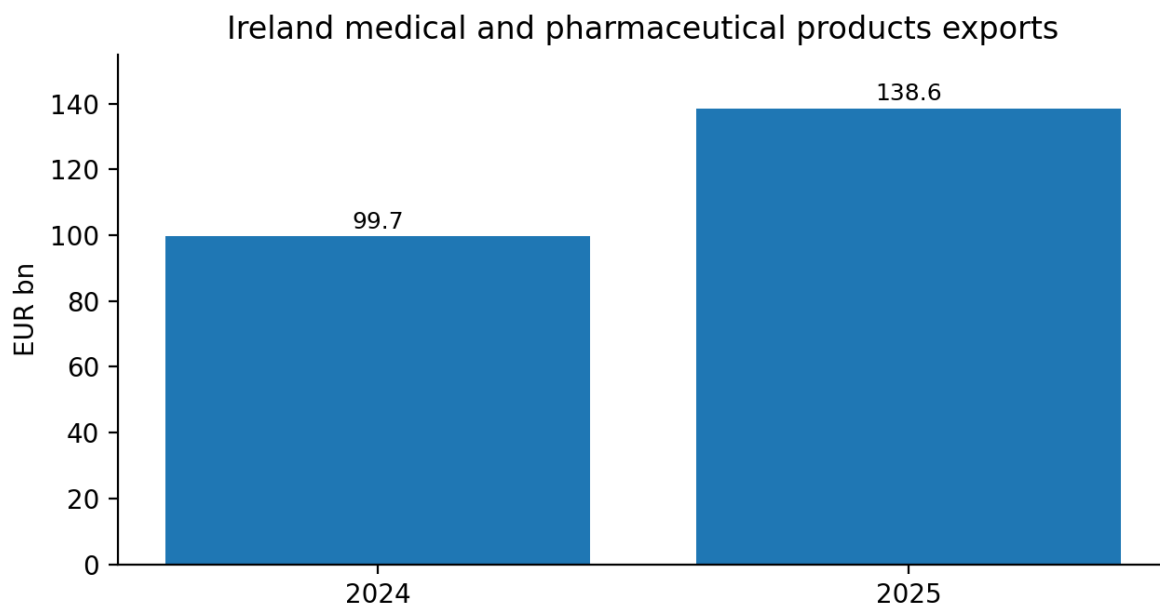


Figure 1. Ireland medical and pharmaceutical products exports, 2024 and 2025. Source: CSO (2026a).

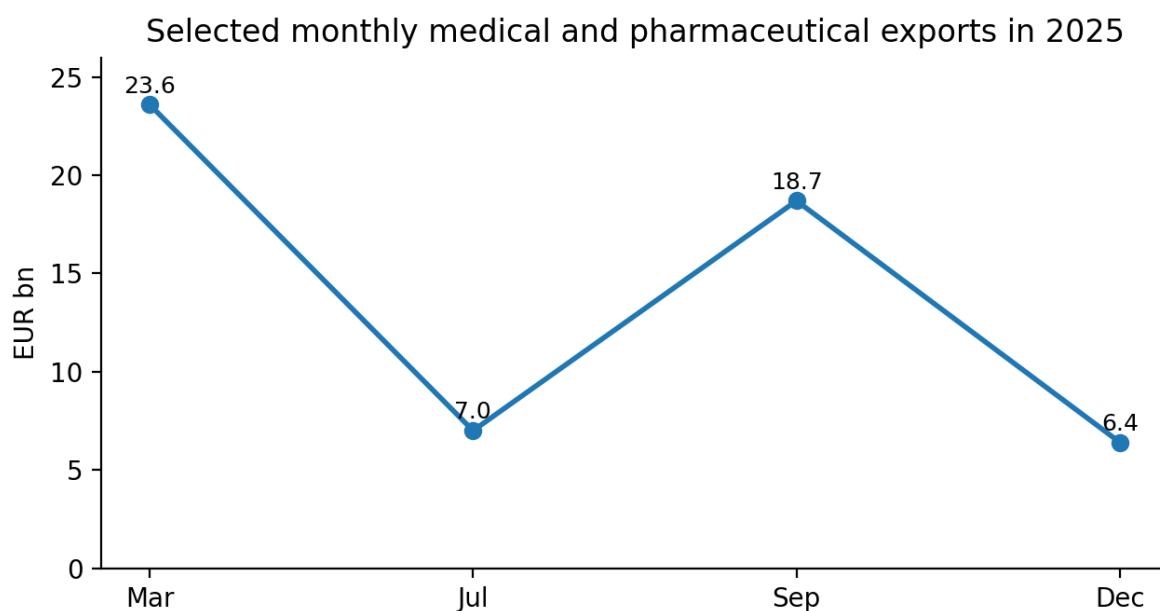


Figure 2. Selected monthly medical and pharmaceutical exports in 2025. Source: CSO (2025a; 2025b; 2025c; 2026a).

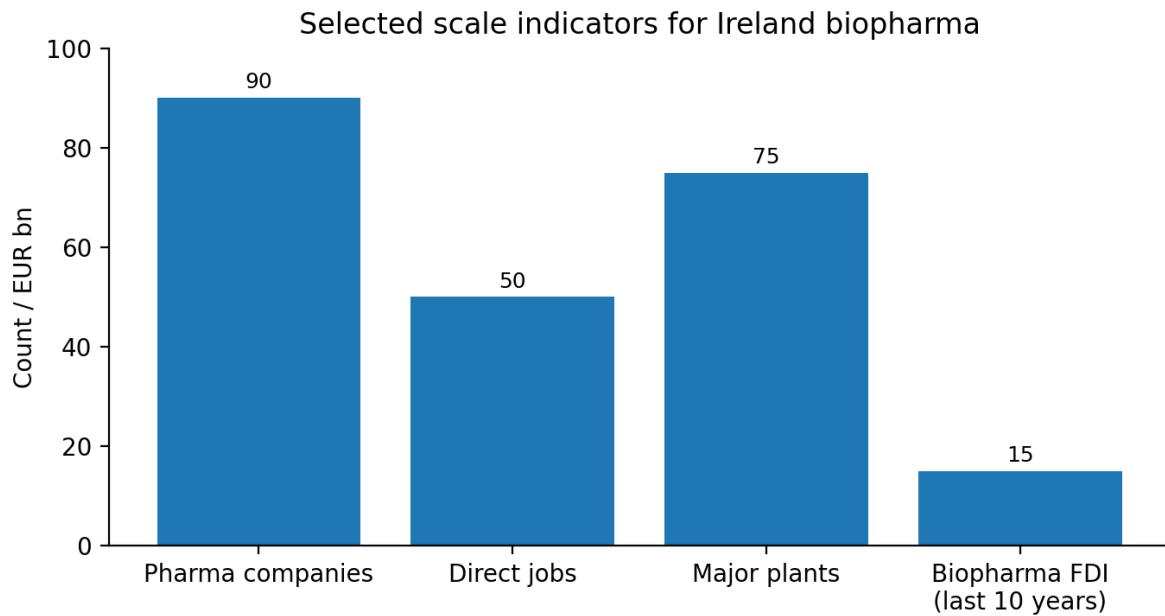


Figure 3. Selected scale indicators for Ireland biopharma. Source: IDA Ireland (2025a; 2025b) and BioPharmaChem Ireland (2025a).

Chapter 3: Porter's Diamond analysis of Ireland's biopharmaceutical competitiveness

The Diamond of Porter is still useful in understanding the reasons why a specific national environment continues to favour internationally competitive industries, but must be carefully modified in a highly globalised and dominated by MNE sector like biopharma. The factors conditions, demand conditions, related and supporting industries, and firm strategy, structure and rivalry were highlighted by Porter (1990). Subsequent studies by Rugman and Verbeke (1993) opined that the framework might undervalue the significance of multinational networks and cross-border integration and Dunning (2000) clarified that host-country advantage should be ultimately considered alongside the use of firm-specific ownership advantages and internalisation logic. Ireland is an ideal example of a country when all three claims can be applied. The nation obviously has advantages that are embedded at the national level, but these advantages are only commercially effective due to Ireland being hooked up into European regulation, global supply chains and multinational production systems.

The first strength is factor conditions. Ireland has ready access to skilled English-speaking labour force, excellent connexion to tertiary educational levels, deep experience in the controlled manufacturing, and accrued experience in validation, quality control, process formation, and

conformity. They are sophisticated, artificially made factors and not natural endowments. They have been constructed over decades in terms of FDI, policy support and repeat reinvestment. According to IDA Ireland, biopharma FDI of over EUR15 billion in the past ten years, and the build-up is significant, since it generates path dependence: once plants, suppliers, engineers and regulators get to know each other, it becomes difficult to replicate a location elsewhere in a short time (IDA Ireland, 2025b). The given interpretation aligns with the results of Siedschlag et al. (2013) who identify that agglomeration, human capital and proximity to research excellence centres enhance the multinational R&D location decisions. That is, the factor advantage of Ireland is not just labour supply. It is co-location of capabilities, credibility and problem-solving ability.

The factor advantages of Ireland are not free. Specific technical functions are short of talent, and the industry analysis of future skills is expecting significant and further demand of highly skilled employees (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2024). The Irish manufacturing conditions reported by Reuters at the end of 2025 also stated that skills shortages were limiting hiring as wages and energy costs became points of pressure (Reuters, 2025d). This implies that Ireland competes based on the capability and reliability, and not on low labour cost. It is a healthy stance in high-regulation biopharma though it increases the bar companies have to overcome to warrant new investment.

Another source of advantage is related and supporting industries. An extensive ecosystem has developed around cleanroom development, process automation, engineering services, validation, logistics, legal services, quality consulting and training specialist. The number of about 90 companies that are the members of BioPharmaChem Ireland also reflects the level of how the sector is now integrated into a broader industrial and policy community (BioPharmaChem Ireland, 2025b). The supporting base is not ideal and Ireland continues to import big volumes of specialised inputs but coordination costs of doing business in the nation are reduced compared to what it would be in a slimmer ecosystem. The latter can be supported by cluster studies that indicate that MNEs tend to co-locate in knowledge-intensive settings since being close to each other enhances learning, recruitment, and mandate development throughout the years (Gugler and Keller, 2015; le Duc and Lindeque, 2018).

Competitors are also enhanced by firm strategy, structure and rivalry. Ireland enjoys a high competition among the major American, European and Japanese life-science companies. It is not just domestic sales that the rivalry is fought. It also relates to the location in each global network of

biologics lines, API capacity, fill-finish facilities, digital upgrades and products that are important to quality. Intra-network and inter-network competition over mandates then becomes domestic rivalry in the Porters sense. This is useful as it makes the Irish operations remain ahead in compliance, productivity and reliability. A plant in Ireland cannot count on the embeddedness of yesterday, it is forced to win the next product, the next upgrade of a process.

Government is more dominant as compared to the four original determinants as proposed by Porter. These strengths of the industry are supported by a long-term investment in FDI, membership in the EU single-market, regulatory credibility, industry planning, and training cooperation. Meanwhile, the environment is getting increasingly demanding. Since the 2024 tax year, Ireland undertook the OECD Pillar Two minimum effective tax rate of the in-scope large groups in which a domestic top-up tax is also provided (Government of Ireland, 2023; Revenue, 2025). That is not canceling out Ireland allure, only modifies benefit make-up. Tax is becoming less singular, skills and infrastructure, energy security and depth of ecosystem count.

The most persuasive conclusion is consequently that Ireland has a globally competitive biopharmaceutical cluster though rather one that can be most aptly thought of as a networked national advantage. Its advantages are factual: factor conditions constructed, regulatory credibility, depth of ecosystem, multinational rivalry and policy consistency. Its drawbacks are also quite evident: overreliance on overseas companies, low domestic consumption, shortage of talents, exposure to imported energy and susceptibility to U.S. trade and tax politics. The diamond can be used to understand why Ireland has become so competitive, but the only way to get this competitiveness is to have changed the reading so that the extent to which Ireland is competitive is that which relies on keeping Ireland in pharmaceutical networks across the globe, as well as on the constant renewal of location advantages which other states are now actively attempting to copy.

Table 2. Summary application of Porter’s Diamond to Ireland’s biopharmaceutical industry

Diamond dimension	Evidence in the Irish case	Critical implication
Factor conditions	Skilled labour, validated manufacturing capability, deep FDI path dependence	High-quality advantage, but constrained by talent and energy costs

Demand conditions	Domestic market small; discipline comes from EU and U.S. regulatory and commercial demand	Diamond works best when demand is read as regional and global
Related industries	Engineering, quality, automation, logistics and professional services clustered around major plants	Ecosystem lowers coordination costs and raises resilience
Rivalry and strategy	Competition among leading MNCs for product mandates and reinvestment	Continuous pressure to upgrade productivity and compliance
Government and chance	FDI supports, EU access, Pillar Two, tariff uncertainty and U.S. policy exposure	Competitiveness is stable but strategically exposed

Source: author synthesis based on Porter (1990), Rugman and Verbeke (1993), Government of Ireland (2023), Revenue (2025), CSO (2025a; 2026a), IDA Ireland (2025b) and Reuters (2025a; 2025b; 2025e).

Chapter 4: Critical evaluation of Pfizer Ireland

One of the most efficient methods to evaluate Pfizer Ireland is to apply PESTLE logic and CAGE framework with the OLI paradigm of Dunning in mind. PESTLE demystifies the external forces behind the market attractiveness, CAGE assists us in comprehending why a U.S. based multinational could still experience significant administrative, economic and strategic distance even when it is operating in a culturally familiar English speaking nation, and OLI reminds that the success of any host country relies on how the host country location specific assets interact with the firm specific capabilities of Pfizer (Ghemawat, 2001; Dunning, 2000). The reason is that the performance of Pfizer in Ireland cannot be ascribed to the conditions in the country. It also indicates the embedded nature of the subsidiary, scope of the products, mandate and ability of the subsidiary to translate the local benefits into network-based relevance.

This is a significant difference in the subsidiary literature. Andersson, Forsgren and Holm (2001) believe that external embeddedness may assist subsidiaries to gain competence, whereas Collinson and Wang (2012) indicate that innovation capability may emerge due to dual embeddedness within local and internal networks of MNEs. In the case of Pfizer Ireland, this means that attractiveness does not only involve entering Ireland. It is concerning the question of whether Irish sites still roster

sufficient strategic worth, educational and performance dependability to triumph future items and investment in comparison to sister sites in other systems of Pfizer around the world.

In politics, Ireland continues to be appealing since it provides continuity of the institution, protection of property-rights, pro-investment state and an administration that has severally given priority to life sciences. IDA Ireland still positions biopharma as one of the key national industries and provides grants, R&D incentives and ecosystem development to promote reinvestment (IDA Ireland, 2025c). In the case of Pfizer, it implies that the host country tends to desire the company to grow as opposed to being there. That can eliminate the arbitrary political risk and enhance the credibility of long-horizon capital planning.

Political attractiveness, however, has become conditional as it was previously. Potential U.S. tariffs and drug manufacturing repatriation were listed as some of the most severe external economic threats to Ireland in 2025 (Reuters, 2025b; Reuters, 2025e). This is of great importance to Pfizer that is located right on the border between the pharmaceutical crossover of the U.S. and Ireland. This can be an asset to the company, because it is able to manufacture in Ireland to supply its markets worldwide but on the other hand, the same logic of cross-border applies that, it will be vulnerable in case the U.S. industrial policy shifts towards a more outright protectionist stance. According to Reuters, the percentage of Irish pharmaceutical exports of finished products is only 16% and about 75 percent of goods produced by multinational companies in Ireland are exported not to North America, and it slightly dampens the effect, but it does not eliminate the political message that domestic manufacturing in the U.S. is receiving priority (Reuters, 2025f).

Ireland is still very favourable to Pfizer economically. The nation has a history of successful life-science cluster, consistent regulatory framework, export infrastructure of high value, a pool of skilled labour and geographical access to the single market in the EU. These are not hypothetical benefits; Pfizer has been in Ireland long enough to indicate that it has funded commercially useful production requirements numerous times. According to the company materials on the country, the country is a major global manufacturing hub of Pfizer which includes APIs, solid dose, sterile injectables, vaccines and biopharmaceuticals (Pfizer Ireland, 2025a). Such a breadth reduces the reliance on one type of product and provides Pfizer with operational flexibility.

However, there is also a limit to the economic case. Ireland is costly as a manufacturing destination when wage and utility differentials are compared on a simple basis and the industry is becoming more

outspoken regarding competition pressures. The secure grid capacity and affordable cost of energy has been emphasized by IDA Ireland as a factor in retaining and expanding FDI, with BioPharmaChem Ireland claiming that a large part of its recent investment in renewable technologies contributing to the situation is partly due to the increased importance of energy as a strategic cost and sustainability factor (IDA Ireland, 2026; BioPharmaChem Ireland, 2025c). In the case of Pfizer, that implies that Ireland is a high-reliability, but not a low-cost, platform of production. Further investment should thus be pegged on productivity, quality, regulatory confidence and network centrality.

Volatility in the macro picture is another economic problem. This massive increase in exports of Irish pharmaceuticals in early 2025 contributed to a sudden jump in the headline GDP, but both Reuters and CSO clarified that this was in part due to front-loading related to tariffs and flows by the multinationals that distort national numbers (CSO, 2025a; Reuters, 2025c). This has an implication at the company level: it can be easy to conceal planning risk behind the facade of national success. Pfizer needs to evaluate not only the current profitability of Ireland, but also the sustainability of patterns of volume and taxation that can be used in planning the allocation of assets in the future.

Ireland was one of the strongest countries where Pfizer was legally. The nation is a mix of EU regulatory coherence, effective intellectual-property protection, enforceability of contracts and well-developed compliance atmosphere. These legal features in a highly controlled industry are not peripheral, they constitute part of the production functionality. The integrity of documentation is very important to a plant that produces sterile injectables or components of a vaccine rather than its physical capability. Ireland has a long history with multinational life-science manufacturing, and this factor makes it less likely that it will face legal uncertainty than less developed destinations.

The situation with the law is however evolving. The adoption of the OECD Pillar Two regime of large groups implies that Ireland famous 12.5% corporation tax cannot be the one-stop shop anymore to the very large multinationals. The investment proposal is more complicated because Ireland has an effective 15% rate on in-scope businesses and the associated domestic top-up regulations (Government of Ireland, 2023; Revenue, 2025). In the case of Pfizer this may not be a reason to exit. Indeed, the Irish embeddedness of the company, its sunk assets and capabilities indicate that switching costs are high. However, the transformation minimises the complacency. Ireland now has to compete more visibly in terms of infrastructure, people, ecosystem and operational excellence.

Ireland is culturally among the less challenging European locations where a U.S. multinational can operate. The language and corporate norms are relatively similar, the familiarity with U.S. capital is longstanding and the environment of the professional services feels comfortable with U.S. business practises. Cultural and administrative distance between the United States and Ireland in the context of Ghemawat is less than in most other manufacturing jurisdictions (Ghemawat, 2001). This is important to Pfizer since cross-site communication, alignment of governance and change of leaders have become simpler in case the day to day organisational assumptions are widely compatible.

The most powerful general judgement is thus a moderate instead of a celebrative one. Ireland is still extremely appealing to Pfizer due to the combination of sunk operational richness, access to the EU market, legal predictability, talented individuals and rich life-science environment. The said strengths are not insignificant and they are one of the reasons why Pfizer still speaks of Ireland as a major manufacturing hub in the world. The future appeal of the location is however determined by the active management of the risks that are largely external to individual plants: U.S. tariff politics, Pillar Two tax implications, energy competitiveness, infrastructure provision and talent supply. Ireland continues to have good location advantages in the OLI terms; however the sustainability of these advantages will be determined by whether they still complement the ownership-specific and internalisation advantages that Pfizer has better than other jurisdictions can.

The last strategic point is Pfizer-specific capability. Multinational success relies on the benefits of the firm even in an attractive host country. Pfizer has a long history, spread of its products across different locations and integration with global supply chains, which makes it better placed than a newcomer to absorb shocks and negotiate favourable terms. The strength in that firm that is specific should not be mixed with immunity. Unless the U.S. industrial policy ceases to push offshore pharmaceutical manufacturing, or competing jurisdictions can provide more aggressive incentives on biologics, Pfizer can continue to restructure its future requirements. The most justifiable finding is that Ireland still is a high-quality location to Pfizer, but that to sustain the status, the country will have to further localise value-added operations, invest in digital and sustainability, and be responsive to the policies of the Irish state. The important point is that embeddedness needs to continue generating new strategic relevance; historic presence will not be sufficient bilateral guaranty to generate future mandates.

Table 3. PESTLE-style assessment of Pfizer Ireland in the Irish biopharmaceutical market

Factor	Opportunity for Pfizer	Risk for Pfizer	Judgement
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Political	Stable, pro-investment state and strong life-science policy support	Exposure to U.S. tariffs and reshoring politics	Attractive but externally exposed
Economic	Dense cluster, export infrastructure, skilled workforce and EU access	High costs, energy pressure and talent constraints	Strong platform, not a low-cost base
Legal	Reliable IP, EU regulation, mature compliance environment	Pillar Two narrows tax advantage and raises scrutiny	Legal strength remains a major asset
Cultural / administrative	Low distance from U.S. business culture and strong institutional familiarity	Talent retention depends on wider living-cost pressures	Favourable and manageable
Environmental / technological	Decarbonisation and digital upgrades can deepen competitiveness	Utility, grid and sustainability investments must continue	Requires continuous upgrading

Source: author synthesis based on Pfizer (2025a; 2025b), Pfizer Ireland (2025a), Government of Ireland (2023), Revenue (2025), IDA Ireland (2025c; 2026), BioPharmaChem Ireland (2025c), Reuters (2025b; 2025e; 2025f), Ghemawat (2001) and McSweeney (2002).

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The biopharmaceutical manufacturing sector in Ireland is among the most obvious of small economies that have managed to gain disproportionate global competitiveness by building cumulative rather than market size advantages. The export of the sector, the intensity of plants, the presence of multinationals and the scope of ecosystems indicates that Ireland has become the strategically central location in the production of pharmaceuticals throughout the world. This can be best described as a modified reading of the Diamond by Porter: the nation is a blend of supportive factor conditions, well-developed supporting industries, stiff multinational competition and institutional stability, and yet its success also relies heavily on the regional and international networks instead of local demand.

Pfizer Ireland represents the advantages, as well as the weaknesses, of that model. The company is favoured by high levels of local embeddedness, extensive manufacturing presence, minimal cultural

and administrative distance between the company and its U.S. parent and a host country environment that is well-regarded both in terms of legal and administrative credibility. Simultaneously, its potential success in Ireland is determined by those forces which extend beyond local plant performance, such as U.S. trade policy, tax reform, energy costs and the supply of specialised talent. Ireland is thus very appealing platform to Pfizer, yet not a naturally favourable one. It is no longer as competitive as it used to be based on reputation of the past but rather on the ongoing infrastructure, skills, sustainability and strategic responsiveness. What is most convincing is that Ireland remains one of the most competitive destinations in the world to carry out complicated pharmaceutical production, but to stay in that role, both the companies and the government must consider competitiveness as a thing that needs to be learned and not inherited.

Chapter 6: Reflective account using Gibbs' reflective cycle

Description.

The initial key choice in conducting the research on this assignment was the choice of the topic. I needed a country-industry couple that would enable strong analysis of public-data, enable me to use Porters Diamond without being formulaic, and an important foreign MNC whose activities were significant enough to critique with a critical 2,000-word analysis. The manufacturing biopharmaceutical industry in Ireland had fulfilled these needs quite well. It provided good official trade statistics, high concentration of multinational companies, policy controversies and an apparent centre of interest in Pfizer. I thus organised the work in four phases, namely, scoping the sector, constructing an evidence base, selecting the right theoretical lenses and then writing the argument section at a time.

Feelings.

My confidence at the beginning was with regard to the significance of the topic and the two dangers. The first was the fact that the success of the pharmaceutical in Ireland had a temptation of making me write a descriptive success storey instead of a report on the same. The second was that the high export levels in 2025 might give a biased analysis in case I assumed temporary front-loading effects as permanent strength. These fears came in handy since they compelled me to doubt the quality of each source rather than gathering data mechanically.

Evaluation.

Triangulation was one of the most efficient elements of the process. Authority, timing and credibility was availed through the official sources like the CSO and government publications. The institutional and industrial context was explained with the assistance of IDA Ireland and BioPharmaChem Ireland. Sources of Pfizer company explained the footprint of the company, and Reuters reported on tariff risk, export volatility and policy debates up-to-date. The mixture of these types of sources allowed me to shift between mere facts and strategic interpretation. Another strength was that the topic per se enabled a high-quality fit between evidence and theory. Porter Diamond, PESTLE and Cage were never introduced artificially; they actually assisted in explaining the case.

The other lesson I learned was the importance of applying theory, and not just implementing it. Porters diamond appeared initially to be an appropriate choice since Ireland is evidently a good export cluster. But after I juxtaposed the theory and the evidence, I came to realise that merely having a national reading could not suffice. The contribution of U.S. demand, EU regulation and multinational network choices implied that the study by Rugman and Verbeke would have to be included in the analysis, and the OLI logic proposed by Dunning made it clear why the attractiveness of the host country can only make a difference when it supplements firm-specific advantages. This enhanced the report since I was not tempted to generalise the competitiveness in Ireland as a domestic issue. The same problem occurred with the company analysis. The secondary sources on embeddedness and the development of capabilities assisted me in going beyond a generic PESTLE discussion and consider why certain Irish operations have higher chances of retaining or gaining mandates in global pharmaceutical networks than others (Andersson, Forsgren and Holm, 2001; Collinson and Wang, 2012). The same warning was received by cultural analysis. I could have done an easy generalisation about the national-culture concepts but that criticism of McSweeney brought back to my mind that organisational reality weakens cultural explanations when it simplifies them to national stereotypes. I instead concentrated on the familiarity of the institutions, socialisation of the workforce and legitimacy of the managers.

Analysis.

The reflective cycle proposed by Gibbs is helpful as it takes reflection further than chronology of actions and explanation of why certain decisions led to the better or weaker work in the end (Gibbs, 1988). The primary lesson of this assignment was that the quality of the international business analysis largely relies on the discipline of source hierarchy. Industry size and macro importance were vital data that could not be used alone to explain competitiveness. Reuters came in quite useful with

identifying tension at the moment like threats of tariffs and front-loaded exports, however news alone might have overemphasised on short run drama. The academic theory was thus required not as ornamentation but as a filter which could separate the structural drivers and temporary noise.

Another lesson that the process taught me is to be more aware of the distinction between market appeal and company success. It is evident that Ireland is a very attractive biopharmaceutical destination, but that does not mean that all multinationals will grow in it indefinitely. Pfizer attractiveness calculus is based on its assets base, its world-wide network and U.S. and European policy changes. This difference contributed to making the company section more critical. Instead of thinking that a good host environment guarantees a good subsidiary, I viewed success as a factor of country and firm capabilities.

Conclusion.

On the whole, the writing and research process enhanced my skill to shift towards evidence-based strategic judgement. Early topic discipline was the greatest advantage of the final report, as it triangulated the sources and was willing to test instead of merely congratulate the prevailing discourse about the success of Irish pharmaceutical. To further enhance the process, I would develop a more official evidence matrix initially and rank each of the sources based on purpose, recency and analytical value. It would be less difficult to prevent the collection of interesting but not necessary material.

Action plan.

The next step that I would take in my international business assignment in future is to prepare a source map in which I would divide official statistics, company disclosures, academic literature and current-affairs reporting, and only then start drafting it. I would also give provisional analytical claims to each section above; thus, the evidence collection is still attached to argument instead of turning into a descriptive collection. Lastly, I would still apply reflective models like Gibbs since they bring to light the rationale of the research choices and show where analytical confidence rests on evidence and where it may lie excessively in intuition.

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