



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

A New Era for Irish Tourism

National Tourism Policy Statement

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Enterprise, Tourism and Employment
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Foreword Minister Peter Burke



As Minister for Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, I am proud to present **A New Era for Irish Tourism – National Tourism Policy Statement**, developed by my Department. This statement sets out a clear and ambitious vision for the future of Ireland’s tourism sector, identifying strategic priorities that will guide its continued growth and development over the coming years.

Tourism is one of Ireland’s most vital indigenous industries. It is a cornerstone of regional economies, supporting thousands of small and medium-sized enterprises across the country. It generates significant revenue, sustains employment, and drives development in both urban centres and rural communities. Beyond its economic contribution, tourism is a powerful vehicle for showcasing Ireland’s rich heritage, vibrant culture, and world-renowned hospitality, strengthening our global reputation and deepening international connections.

Looking ahead, my priority is to maintain the strong momentum we’ve built and to ensure that every region of Ireland benefits from tourism’s growth. I firmly believe that untapped potential exists in many parts of the country, and this policy is designed to unlock that opportunity. We are operating in a complex global environment in 2025, marked by geopolitical instability and economic uncertainty. These challenges demand resilience, innovation, and strategic foresight from our tourism sector.

The Programme for Government, *Securing Ireland’s Future*, commits to ensuring that all communities thrive by 2030. It sets out a vision for a competitive, balanced economy that delivers for every region. This policy statement aligns with that vision, placing tourism firmly within the enterprise, tourism and employment agenda. It outlines a five-year strategic framework that prioritises support for tourism SMEs, recognises the sector’s economic significance, and promotes inclusive, sustainable growth. Recently I was pleased to introduce several targeted measures, including a reduction in VAT for hospitality which is particularly important for small and family-run businesses who operate on very low profit margins.

Our overarching objective is to ensure that tourism contributes meaningfully to broader government goals, climate action, digital transformation, competitiveness, market diversification, and regional balance. The policy addresses key capacity constraints on the sector, including accommodation, visitor access, skills development, and access to finance. It also places a strong emphasis on sustainability, innovation, and community wellbeing.

Importantly, this policy statement highlights culinary tourism as a key driver of regional and year-round tourism. We are committing to the development of a dedicated Culinary Tourism Strategy to enhance the quality of Ireland's food offering and meet rising international and domestic expectations.

Ireland's tourism offering is world class, rooted in our breathtaking landscapes, cultural richness, and warm hospitality. Protecting these assets is both an environmental imperative and an economic necessity. We must also support those whose livelihoods depend on tourism, by reducing administrative burdens, fostering innovation, and enabling digital transformation for SMEs.

I am confident that the strategic objectives outlined in this policy will deliver real economic benefits, strengthen local communities, and sustain long-term employment. By continuing to develop our Shared Island tourism offerings, supporting rewarding careers, and enhancing regional tourism distribution, we can fully realise the sector's potential.

Effective implementation will be key. This will require close collaboration across Government Departments, state agencies, local authorities, and the private sector. The tourism industry itself must lead the way, embracing the policy's objectives to secure sustainable growth that benefits businesses, workers, and communities alike.

I wish to sincerely thank all those who contributed to the development of this policy statement, particularly Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland, for their commitment to strengthening Ireland's tourism industry. Together, we can ensure that tourism remains a pillar of our economic prosperity, delivering opportunity, employment, and sustainable growth for all.



Peter Burke,
Minister for Enterprise,
Tourism and Employment

Acronym Key

Artificial Intelligence	AI
Business to Business	B2B
Central Statistics Office	CSO
County and City Management Association	CCMA
Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment	DETE
Destination & Experience Development Plans	DEDPs
Electric Vehicle	EV
Environmental Protection Agency	EPA
European Digital Innovation Hubs	EDIH
Expert Group on Future Skills Needs	EGFSN
European Union	EU
Great Britain	GB
Local Enterprise Office	LEO
Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events	MICE
National Adaptation Framework	NAF
National Aviation Policy	NAP
National Biodiversity Action Plan	NBAP
National Parks and Wildlife Service	NPWS
National Planning Framework	NPF
Night-time economy	NTE
Office of Public Works	OPW
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	OECD
Programme for Government	PfG
Regional Enterprise Plan	REP
Small and Medium sized Enterprise	SME
Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland	SEAI
Union of European Football Associations	UEFA
United Kingdom	UK
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation	UNESCO
United States	US
Value Added Tax	VAT



01

Summary



Tourism is one of Ireland's key economic sectors, accounting for close to 1 in 10 of all jobs in the economy and a critically important indigenous employer with 46,000^{1,2} tourism related enterprises. CSO data shows foreign earnings of over €6bn from tourism in 2024 and it is estimated that overseas visitors account for three quarters of the total tourism spend in the economy.

The PfG Securing Ireland's Future includes a commitment to “develop a new national tourism policy to 2030 setting out a vision to grow visitor and employment numbers in the sector across Ireland”.

Following the transfer of functions to the Minister and Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, the Minister has engaged in a wide-ranging consultation with stakeholders and the tourism development and promotion agencies to prepare this National Tourism Policy Statement – A New Era for Irish Tourism.

This new policy statement articulates the Government's vision for a strong, resilient, and growing tourism sector that benefits to communities across the country. It sets out a clear ambition to enhance tourism's economic contribution, support balanced regional development, and ensure the industry remains inclusive, sustainable, and adaptable to future challenges.

The policy statement also reflects the positioning of tourism within the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, reinforcing its role as a key driver of economic growth, job creation, and balanced regional development. The policy statement:

- Responds to the Government's broader ambition to diversify Ireland's tourism offering and source markets;
- Places greater emphasis on regional development and developing our less mature tourism destinations;
- Outlines a range of supports available to boost the competitiveness of the tourism related hospitality sector and initiatives to boost the attractiveness of Ireland's quality food offering from a tourism perspective; and,
- Places the competitiveness of SMEs in tourism related activities at the heart of our developmental approach so the sector continues to contribute meaningfully to Ireland's economic wellbeing.

1 We know a lot of employment is accounted for within accommodation and food (74%), but also in transport, and cultural and recreational activities. Using data from the Labour Force Survey, the figure extrapolates tourism employment forward to 2025 based on trends in the accommodation and food sector.

2 [Irish Tourism Sector 2019 \(Tourism Satellite Account\) - Central Statistics Office](#)



Government has already made a number of significant commitments to supporting the tourism sector in 2025, including additional enabling and promotional investments under the revised National Development Plan, the reduction in the VAT rate for food and catering services to 9% from July next year announced by the Minister for Finance in Budget 2026 and the Minister for Transport's commitment to address the Dublin airport passenger cap.

This policy statement recognises Ireland's unique offering and potential as a tourism destination and sets the following ambitious targets:

- Overseas tourism revenue to grow to €9 billion by 2031 representing a 50% increase on €6bn in 2024 (+6% on average per annum excluding carrier fares);
- Domestic³ tourism revenue to grow to €5.8 billion by 2031 with an annual growth of 7% on average per annum in domestic overnight trip revenue from €3.6bn in 2024. The target for overseas and domestic revenues combined is to increase from €9.6bn to €14.8bn by 2031;
- A minimum annual increase of 7% in visitor numbers in less mature tourism destinations;
- At least 250,000 employed in tourism industries by 2031 (up from 228,800 in 2024); and
- At least 90% of tourism-related SMEs adopting advanced digital tools by 2031.

³ In line with the CSO definition, domestic tourism is defined as the activities of residents of Ireland travelling to and staying in places only within Ireland but outside their usual environment. For more information see [Household Travel Survey - CSO - Central Statistics Office](#)

This policy statement outlines Ireland's strategic direction for tourism over the next six years, placing a strong developmental emphasis on supporting tourism SMEs and businesses and recognising the sector's significant economic contribution at national and local level.

The overall objective of this policy statement is to ensure that the tourism and related sectors support the broader goals of government, including climate action, digital transformation, competitiveness, market diversification and balanced regional development. It reflects tourism's strategic repositioning within the enterprise, tourism and employment agenda. It is focused on reinforcing the sector's contribution to economic resilience, regional development, and community wellbeing. It prioritises sustainability, innovation, and inclusive growth across all regions and addresses capacity constraints in the market including on accommodation, visitor access, skills and access to finance.

The key policy commitments in the policy statement include:

- Grow our strategic source markets and value-adding visitors by deepening and defending our key North American and GB markets, and growing and diversifying our Mainland Europe, Gulf and Asian markets. This will include increasing Tourism Ireland resources in those markets and supporting connectivity from strategic source markets through a new Strategic Air Access Programme;
- Develop a balanced regional spread of tourism throughout the country, prioritising investment in less mature tourism destinations. Delivery of other PfG commitments such as the Year of the Invitation, Ireland of Islands and Marine Tourism will also be supported;
- Enhance seasonal distribution through a focus on initiatives that provide year-round attractions for visitors including investing in festivals such as 'Home of Halloween' and strengthen linkages and strategic partnerships in the development of tourism product including with the Office of Public Works, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Coillte and BnM, among others;
- Develop a Tourism Accommodation Strategy that will guide the provision of an appropriate mix of accommodation options, across all regions with particular focus on less mature tourism destinations;
- Introduce regulatory controls for the Short Term Letting Sector in 2026 to ensure the tourism sector develops in a way that recognises and is complementary to the wider needs of local communities, both economically and socially;
- Accelerate the delivery of all-island product development and promotion through the tourism agencies and Shared Island funding and develop new tourism opportunities building on the Wild Atlantic Way and Causeway Coastal Route Brand Collaboration project and the implementation of the Cuilcagh Lakelands, Carlingford Lough and Slabh Beagh Shared Destinations projects;

- Support our tourism-related SMEs to grow and scale to compete on the domestic and international markets and harness the full potential of digital and AI. Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland and the LEOs will work with SMEs to grow competitiveness, skills, and digital transformation, to drive sales, profitability and resilience. DETE will also progress initiatives to improve access to finance for the sector;
- Promote sustainable business practices along the tourism value chain to ensure tourism plays its part in achieving our national climate and biodiversity targets and invest in amenity and nature restoration including through the EU Just Transition Fund;
- Ensure a collaborative and coordinated whole of Government approach is taken to realising the benefits from the implementation of Business Events 2030 and continue to support major sporting events which provide significant benefits for the tourism sector such as the Ryder Cup and American football games;
- Ensure Ireland's night-time economy and Ireland's unique heritage and sport are recognised and coherent in terms of development as key assets in terms of attracting overseas and domestic visitors;
- Assist less mature tourism destinations to benefit from tourism growth by ensuring the delivery of DEDPs for all areas and ensure local tourism enterprises continue to have a central role in the development of these plans;
- Review all tourism data sources to identify gaps to be addressed and develop enhanced sets of indicators on performance and outcomes for the tourism sector.

A new Tourism Policy Oversight Group will monitor and advise on implementation of the policy statement. This group will be supported by improved data collection and strengthened collaboration across Government and industry. It will ensure that tourism policy remains responsive, evidence-based, and aligned with broader national priorities.

Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland are central to delivering the policy's objectives and will align their 3-year Corporate Plans accordingly for the periods 2026-2028 and 2029-2031.

The agencies' delivery will include an enhanced focus on supporting SMEs, promoting domestic and overseas tourism, and developing inclusive, food-focused, and heritage-rich offerings.

The agencies will also lead initiatives in digital transformation, destination marketing, and regional development, with a particular focus on activating the DEDPs.



02

Policy Context



In economic and social terms, tourism is hugely important and provides a significant contribution to the Irish Exchequer. In 2024, there were 6.6 million overseas visitors to Ireland, resulting in €6 billion in export revenue, (€8.2 billion including fares), while the total value of domestic overnight trips by residents in Ireland was estimated at €3.6 billion. It is estimated that Ireland's tourism sector accounts for 3.7% of all tax revenue with employment in tourism industries in 2024 estimated at 228,800.

The Tourism Policy Framework 2025 – 2030 was published by the then Government in November 2024 and the many worthwhile policy objectives to ensure a sustainable tourism sector remain valid and are reiterated in this policy statement.

The new PfG 2025 Securing Ireland's Future commits to delivering a strong economy, improving our competitiveness and ensuring communities thrive by providing for balanced development for all regions. The PfG also states that a new national tourism policy will be published and contains new tourism specific commitments, which are included in the following chapters.

Furthermore, the early part of 2025 saw significant geopolitical and economic uncertainty. It is essential that the tourism sector has the right foundations in place to weather any unfavourable headwinds in the longer term. This policy is designed to provide confidence that Government will actively support the sustainable growth of tourism in the years ahead. In addition, it has long been recognised that tourism can play a significant role in underpinning enduring relations between countries, and a strong Irish tourism sector has so many other benefits in terms of showcasing and increasing demand for other Irish products from food and drink to the creative industries.

Finally, as part of the new alignment of Government Departments, responsibility for the tourism sector now rests with the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment. This reflects the Government's view of tourism as a critical economic sector giving valuable employment throughout the country. The synergies with other policy areas within DETE are reflected in this policy statement.



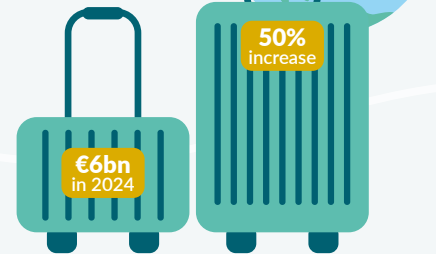
A New Era for Irish Tourism Policy Targets

OVERSEAS TOURISM REVENUE

to grow to

€9 billion

by 2031



(+6% per annum excluding carrier fares)

DOMESTIC TOURISM REVENUE

to grow to

€5.8 billion



with an annual growth of
7% per annum

in domestic overnight trip revenue
from €3.6bn in 2024.

PRIORITISE GROWTH

in the

off-peak season

(October to May)



VISITOR NUMBERS

a minimum increase of

7%

per annum



in less mature and emerging
regions within Ireland

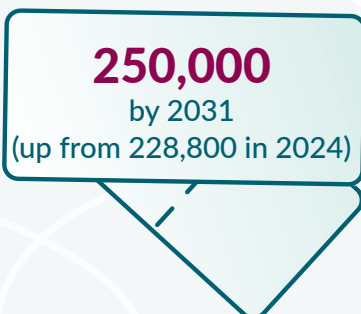
TOURISM EMPLOYMENT

at least

250,000

by 2031

(up from 228,800 in 2024)



TOURISM-RELATED EMISSIONS

cut by

45%

by 2030



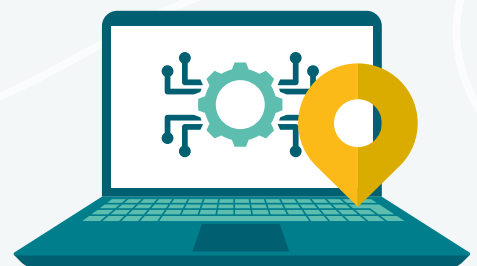
(based on 2018 levels)

TOURISM SMEs

90%

using advanced
digital tools

by 2031



25% of tourism businesses
actively using AI

2.1 Targets

While high level targets for the period to 2031 are shown below, the annual Business Plans of the Tourism Agencies and other specific strategies as detailed in the following chapters will be developed to implement the goals set out in the policy statement. Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland will align their 3-year Corporate Plans accordingly for the periods 2026-2028 and 2029- 2031 and this policy statement will be the subject of a mid-term review in 2028 at which time the targets below will be reassessed.

High Level Targets

- As a small island economy, we are heavily dependent on exports to generate the revenue to fund our public services. The potential to maximise the export contribution of tourism and grow the revenue associated with overseas visitors remains a key policy focus. While annual figures may fluctuate depending on economic and other factors, the overall aim is that overseas tourism revenue will reach €9bn (excluding carrier fares) by 2031. This represents an increase of 50% on the 2024 level. Achieving this ambitious target will require an appropriate mix of higher spending tourists, increasing the average spend per overseas visitor and growing visitor numbers from markets with greater connectivity to Ireland. In this regard, a total increase of 15% in overseas visitor numbers of up to one million per annum over the lifetime of the plan should ensure the revenue target can be met. The tourism agencies will adapt a strategic and responsive approach to target the markets and potential visitors that present the best prospects of achieving the overall revenue target.
- Having more Irish people holidaying at home would deliver significant economic and environmental benefits. Fáilte Ireland's annual business plans will include specific targets around displacing outbound holidays with domestic visits for our growing population. In terms of domestic tourism, the target will be to achieve an average annual increase of 7% in tourism revenue in the period to 2031. This would result in the total value of domestic overnight trips by residents in Ireland rising to €5.8bn. Combining overseas and domestic tourism, this would give a total value of €14.8bn by 2031 compared to €9.6bn in 2024.
- The benefits of tourism should be felt in all areas of the country. Accordingly, there will be an enhanced focus on less mature tourism destinations, including Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, Ireland's Ancient East, and the northern stretch of the Wild Atlantic Way in terms of product development and marketing. This investment will ensure these areas see a minimum increase of 7% per annum in visitor numbers in the period to 2031.

-
- Currently, 50% of Ireland's tourism revenue is concentrated in the four peak months from June to September. To address this imbalance, the policy will designate October to May as the off-peak season and prioritise growth during this period. This strategic focus will guide industry stakeholders and tourism agencies in leveraging available capacity, enhancing resilience, and supporting year-round employment.
 - Securing Ireland's Future targets the creation of 300,000 extra jobs by 2030. Achieving the growth targets outlined in this policy statement will give rise to additional employment opportunities in the tourism and related sectors right across the country. The overall employment aim will be to have at least 250,000 employed in tourism industries by 2031 (up from 228,800 in 2024).
 - Tourism will contribute to Ireland's legally binding climate and biodiversity targets, including the national goal of a 51% reduction in emissions by 2030. In line with the target for the commercial built environment, this means aiming for a 45% reduction in tourism-related emissions (based on 2018 levels). A 2024 baseline for tourism emissions will be established and efforts will be focused on where the sector has the most direct control such as energy usage in commercial buildings and operations. To track progress, Fáilte Ireland's annual Business Plans will also contain specific targets for the number of tourism businesses which have undertaken environmental audits and emission reduction measures.
 - Digitalisation and the adoption of artificial intelligence are essential for the competitiveness and resilience of tourism enterprises. These technologies enable improved customer engagement, operational efficiency, data-driven decision-making, and enhanced sustainability across the sector. Fáilte Ireland will work closely with the relevant agencies to ensure that tourism SMEs are supported. The objective is that at least 90% are adopting advanced digital tools by 2031 (e.g., booking platforms, customer relationship management, augmented/virtual reality), with a minimum of 25% demonstrating active use of AI-driven tools for personalisation, automation, or predictive analytics.

It should be noted that the overall objective is to achieve the above targets in the most sustainable way possible and that is the focus of this policy statement. The achievement of this policy's stretch targets is predicated on a set of core assumptions:

- Capacity constraints at Dublin Airport are resolved, and regional airports possess sufficient capacity to support tourism growth.
- Tourism accommodation capacity is adequate, with availability aligned to seasonal and geographic demand, and unaffected by any adverse impacts from short-term letting regulation.
- No significant global travel disruptions or economic shocks occur that would materially affect inbound tourism.

These assumptions underpin the following enabling conditions:

- Sustained and enhanced investment in tourism marketing and product development.
- Continued improvements in strategic air connectivity.
- Sufficient accommodation supply across regions and seasons.

Collectively, these conditions are essential to increasing Ireland's share of the international tourism market and delivering balanced, sustainable growth.



2.2

Alignment with International and Government Objectives

The Tourism Sector overlaps many economic, environmental and social realms. As a result, there are several strategic documents at European Union, national and local level that are relevant to delivering on the vision of this policy statement.

At international level, the EU has competency to carry out actions to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of Member States in tourism. The EU's new Strategy for Sustainable Tourism is due to be published in 2026, and Ireland will continue to play an active role in the evaluation of all EU proposals and contribute proactively to the tourism area through the Tourism Advisory Committee and relevant Working Groups. Other EU legislative proposals that may impact on tourism will be monitored to ensure they are consistent with the overall objectives outlined in this policy statement.

Ireland's Presidency of the EU in the latter part of 2026 will provide an opportunity to showcase Ireland's tourism offering and DETE will work with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to maximise the benefits. Ireland also works closely with other international bodies undertaking research and analysis work in the tourism field such as the OECD and active engagement by Ireland will continue in the years ahead.

At national level, it will be important that tourism develops in a manner consistent with the National Planning Framework and the updated National Development Plan, the National Climate Action Plan, the National Adaptation Framework and Ireland's fourth National Biodiversity Action Plan. From a transport perspective, policies such as the National Aviation Policy, the National Sustainable Mobility Policy and the Moving Together strategy are all relevant in achieving the objectives of this policy statement.

Ireland's Trade and Investment Strategy aims to see Ireland grow sustainably, diversify our export markets and support continued prosperity. Trade, tariff and economic considerations in key markets will influence consumer sentiment. In relation to targeting our best overseas prospects, agile responses will be required in these markets to achieve our growth targets and Tourism Ireland will ensure that it has appropriate market diversification strategies in place.

The Government Action Plan on Market Diversification 2025 aims to assist Irish businesses in adapting to global economic uncertainty by expanding into diverse markets and strengthening their presence in existing ones. It supports Ireland's continued growth by promoting sustainable exports, deepening trade and investment relationships, creating quality employment, and reinforcing the national economy. The plan is structured around four core objectives: supporting exporting businesses and improving market access; broadening Ireland's international engagement through diplomatic and global networks; delivering impactful trade and tourism missions; and enhancing domestic readiness through policy, infrastructure, and regulatory alignment to boost international competitiveness.

In relation to the regional spread of tourism, Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021–2025 sets out the vision for a thriving rural Ireland which is integral to our national economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing and development. The PfG commits to a new Rural Future policy statement to 2030, and tourism considerations will be fully factored into the finalisation of this. Furthermore, "Securing Ireland's Future" commits to several new policy developments across Government with potential tourism implications and the need to achieve the tourism growth targets outlined in this policy statement will be factored into the finalisation of these. The PfG also commits to publishing and resourcing new Regional Enterprise Plans, which are expected to be delivered in 2026 and will be cognisant of the tourism objectives outlined in this tourism policy statement.



03

Delivering the Best Visitor Experiences

A woman in a black tank top is smiling and holding a string of warm white lights. In the background, a large bonfire is burning brightly, illuminating the scene at night. Other people are visible in the background, some looking towards the camera and others looking away.

Ensure Ireland remains a high-class, competitive tourist destination by delivering high-quality, authentic and distinctive visitor experiences throughout Ireland.



This section of the policy statement outlines how the Government and State Agencies will work together to create authentic, engaging, and memorable tourism experiences that reflect Ireland's culture, landscapes, heritage, and way of life. By celebrating what makes our island unique; - our people, food, traditions, and natural beauty, we aim to ensure every visitor feels welcomed and inspired to return.

Through the continued development of tourism attractions, destinations, and experiences, and by expanding the range and quality of both domestic and overseas visitor offerings, we will further enhance the overall experience Ireland provides.

As part of this new policy statement, Ireland's culinary offering will be at the heart of Ireland's visitor experience and as a high value and employment intensive sector presents real opportunities for further growth. Culinary experiences leave lasting impressions on tourists, influencing their overall satisfaction with a destination and the likelihood of return.



3.1 Culinary Tourism

Ireland is home to exceptional food, yet many overseas visitors arrive with modest expectations. While food is rarely the primary reason for travel, 2024 research⁴ shows that 81% of visitors rate the quality of Irish food as “very good” after experiencing it. Scenery remains the top attraction, but food and drink now account for 34% of total visitor spend, highlighting their importance in the overall tourism experience and to the income generated by visitors.

Food tourism is becoming increasingly important for attracting high-value visitors and enhancing Ireland’s global appeal. Domestically, it also plays a key role in supporting year-round tourism and regional development, reinforcing its value across the entire visitor journey. Ireland’s culinary strengths lie in fresh, local ingredients, such as seafood, grass-fed meats, artisan cheeses, and seasonal produce. A growing number of high-quality restaurants and chefs who champion local fare continue to elevate Ireland’s culinary reputation.

The strategy will focus on marketing the uniqueness and provenance of Irish food, chefs, and culinary experiences; enhancing customer engagement through practical supports while addressing operational and commercial challenges; and ensuring a compelling seven-day offering across key destinations to enrich the visitor experience and drive regional growth. Tourism Ireland will support these efforts by elevating international perceptions through overseas publicity, strategic partnerships, and digital campaigns, while also ensuring food and drink feature more prominently in travel trade itineraries.

3.1.1

As a priority, a new Culinary Tourism Strategy will be prepared to elevate the quality of the culinary offering and improve domestic and international expectations of Irish Food. This will build on ongoing work at local level and ensure a strong seven-day offering in all key destinations. The new Strategy will develop dedicated destination marketing campaigns showcasing the range and quality of food experiences and will also identify culinary related opportunities to boost year-round tourism and ensure a greater regional spread of tourists.

Given the importance of food-related spend and its impact on the visitor experience, all new and refreshed DEDPs will include a dedicated focus on food. A detailed analysis of each destination’s food offering will be undertaken, reviewing relevant businesses and their contribution to tourism.

4 Fáilte Ireland, Visitor Attitudes Survey 2024, Tourism Research & Insights.

3.1.2

All new and updated DEDPs will promote the unique food and beverage offerings in that destination and the engagement of businesses with the tourism sector. Sustainability, local production and authentic food experiences will be the key focus areas together with food festivals and food markets that can enhance the visitor experience. Potential opportunities will also be identified together with measures to develop appropriate food themes and focus areas to enhance the destination experience.

Food trails are a valuable tourism asset, offering a structured way to explore regional culture through cuisine. They help sustain rural food enterprises by attracting visitors to less mature tourism destinations. Fáilte Ireland has prioritised this in its DEDPs, where food stories, events, and festivals play a key role in enhancing destination appeal and supporting local economies. To support this policy statement, each DEDP should highlight immersive food and drink experiences that reflect the destination's identity; - from local tastings and culinary events to food traditions and producer engagement. DEDPs should also explore new and innovative food tourism opportunities.

3.1.3

Food and Beverage Visitor Experiences provide a strong basis for further growth. All new and updated DEDPs will identify Culinary Experiences to allow visitors experience the local offering and identify any gaps in the destination. Working with industry, the tourism agencies will establish campaigns based on regional food trails that highlight strong local specialities.

Fáilte Ireland supports local producers and providers serving the visitor economy, including restaurants, pubs, cafés, distilleries, and microbreweries. While these have delivered value, many businesses continue to face challenges. To address this, Fáilte Ireland will launch a new programme of strategic supports for relevant businesses aimed at improving profit margins, growing demand, and enhancing revenue and brand reputation. Tailored assistance will be offered based on individual business needs, including training in food waste reduction and digital transformation (see Section 6.5).

Tourism Ireland will continue to promote Ireland's culinary strengths overseas through annual campaigns that highlight quality and authenticity. Irish food and drink feature in international marketing, TV co-productions, and in-market events delivered in partnership with Bord Bia. The agency will also support visitor-facing food and drink enterprises in showcasing their products abroad and connect them with overseas tour operators during sales missions to drive visitor numbers.

3.1.4

The tourism agencies will undertake a targeted awareness raising campaigns with the sector to highlight the commercial and operational assistance available. As a priority, Fáilte Ireland will activate a suite of specific supports aimed at growing sales and improving profit margins. This programme will offer tailored supports to reflect individual business stage of development and ambitions for growth, including on digital transformation.

3.2

New Capital Investment Strategy for Tourism

In recent years, significant investment has been made in developing and maintaining the tourism offering by way of substantial exchequer funding across the country in programmes such as Platforms for Growth and Destination Towns and digitisation. Strategic partnerships between Fáilte Ireland and authorities such as the OPW, Coillte, Waterways Ireland and Local Authorities as well as other Government Departments have been an important element of product development and further investment by these bodies will continue in the years ahead. In addition, there has been significant investment in complementary products such as walking trails and greenways with substantial funding provided for walking and cycling infrastructure.

It is recognised that to ensure Ireland remains competitive with other tourism destinations and that the offering is innovative and appealing to visitors, continued investment is required to renew and enhance the tourism product during the lifetime of this policy statement. DETE through the tourism agencies will continue to support public capital investment proposals that will help achieve the overall objectives of this policy statement and to work with other Departments and bodies on optimising complementary investments under the National Development Plan. Opportunities to enhance the tourism offering across the island through broader Government initiatives such as the Shared Island Fund will continue.

3.2.1

Further public funding support will be provided for investment in tourism capital projects over the lifetime of this policy statement. These investments will prioritise securing a greater regional spread of tourists, particularly to less mature tourism destinations including Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, Ireland's Ancient East, and the northern stretch of the Wild Atlantic Way, as well as projects that can help achieve a longer tourism season in the relevant areas. Fáilte Ireland will develop a capital investment strategy to guide investment in the sector and deliver these objectives.



3.3

Development of State-Owned Land for Tourism

In relation to further tourism product development, amenities and lands in state ownership can offer significant potential, particularly the possible development of further walking and cycling trails, nature reserves and heritage interpretation sites. In recent years Fáilte Ireland has undertaken strategic investment partnerships with the National Park and Wildlife Services, Office of Public Works, Waterways Ireland and Coillte as well as specific investment projects with BnM. There is scope for further development in this regard, particularly in less mature tourism destinations.

3.3.1

The Department will work collaboratively with relevant stakeholders to explore and advance opportunities for harnessing the tourism potential of State-owned lands, heritage sites, and cultural assets, with consideration given to natural capital principles where appropriate.



3.4

Greenways, Blueways and Walking Trails

Ireland's greenways and blueways blend scenic beauty with sustainable travel. These off-road walking, cycling and water-based trails have provided transformative shift in the tourism offering in many less mature tourism destinations. Beyond tourism, these initiatives have delivered significant economic benefits to rural communities.

3.4.1

Local authorities and other relevant agencies will continue to progress development of infrastructure such as greenways, blueways, walking trails (including through the National Walks Scheme) and active travel routes. This will include a renewed focus on solutions to link key tourist attractions, including the Trail Network in the Midlands and Blue Flag beaches on the coast with towns and villages.





3.5

Ensuring a Welcome for All

An essential aspect of Ireland's welcome is that it is experienced by all visitors without restrictions. Ensuring all visitors witness the traditional welcome that Ireland is internationally renowned for is also essential in terms of encouraging repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth reviews. Everyone deserves the opportunity to explore, discover, and enjoy the world around them and for that reason all tourism businesses should aim to be universally accessible and create barrier-free tourism experiences. This means ensuring tourist destinations, products and services are accessible to all people, regardless of their physical limitations, disabilities, or age. Groups requiring specific attention in this regard include people with disabilities, senior citizens, families with young children, and neurodivergent individuals. In addition, it is essential to ensure that visitors enjoy their holiday without fear of discrimination because of sexuality, race or gender.

3.5.1

To harness the growing, high value inclusive tourism market, the Government will work with the tourism agencies to establish and promote Ireland as an internationally recognised accessible and inclusive tourism destination, offering a welcome to all.

3.5.2

The Government will work with the tourism agencies to ensure that visitors enjoy their holiday without fear of discrimination because of sexuality, race, gender or ability. This will be reflected in the development and promotion of attractions, events and facilities.

Promoting and enabling active mobility is a national policy aim, and the tourism industry must include consideration of all mobility requirements. This will require improvements to tourism infrastructure, staff training and the use of innovative technology.

3.5.3

Providing for universal accessibility is fundamental to extending the Irish welcome. To ensure all tourists can enjoy Ireland's tourism offering, the tourism agencies will work with the industry and advocacy groups to identify and address barriers and issues that can restrict access to tourist sites and services.

3.6

Celebrating Ireland's Unique Heritage and Sport

Ireland's culture and heritage are a valued aspect of its tourism offering. The country's rich historical landscape, including two UNESCO World Heritage Properties, attracts visitors interested in exploring Ireland's past or tracing ancestral connections. Ireland's broader cultural designations, Dublin's recognition as a UNESCO City of Literature and Galway's designation as a UNESCO City of Film, further enhance its international cultural profile and present opportunities for thematic tourism development. Údarás na Gaeltachta works in close collaboration with Fáilte Éireann on the development of visitor destinations that showcase the unique cultural and linguistic characteristics of the Gaeltacht.

3.6.1

The tourism agencies, local authorities and other relevant agencies will collaborate to develop new defined routes at regional scale based on heritage and cultural themes. This will include additional opportunities to present Ireland's arts, cultural heritage and the Irish language to visitors in a manner consistent with the objectives of this policy statement.

Ireland is also recognised for its love of sport and its own unique sporting heritage. Ireland is a world leader in equestrian sports, and the international success of Irish golfers has helped spotlight the strength of Ireland's golf offering. Golf tourism is a significant contributor to the Irish economy, with Fáilte Ireland estimating that over 220,000 overseas visitors travel to Ireland each year primarily for golf, generating approximately €300 million in revenue. These visitors tend to stay longer and spend more than the average tourist, supporting local businesses and extending the tourism season. Ireland's position as a premier golf destination will be further reinforced by hosting the Ryder Cup in 2027 at Adare Manor, an event expected to attract substantial international attention and deliver lasting economic and reputational benefit.

There are also sports that are uniquely associated with Ireland, particularly gaelic football, hurling and camogie. While these sports forge strong community spirit and pride, many overseas visitors are unaware how to engage with or experience these sports. Making this engagement easier will benefit both the sporting organisations themselves but also provide an exciting and unique opportunity for the visitor.

3.6.2

The Department and the tourism agencies will work with relevant sporting bodies to maximise tourism opportunities associated with our unique sporting offerings and heritage.

Outdoor and activity-based tourism continues to be a major draw for visitors to Ireland, with walking and hiking being the most popular pursuits undertaken by approximately two million overseas visitors annually. This reflects Ireland's strong appeal as a nature-based destination.



There is also growing interest in water-based tourism, including boat trips, kayaking, and time spent on Ireland's rivers, lakes, and coastline. These experiences consistently score well as motivating factors for overseas visitors and offer strong potential for further development, particularly in coastal and rural areas. Ireland's inland waterways provide real opportunities for scenic and nature-rich experiences through activities such as boating, cruising, paddleboarding, and kayaking.

Ireland's position as a premier angling and water sports destination can be strengthened through international promotion and strategic partnerships with Inland Fisheries Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, and Tourism Ireland. This includes leveraging international media engagement, digital platforms such as DiscoverIreland.ie and Ireland.com, and targeted publicity in key overseas markets. Growth in visitor numbers in less mature tourism destinations, which include Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, Ireland's Ancient East, and the northern stretch of the Wild Atlantic Way, can be supported through increased participation in activities. Accordingly, optimising the use of inland waterways will receive enhanced focus in the development and updating of all relevant DEDPs.

3.6.3

The tourism agencies will work with relevant bodies to increase the focus on nature-based tourism opportunities associated with our inland waterways system and landscape, including angling, cruising, water sports, and outdoor activities such as walking and hiking. In relation to less mature tourism destinations, all new and updated regional tourism development strategies and relevant DEDPs will include specific proposals on how to optimise the inland waterway system from a tourism perspective.

3.7 Tourism Festivals

Festivals also offer an opportunity to showcase internationally Ireland's unique and rich cultural heritage in a fun and engaging way, while providing a significant economic boost to the relevant local communities. Major Irish festivals such as the St Patrick's Festival attract significant overseas visitors while smaller regionally based festivals deliver economic and social benefit to rural locations. The Ireland, Home of Halloween initiative developed in partnership by Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland and Tourism Northern Ireland aims to establish Ireland globally as the authentic birthplace of Halloween and will deliver thousands of visitors across the island of Ireland to events such as the Púca Festival across the month of October, thereby creating a new tourism season for Ireland in the off peak. The tourism agencies work closely with and support local authorities in the organisation and funding of many smaller festivals.

3.7.1

Fáilte Ireland will support a diverse portfolio of uniquely Irish festivals which can deliver strong tourism returns, support regional and seasonal dispersal and generate economic benefits.



3.8 Night-Time Economy

A vibrant and inclusive night-time economy is central to Ireland's tourism offering. Led by the Department of Culture, Communication and Sport, the 2021 Night-Time Economy Taskforce Report outlines actions to strengthen this sector. Fáilte Ireland supports implementation alongside local authorities, businesses, and cultural organisations. Pilot projects in nine towns and cities have introduced Night-Time Economy Advisors to help revitalise nightlife. Learnings from these pilots will be shared nationally to inform broader rollout, supported by dedicated funding.

3.8.1

Ireland's night-time economy plays a vital role in attracting both domestic and overseas visitors. Government, the tourism agencies and other relevant stakeholders will continue to progress the recommendations of the Taskforce Report to support vibrant, inclusive nightlife across the country. Work will continue to support the various pilot projects including the NTE Advisors across the country to drive a more sustainable and diverse night-time offering.



04

Promoting a Vibrant and Creative Tourism Enterprise Sector



A wide-angle photograph of a golf course under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. In the background, a large, multi-story clubhouse with a grey stone facade and many windows stands on a grassy rise. To its right is a smaller, modern-looking building with large glass windows. The middle ground is a vast, green golf course with several sand traps and a line of tall, thin trees. In the foreground, two golfers wearing blue jackets and white hats are standing on a green, looking towards the clubhouse. The overall scene is peaceful and well-maintained.

Ensure the right conditions are in place for a thriving, entrepreneurial and creative tourism enterprise sector, supporting businesses to invest, grow and scale, innovate their product and service offerings, diversify their revenue streams and deliver high levels of visitor satisfaction.



4.1

Tourism at the Heart of Enterprise Strategy

Entrepreneurs, SMEs, clubs and societies are the heart of the Irish tourism industry with family run guesthouses, campsites, local guides and artisan food producers, cafes and restaurants, together with clubs from golf to surfing and the great outdoors, activities and tour providers, and a wide range of outlets providing authentic and memorable experiences to visitors from around the world.

The Government is determined to ensure that our tourism SMEs have the tools, resources, and environment to grow in an increasingly competitive global market. In this regard and in line with commitments in the PfG, a range of measures are being progressed by DETE to help all tourism-related SMEs. These include:

- Additional supports for SMEs and investment in overseas in-market promotion to deliver on the Action Plan on Market Diversification;
- Implementation of the Government's new Action Plan on Competitiveness and Productivity;
- The stakeholder engagement by the Cost of Business Advisory Forum on a comprehensive review of the cost structure for SMEs;
- The formation of a new Small Business Unit in the Department; and
- The development of a new medium- and long-term enterprise strategy – Enterprise 2035.

The importance of ensuring the viability of tourism SMEs is fully recognised, with agency support for business start-ups and initiatives that help existing enterprises build resilience by upskilling and adapting to the evolving demands of the global market. Through training initiatives and digital transformation programmes, Government and the tourism agencies will help tourism businesses develop new skills, improve customer service, and tap into overseas markets. Tourism Ireland will assist 'overseas scale-ready' tourism SMEs by creating platforms for engagement with international travel trade, enabling commercial partnerships that drive visitor growth. In this regard the aim will be that each year, over 600 SMEs will benefit from inclusion in consumer marketing and participation in overseas Business 2 Business 'B2B' events.

In alignment with the Smart Specialisation Strategy for Innovation 2022–2027, which promotes place-based investment in regional strengths, tourism SMEs, particularly those in rural and less mature tourism destinations, will be supported as drivers of local innovation, sustainability and inclusive growth. Future national and local strategies will fully consider how best to support tourism SMEs in contributing to regional economic development and green transformation.

4.1.1

The State will continue to support tourism SMEs in establishing themselves, driving innovation, and building commercial resilience. In this regard, all relevant future strategies at national and local level will fully consider how best to support SMEs in the tourism sector.

The Government will also continue to take all feasible steps to reduce the administrative burden for SMEs and reduce costs of compliance including for enterprises operating in the tourism sector. In this regard, it is recognised that many small businesses in the tourism sector see their productivity being impacted by administrative complexity and regulatory requirements that can be time-consuming and costly.

4.1.2

Fáilte Ireland will embed Better Regulation and streamline their working practices by reviewing the administrative requirements placed on businesses, employees and consumers they engage with and work with other agencies and bodies to progress the simplification agenda for the sector.

4.1.3

The SME Test has been designed to drive consideration of less stringent compliance requirements for smaller companies, where appropriate and proportionate. The Department and Fáilte Ireland will apply the SME Test when developing new tourism policies, initiatives or offerings and ensure that the perspective of the tourism sector is considered where appropriate across Government.



4.2

Government Support for the Tourism Sector

To ensure Irish tourism continues to thrive and provide further job opportunities, the provision for ongoing and enhanced public investment in the sector is part of the revised National Development Plan. The funding provided by the Government to the tourism agencies for tourism marketing, tourism product development and industry supports provides a significant return on investment. Accordingly, this level of investment will be increased in real terms over the lifetime of this policy statement.

4.2.1

In view of the economic importance of tourism for the Irish economy, the Government is committed to increasing the level of public investment in tourism in real terms for the period of this policy statement.

4.3

Fiscal Measures

To achieve the targets outlined in this policy statement, it is essential that the Irish tourism sector can innovate, invest and compete with similar international destinations. In line with the commitment in the PfG to further support businesses and help retain jobs, the Minister for Finance announced the reduction of the VAT rate from 13.5% to 9% on food and catering businesses as part of Budget 2026. This measure will come into effect from the 1st of July 2026 and reflects the Government's commitment to support businesses in the food services sector who are facing increased cost pressures.

4.3.1

The Government will seek to maintain a healthy and profitable environment for the tourism sector during the lifetime of this policy statement. Budget 2026 provides for a reduced VAT rate of 9% for food and catering services which will apply from July 2026. This represents a major Government commitment to the tourism and hospitality sector which will help with the stabilisation of food-led enterprises.

4.4

Regional Enterprise Plans and Tourism

Balanced regional development is a key Government priority and a central component of the White Paper on Enterprise 2022-2030 is to support balanced regional enterprise development. The nine Regional Enterprise Plans (REPs) are bottom-up plans developed and led by regional stakeholders which focus on collaborative initiatives to strengthen the enterprise ecosystem in each region in focus areas such as decarbonisation, digitalisation and place-making.

The REPs allow regions to identify their unique strengths and challenges, and to implement actions that support enterprise growth, innovation and job creation. They are designed to bridge national enterprise policy and local action by providing a flexible structure that reflects the specific priorities and capacities of each region in line with the National Smart Specialisation Strategy for Innovation 2022-2027.

A new Regional Enterprise Policy statement is currently being developed with development of a new set of REPs to follow in 2026. The existing REPs already contain key objectives relating to tourism particularly in relation to placemaking and ensuring the regions are attractive places to visit and work. Fáilte Ireland will play a key role in the development of the new REPs and will ensure the overall tourism objective of increasing visitor revenue is achieved by sustained marketing and promotion of saleable visitor experiences that appeal to the target audiences of each individual region.

4.4.1

New Regional Enterprise Plans will be developed and published in 2026 to support balanced development across Ireland. All plans will be cognisant of the tourism objectives set out in this policy statement and align with relevant Regional Tourism Development Strategies. In this regard, relevant tourism stakeholders including the tourism agencies will be fully engaged in the formation of the Plans.



4.5

Competitiveness and Tourism

While Ireland was never considered a budget destination compared to many other European countries, ensuring a competitive tourism sector will be essential to achieve the growth targets outlined in this policy statement. With rising travel costs and a highly competitive global market for overseas visitors, maintaining a competitive edge requires offering exceptional value rather than relying on price alone. That said, the Government is committed to taking measures to improve the competitiveness and productivity of all sectors in the Irish economy. A new Action Plan on Competitiveness and Productivity was published by Government in September 2025 which identifies 85 concrete actionable reforms across Government to enhance our competitiveness. These measures will benefit tourism enterprises in areas such as addressing business costs through regulatory adjustments and targeted initiatives as well as infrastructure delivery. The measures will also ensure that further increases in the National Minimum Wage are managed in a sustainable way, and this will be of relevance for enterprises operating in the hospitality and tourism field.

4.5.1

The Government will support innovation and continual improvement in the competitiveness and sustainability of our tourism offering, in order to most effectively meet the expectations of future visitors and ensure Ireland is the best place to visit in Europe.



4.6

Assisting Small Tourism Enterprises

It is estimated that 90% of tourism enterprises in Ireland are SMEs (i.e. with fewer than 250 employees). These businesses often lack the in-house capacity to respond to broader market challenges such as digital transformation, sustainability requirements, and shifting consumer expectations. Fáilte Ireland works with thousands of SMEs, stakeholders and communities across the country on developing and promoting their competitiveness, tourism offerings and attractiveness for visitors, growing revenues and quality jobs.

Together with the 31 Local Enterprise Offices in every county, Fáilte Ireland plays a pivotal role in supporting small tourism businesses and startups. These agencies offer a comprehensive suite of financial and developmental supports tailored to the growth stage of tourism SMEs. Their combined efforts are essential to strengthening the sector's resilience, competitiveness, and long-term sustainability. These supports aim to foster growth and innovation while helping businesses build commercial resilience in areas such as cost and cashflow management, demand generation, and operational efficiency. Fáilte Ireland provides practical one-to-one and online resources to help businesses manage and market their services effectively, as well as supporting innovative tourism projects that enhance visitor experiences and contribute to job creation. Similarly, the LEOs may offer salary support for unique tourism services projects that primarily generate revenue from overseas visitors and do not cause displacement in the local economy. Financial supports available through these agencies include feasibility study grants, priming grants, business expansion grants, the Digital for Business Programme, and the Grow Digital Voucher, among others.

The full suite of Fáilte Ireland supports are available through the National Enterprise Hub. The NEH, hosted by Enterprise Ireland, provides an all-of-government service staffed by expertly trained advisors and a centralised access point for businesses seeking government support. The NEH consolidates information on more than 250 supports from 32 different Departments and State Agencies and works closely with LEOs and Fáilte Ireland to ensure tourism enterprises are directed to the most appropriate resources.

There is already strong collaboration between LEOs and Fáilte Ireland, particularly in relation to the Climate Action Programme and the Green for Business Strategy. To maximise impact and ensure efficient delivery of supports Fáilte Ireland and the LEOs will ensure a coordinated approach in providing tourism SMEs targeted, relevant, and timely support aligned with their specific stage of development and growth potential.

4.6.1

Fáilte Ireland and LEOs ensure a coordinated approach in providing tourism SMEs targeted, relevant, and timely support aligned with their specific stage of development and growth potential as appropriate.

4.7

Emissions Reduction Supports

As well as the environmental benefits of tourism businesses reducing individual emissions, the businesses in question can often benefit financially from the introduction of energy saving technology and practices. The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland reports that on average an SME can reduce its energy bill by up to 30% through modest energy efficiency measures, with 10% savings achievable with little or no capital investment. Fáilte Ireland's Climate Action Programme, Green for Micro and the Energy Efficiency Grant offers support for tourism businesses on every step of their low-carbon journey. Developed in partnership with the SEAI, this initiative ensures that tourism businesses can access essential financial supports for actions to reduce carbon emissions, increase energy efficiency, and adopt renewable technologies.

4.7.1

Through programmes from Fáilte Ireland, SEAI, and other public bodies, the tourism sector will be provided with significant supports to reduce energy costs and emissions and to report on the outcomes. Key actions will include improving insulation and the energy efficiency of buildings and conversion of heat sources away from fossil fuel energy.



4.8

Digital Transition Strategy

Digitalisation and the adoption of AI offers a wide variety of benefits across many sectors and can enhance efficiency, accessibility and innovation. From a sectoral perspective, the way tourists plan, and experience travel has changed profoundly in recent years. Recent trends show that 80% of visitors now research and book their holiday online, and over 30% of overseas audiences, per a recent Tourism Ireland study, have tried generative AI to gain travel inspiration or to help build travel itineraries. Accordingly, using new technologies to reach the right audience with the right message at the right time through data-driven marketing is essential. Online and digital marketing has potential benefits for 'harder to reach' tourism destinations, in less visited rural locations that may not benefit from proximity to more established attractions. The tourism sector needs to accelerate the adoption and use of digital and AI in operations, marketing and service delivery to remain competitive, respond to market trends and meet the evolving expectations and demands of overseas and domestic tourists.

To support this transition, businesses in the tourism sector will be encouraged to engage with Ireland's four European Digital Innovation Hubs, which offer technical expertise, training, and networking. The transition strategy will also highlight national supports, making tourism businesses aware of the Digital for Business Programme and the Grow Digital Voucher. By connecting businesses with these resources, the strategy aims to make digital and AI adoption more accessible across the sector

4.8.1

To ensure that the Irish tourism sector remains at the forefront of the digitalisation evolution, the tourism agencies and other relevant stakeholders will develop and implement a sector-wide digital strategy. This will support tourism businesses in adopting digital tools and AI and enhance Ireland's global visibility through continued investment in digital channels and AI-optimised platforms like Ireland.com.



4.9

Access and Connectivity

As an island destination, air access is vital for Irish tourism. In an era of increasing competition for international visitors, Ireland's ability to offer direct flights and efficient transport options is vital to staying competitive and maintaining a steady influx of tourists. While it will be an ongoing objective to grow access routes to all Irish air and seaports, Dublin airport will remain as the prime access route for overseas visitors. The PfG includes a commitment to work with stakeholders to lift the passenger cap at Dublin airport and to ensure relevant agencies engage effectively with all communities impacted by noise, flight movements and airport operations. Tourism objectives will also be fully considered as part of the planned review of the National Aviation Policy being undertaken by the Department of Transport.

In relation to achieving the overseas growth targets outlined in this policy statement, generating additional year-round business will be essential. While growing visitor revenue from specific established overseas markets including, Great Britain, Mainland Europe and North America will remain essential, adopting an agile approach to emerging markets will also be required. In this regard, there will be enhanced focus on direct air connectivity from potential inbound tourism markets, particularly from Asia, South America, and Canada and key US gateways, as well as growing direct air connectivity to the regions. Opportunities for enhanced ferry access will also be pursued with relevant stakeholders.

As an island destination, air access is vital, accounting for 90%⁵ of overseas inbound connectivity. Currently, over 80%⁶ of visitors arrive to Ireland via Dublin Airport, therefore promoting direct traffic to regional airports provides the opportunity to grow tourism to regional economies throughout the country. Furthermore, issues with the cap at Dublin Airport have shown the importance of providing diverse access options for tourism. As outlined in Ireland's Business Events Strategy, to maximise the impact of business events, a greater focus will be put on growing regional events that take place outside of Dublin. Direct access to the regions is key to facilitating Ireland's regional business events hubs and leveraging business events to achieve these objectives.

The Regional Co-operative Access Scheme, which is delivered by Tourism Ireland, aims to fully maximise all opportunities presented by direct access to the regions by generating demand through co-operative marketing campaigns with airlines and sea carriers and working with airports, ports and carriers to secure new routes bringing visitors directly to the regions supporting local economies and communities.



⁵ See Fáilte Ireland's Key Tourism Facts 2024.

⁶ See Fáilte Ireland's Key Tourism Facts 2024.

4.9.1

Tourism priorities will be fully considered as part of the review of National Aviation Policy. In line with the PfG commitment, Government will work to lift the cap at Dublin Airport as soon as possible. A new Strategic Air Access Fund will be introduced to maximise the opportunity presented by the establishment of new air routes with inbound tourism potential. The Fund will be used to drive incremental business and establish a foothold in new tourism markets for Ireland. DETE will also engage with the Department of Transport and other relevant stakeholders in relation to enhanced ferry access for potential inbound tourists.

4.9.2

To ensure the continued growth of tourism in the regions over the lifetime of this policy statement, there will be continued prioritisation of developing and promoting access to regional ports and airports, with associated marketing support provided by the tourism agencies.



4.10

Domestic Marketing

Traditionally, the primary focus of Government and tourism agencies has been in attracting overseas visitors to Ireland. The total expenditure of Irish residents travelling overseas however, exceeds the amount generated by overseas visitors to Ireland. In this regard it is estimated that in 2024, Irish residents took 13.7 million outbound overnight trips, totalling 81.2 million bed nights. Promoting a substitution of a part of these overseas holiday breaks for a domestic holiday will be a key focus in developing our regional tourism offering, as it would represent a significant boost for the Irish tourism sector.

4.10.1

In view of the significant expenditure by Irish residents on overseas holidays and the quality tourism product on the island, there will be an increased focus on encouraging and promoting Home Holidays. Specific marketing funding will be allocated for appropriate campaigns.

4.11

Overseas Marketing

Ireland and the United States share particularly strong links. These deep-rooted connections are built on historical ties and a significant Irish American diaspora, which continues to foster close cultural and economic relations. The US is one of Ireland's largest trading partners, with strong flows of investment, especially in sectors like technology, pharmaceuticals, and financial services. In tourism, the transatlantic bond is equally significant, and recent years have seen steady growth in the number of visitors. In 2024, a total of 1.4 million visitors came from North America, with associated revenue estimated at €2.2 billion (excluding fares). This represented almost 36.4% of the total overseas revenue for the year.

Visitors from North America tend to stay longer, spend more and travel more widely across the country. The early months of 2025 have seen policy proposals in the US which could significantly impact Ireland's economic development and any general slowdown in the US economy is likely to impact the number of US visitors travelling overseas. Accordingly, it will be essential that Tourism Ireland is agile in its marketing activity to ensure Irish tourism is best positioned to cope with any general downturn in the US market.

4.11.1

To ensure that Ireland achieves the economic growth targets outlined in this policy statement, the Department and the Tourism Agencies will focus marketing efforts on those high-growth regions and market segments with the strongest prospects of achieving the growth objectives of this policy statement.

4.12

The Diaspora

In terms of tourism potential, diaspora communities are a strength for Ireland, with millions of people around the world claiming Irish heritage or a strong affinity with Ireland. The USA and GB in particular have traditionally been rich source markets for Diaspora related tourism. It is also recognised that, in line with the business events strategy, Business Events 2030, there is further growth potential by investing in business related diaspora marketing strategies, particularly in the USA market.

The PfG commits to launching a “Year of the Invitation” extending a global invitation for visitors to reconnect with Ireland. To deliver on this commitment the Tourism Agencies will bring forward proposals on how such an initiative can deliver real benefits for the Irish tourism sector and a return on public investment. In this regard the whole of Government legacy benefits from the initiative will be a key consideration as will the desire to ensure that any measure delivers on the overall year-round and regionality focus of this policy statement.

4.12.1

The Tourism Agencies will develop leisure and business diaspora tourism proposals that will have a long-term legacy benefit with a focus on delivering on our regionality and year-round objectives.



4.13

Business Events

Business travel is recognised as a key driver of economic growth. As one of the highest-yielding tourism segments, it contributes more than €1 billion to the economy annually, €290 million to the Exchequer and supports almost 22,000 jobs. Business event delegates come to Ireland to attend international conferences, corporate meetings or on an incentive trip. This is considered promotable tourism, whereby a destination can bid to become the host. The international Business Events industry is highly lucrative, with each business tourism visitor generating almost two and a half times more revenue than that of a leisure tourist. Business Events travel is high value and by its nature often occurs midweek and outside of peak season, thereby aligning with ambitions to strengthen year-round tourism.

4.13.1

To realise the full potential of business events, a collaborative and coordinated whole of Government approach will be taken to the on-going development of the Irish business events industry, in line with Ireland's Business Events Strategy, for the delivery of increased value for tourism and beyond.



4.14

Major Sports Events

Hosting major sports events in Ireland promotes Ireland's image overseas and provides a significant economic benefit. Amongst the most significant sports events held on the Island to date include the Special Olympics in 2003, the Ryder Cup in 2006, the Women's Rugby World Cup in 2017 and the UEFA Europa League Final in 2011 and 2024. Ireland has also regularly hosted US college football games in recent years. Events planned for the coming years include the return of the Ryder Cup in 2027, which will be hosted at Adare Manor in County Limerick, Ireland. The UK and Ireland will co-host the UEFA EURO 2028 tournament, and England, Ireland, and Scotland will jointly host the ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup in 2030. Those attending sporting events are often high-yield, and high net-worth visitors. Major events can be interspersed throughout the year, promoting year-round tourism as well as regionality. Decisions on which major sports events to pursue are guided by the Major International Sports Events Policy and Strategy Framework 2024, published by the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport.

In 2025, The Government launched Ireland's first ever International Sports Diplomacy Framework. The new Framework is designed to establish Ireland as a sporting hub and help build our reputation as a premier sporting nation. Through the unifying power of Sport, the Framework will serve to foster opportunities for international partnerships, cultural exchange and diaspora engagement.

4.14.1

The hosting of major sporting events can provide a significant tourism boost to the host country. Potential tourism benefits will also be a key consideration in the development of a new International Sports Diplomacy Strategy following the publication of Ireland's International Sports Diplomacy Framework.



05

Empowering Communities



Empower communities to benefit from the economic and social progress that tourism has the potential to deliver, in a way that enhances quality of life and preserves our natural assets for future generations.

5.1

Regional and Local Prosperity

Under the umbrella of the four Regional Experience Brands, Ireland's Ancient East, Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Hidden Heartlands and Dublin, the four Regional Tourism Development Strategies have worked well in providing a framework for tourism development and research has shown that the brands are resonating well in overseas markets. These development strategies are designed to leverage the unique characteristics of each region ensuring continued sustainable growth based on their strengths. They also recognise that many areas of the country do not currently have capacity restrictions and can grow sustainably in the medium term. In addition, Tourism Ireland, in its marketing of the island of Ireland overseas, is committed to marketing the Regional Experience Brands with the goal of faster regional revenue growth than the overall national average. It is acknowledged however, that certain regions have greater potential for further growth. In this regard, over the lifetime of this policy statement, it will be a priority that the less mature tourism destinations receive particular focus to achieve the overall growth targets.

The regional experience brands are underpinned by the DEDPs. Developed collaboratively with stakeholders, including the Local Authorities, these five-year strategies are aimed at growing tourism in a specific area by enhancing visitor experiences and maximising the potential of tourism development projects.

5.1.1

A key objective is to spread the benefits of tourism to all regions, and this will be a priority consideration for all public investment decisions. In particular, the need to see less mature tourism destinations grow at a faster level than the traditional tourism regions will be a priority of Government and the tourism agencies. Regional Tourism Development Strategies will be activated through a series of DEDPs, and local tourism enterprises will have an enhanced role in the development of these strategies.

To ensure that this sustainable growth is filtered down to individual communities, the Destination Towns Scheme is designed to boost the attractiveness and tourism appeal of towns nationwide. The scheme provides funding to local authorities to enhance public spaces and create appealing visitor experiences in towns across Ireland. It aims to encourage longer stays and upgrade tourism infrastructure and amenities in selected areas.

5.1.2

The Destination Towns Scheme and the DEDPs will be expanded during the lifetime of this policy statement, and the tourism agencies will work with industry to develop itineraries and packages to keep visitors within regions for longer.

5.2

Developing Tourism in the Midlands

Fáilte Ireland is an Intermediate Body for the purposes of the EU Just Transition Fund which runs until 2026. The purpose of the EU Just Transition Fund is to assist the most affected territories in transitioning to a climate neutral economy. The wider Midlands region has been particularly affected by the ending of peat extraction for energy production and the Fund's geographic territory includes counties Laois, Longford, Offaly, Roscommon, Westmeath, and municipal districts of Ballinasloe (Co. Galway), Athy and Clane-Maynooth (Co. Kildare), and Carrick-on-Suir and Thurles (Co. Tipperary). The fund aims to address employment, economic, social and environmental changes that come with the shift away from carbon-intensive activities. The tourism element includes allocations of €38 million under Regenerative Tourism business supports and €30 million for a Tourism Trails Network. Part of the Fund will be used to develop a midlands trail network across the region with funding also being provided for tourism businesses to engage in a digital transformation programme.

In addition, funding is available for private and community SMEs to provide new and enhanced visitor experiences and low-carbon tourist accommodation. The funding will transform the tourism offering in the area and will create more reasons for domestic and international tourists to visit Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, generating new opportunities for employment, empowering local businesses, and enhancing local communities.

5.2.1

It is recognised that the Midlands region has not benefitted from tourism growth to the same extent as many more mature tourism destinations. The EU Just Transition Fund provides an opportunity to transform the tourism offering in the region. The Department and Fáilte Ireland as the intermediary body, will work closely with other State agencies and private stakeholders to ensure that all projects in receipt of EU Just Transition Funding are delivered by 2026.

5.2.2

In terms of delivering a high quality, sustainable tourism offering, all learnings gleaned from the EU Just Transition Projects will be fully factored into the design of future public funding schemes for tourism projects.

5.3

Tourism on a Shared Island

Tourism is specifically designated as an area for North South cooperation under the Good Friday Agreement. Tourism Ireland, the all-island tourism marketing company, is responsible for promoting the island of Ireland overseas as a leading holiday and business destination. North South collaboration strengthens the tourism sector by supporting joint initiatives, enhancing regional connectivity, and creating more cohesive visitor experiences across the island. These efforts contribute to increased visitor numbers, longer stays, and greater economic impact in border regions and beyond.

Tourism on the island is benefitting from the Shared Island Fund administered by the Department of the Taoiseach, in particular through the Brand Collaboration Project between the Wild Atlantic Way and the Causeway Coastal Route and the Shared Destinations Programme which will include projects in Cuilcagh Lakelands, Carlingford Lough and Sliabh Beagh.

5.3.1

The Government is committed to ongoing cooperation in the overseas marketing of the island of Ireland as a holiday destination. In this regard, the Government will work with counterparts in Northern Ireland to ensure that Tourism Ireland continues to be adequately resourced to successfully carry out its remit and help achieve the policy objectives set out in this policy statement.

5.3.2

The Department, in consultation with the tourism agencies will continue to support Shared Island bids for joint initiatives which will enhance regional connectivity and create more cohesive visitor experiences across the island.

5.3.3

Under the All Island Strategic Tourism Group, which was established by the North South Ministerial Council, the Department and tourism agencies will work with counterparts in Northern Ireland to identify key areas of North/South co-ordination and co-operation to harness the tourism potential of the whole island, offering rewarding experiences for visitors, while supporting communities across the island.

5.3.4

Encouraging two-way flows of tourists between the South and the North can potentially benefit both economies as well as having a positive environmental impact when substituted for an overseas holiday. Accordingly, the tourism agencies North and South will work together to further develop appropriate opportunities across the entire island.

5.4 Enhancing Seasonal Distribution

Ireland's tourism season remains heavily concentrated in the summer months, with reduced activity during the rest of the year. Promoting year-round tourism is essential to strengthen the resilience of tourism-dependent economies and make better use of existing capacity. Tourism Ireland will market standout seasonal events such as Winter in Dublin, Home of Halloween and St Patrick's Day across overseas markets to attract visitors beyond the summer peak. With hotel occupancy averaging 72% from October to May, compared to 88% in summer, the opportunity for growth lies in stimulating demand throughout the year, while a strong summer remains vital for industry profitability.

5.4.1

To ensure a tourism industry that benefits the entire community, extending the tourism season will be a priority consideration for all public investment decisions. The tourism agencies will have an enhanced focus on marketing the off-peak season, from October to May and will ensure that support for events, festivals and tourism infrastructure prioritise initiatives that can provide year-round visitors.



5.5

Tourism Accommodation

To achieve sustainable tourism growth, it is essential that Ireland has sufficient and fit-for-purpose tourist accommodation stock. Diverse and unique accommodation options ensure that all potential visitors can be facilitated. In recent years, a portion of hotel stock has been utilised to provide essential humanitarian accommodation, which has impacted the tourism sector.

5.5.1

To achieve the thriving tourism sector envisaged by this policy statement, it will be a priority of Government that all relevant accommodation currently being used for humanitarian purposes is transitioned back to tourism use over time.

While the overall growth of overseas visitors has benefitted Irish tourism, not all regions of Ireland have benefitted to the same extent and the availability of suitable accommodation in less mature tourism destinations has been a factor in this regard. Sustainable tourism growth requires a strategic and planned approach to identifying the areas of the country best placed to accommodate additional visitors.

5.5.2

To support sustainable growth in tourism across all regions, the Government will develop a Tourism Accommodation Strategy. This Strategy will guide the provision of an appropriate mix of accommodation options, exploring innovative approaches alongside conventional models, with particular focus on less mature tourism destinations.

Furthermore, while the availability of properties for short-term letting can provide a significant benefit to many tourist areas, it is also recognised that the current lack of housing stock for long-term use has significant social impacts and is a real and immediate challenge for the Irish economy. This shortage/unavailability of adequate housing stock can also have a detrimental effect in recruiting the necessary people to work in tourism businesses in certain areas. The long-term sustainable growth of tourism requires that an appropriate balance is achieved between the short- and long-term rental sectors.

5.5.3

New legislation will be enacted in 2026 to introduce regulatory controls and establish a register for short-term letting properties. In parallel with this, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage will publish a National Planning Statement for Short-Term Letting. This will allow the tourism sector to develop in a way that recognises and is complementary to the wider ambitions of local communities, both economically and socially.

5.6

Rewarding Careers in Tourism

Working in the tourism sector can provide interesting, rewarding and life-long careers. Jobs are typically available to suit people at a range of career and life stages and often provide good opportunities for progression and development. At present, many tourism businesses are struggling to attract and retain staff so action in this area is vital for sectoral sustainability. The provision of high-quality service is a core value of Irish tourism, and this is heavily reliant on securing a stable well-trained and satisfied workforce. State assistance for career development in the tourism sector will be focused on the skills and capabilities required for the sector to compete and innovate for the future. The tourism industry and representative and development bodies will also be encouraged to collaborate extensively with relevant actors to drive quality employment practices, support the retention of employees and attract future talent.

The Department will work to ensure a skilled workforce is developed and maintained to meet the future requirements of the tourism sector. To assist in this the Department and its agencies will work with the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Solas, Skillnet and other relevant Departments, agencies and institutions to develop and implement world-class training for people looking to build careers in the sector. This will include non-traditional tourism sector skills to support the development of green skills in the tourism sector.

As well as the economic benefits from having strong employment opportunities, ensuring there is a cohort of well-trained, professional staff in the sector also provides a positive impression of the overall tourism experience in the country. Addressing any recognised skills shortages is also critical to ensure Ireland's reputation as a high-quality tourism destination is maintained. The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs will review the key development requirements for the sector over the next decade at all levels.

5.6.1

Interactions with capable and courteous staff at tourism businesses are central to visitor satisfaction. A range of initiatives will be promoted by Fáilte Ireland, in collaboration with the Department and the tourism industry, to support quality employment practices and diverse career opportunities.

5.6.2

To ensure a continued coordinated and efficient approach to address labour shortages, the Department will work with industry and across Government on key issues, such as ensuring access to required skills from overseas for priority occupations and the EGFSN will review the future requirements for the sector.

5.6.3

The Department will work with other relevant Departments, agencies, representative bodies and education providers to continue the work of the Hospitality and Tourism Careers Oversight Group, established to address labour supply and skills development issues for tourism businesses.

5.7

Dublin City Taskforce

Dublin remains a key part of Ireland's overall tourism offering, with many of the country's most iconic attractions located in the city. As a gateway city, it serves as the main access point for overseas visitors arriving in Ireland before travelling to other regions. The Government is committed to transforming the city centre into a vibrant, safe and attractive destination for both residents and tourists. Implementation of the Dublin City Centre Taskforce recommendations, in line with the PfG commitment, will be critical to ensure a positive first impression of Ireland and is essential for the success and reputation of Irish tourism.

5.7.1

DETE and the tourism agencies will continue to engage with the Department of the Taoiseach in relation to the achievement of the objectives of the Dublin City Taskforce Plan and improving Dublin's positive first impression and reputation with visitors, while ensuring that tourism implications are fully considered in all implementation measures.

5.8

Marine Tourism Strategy

Tourism plays a crucial role in the economic sustainability of coastal communities. For many coastal towns and villages, tourism helps diversify the local economy particularly in regions where traditional industries like fishing have declined.

The inhabited offshore islands are an integral part of rural Ireland. Though home to only around 3,000 people, they make a significant contribution to our economy, culture and heritage. They attract visitors, artists, and those drawn to their nature, history and language. Tourism is a hugely important aspect of island economies.

While many coastal areas have benefitted from marketing initiatives like the Wild Atlantic Way, it is felt that more can be done from a tourism perspective to ensure the economic sustainability of coastal communities. While cruise tourists generally spend less in the Irish economy than overnight visitors, there can still be significant benefits particularly in the vicinity of the ports where they are berthed.

5.8.1

The Tourism Agencies and other relevant stakeholders will develop a new Marine Tourism Strategy to set out how tourism can be grown further in coastal communities. The new Strategy will include proposals in relation to the effective marketing of the Islands as a unique tourist experience and explore potential enhanced benefits from cruise tourism.





5.9

Tourism and the Local Authorities

Local authorities play a key role in planning and delivering services and infrastructure essential to tourism, including investment in attractions, maintenance of public spaces and environmental assets, and the provision of public facilities. All local authorities have dedicated tourism officers who support strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and the implementation of local tourism initiatives and coordinate their activities through the City and County Managers Association.

At the local level, Fáilte Ireland adopts a collaborative approach to developing visitor-centric infrastructure and unlocking Ireland's tourism potential. Extensive consultation with industry, local authorities, and communities during the development of DEDPs fosters co-ownership and alignment with local priorities.

5.9.1

The Department will work with the CCMA, Fáilte Ireland and the local authorities to support the planning and delivery of visitor-focused infrastructure and services, including investment in attractions, public spaces, and facilities. This collaboration will promote co-ownership and alignment with local priorities, enhancing the overall visitor experience and strengthening Ireland's tourism offering.

5.9.2

DETE and Fáilte Ireland will assist and cooperate with the regional assemblies in the preparation of regional spatial and economic strategies to ensure that the interests of the tourism sector are appropriately reflected in the strategies and subsequent County Development plans.

Growing a Sustainable Future



Ensure Ireland's natural and built environment remains a key attraction for unique tourism experiences while ensuring the tourism sector plays its part in achieving our climate objectives.



Ireland's natural beauty is central to its tourism appeal. In Tourism Ireland's 2024 Sentiment Tracker, 34% of potential visitors said scenery was their main reason for travel. To ensure Ireland's tourism offering remains strong and competitive, protecting and restoring the natural environment is essential.

6.1 Climate Adaptation

Climate adaptation refers to action that helps reduce vulnerability to, and avail of potential benefits from expected impacts of climate change. Under the National Adaptation Framework, the tourism sector was highlighted as one of the thirteen sectors that is particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and is required to prepare sectoral adaptation plans under the Climate Act. Factors to be considered include the importance of the weather in the continued success of the sector and the location of many major tourist centres in coastal areas susceptible to flooding, erosion and sea level rises. At the same time Ireland's more moderate climate and year-round access to our natural amenities provide a welcome alternative for many.

6.1.1

To ensure the tourism sector is resilient to impacts of climate change and that we can sustain and enhance sustainable enjoyment of our natural environment and amenities, DETE will publish and implement a detailed Tourism Sectoral Adaptation Plan.



6.2

Sectoral Carbon Emissions

Climate change affects everybody with increasing impacts predicted in the coming years. In line with national climate action planning, the tourism sector must take steps to decarbonise, both from direct sectoral activities and through the supply-chain. It is acknowledged however, that achieving any environmental targets for tourism will be dependent on significant progress being made across Government to reduce emissions associated with other sectors such as transport.

6.2.1

To ensure that tourism plays its part in achieving national and international emissions reduction targets, a baseline figure for the carbon emissions of the tourism sector will be calculated by Fáilte Ireland. This will require a thorough analysis of current emissions trends and sustainability measures. Subsequent plans to give effect to this policy statement will contain tourism specific emission reduction targets.

As already outlined in this document, tourism revenues represent significant export earnings. Spending by overseas visitors benefits not just accommodation providers, but also those working in areas such as food production, transport, entertainment and retail. It is also recognised however, that as an island destination there is a significant environmental impact associated with overseas visitors coming to Ireland for their holidays. As already outlined in this statement; to achieve the economic growth targets in this statement will require agile targeting of best-prospect inbound markets and it will be important to achieve the right balance between tourism revenue and environmental impact. At the broader level it will be essential to ensure that all actors in the tourism industry take action to reduce emissions. In this regard, all decisions on future public supports will need to consider emissions reductions.

6.2.2

Implementing effective climate actions across the tourism value-chain will be a priority focus. Future industry supports will take account of climate impact with assistance prioritised to applicants that demonstrate commitment to good practice on environment, biodiversity and climate action.

6.3

Protecting the Environment, Biodiversity and Habitats

Ireland's international reputation as a country with an unspoiled environment and setting as an island on the edge of Europe with dramatic coastal scenery and world-famous rural landscapes are major draws for overseas visitors. Effective environmental stewardship and clear landscape objectives are necessary to protect Ireland's natural environment for residents and visitors and to deliver on the promises in Ireland's promotional activity. While direct responsibility generally lies outside the tourism sector, it will be essential that tourism considerations are fully addressed when relevant agencies including local authorities are drawing up their development plans.

6.3.1

Ireland's natural environment is an essential component of the tourism offering and to ensure it is preserved, DETE will continue to assess all national policies to ensure they support sustainable tourism and tourism communities. Fáilte Ireland as a designated body under the Planning Acts will input as required to ensure development proposals do not damage Ireland's habitats and protect the overall quality of the tourism offering.

Regenerative and ecotourism offer a significant potential growth area for tourism and Ireland's biodiversity must be protected to benefit from the opportunities that unique natural flora and fauna present. It is recognised that Ireland's biodiversity is at risk with assessment of the conservation status of habitats showing most in an unfavourable condition with ongoing declines evident across many areas of tourism value including marine, peatland and woodland habitats. While public bodies have a key role in protecting biodiversity, the tourism industry has an important opportunity to contribute by planning and acting to protect and improve our natural resources.

6.3.2

Ireland's biodiversity underpins the overall tourism offering and the quality of life in tourism communities. To enhance Ireland's biodiversity, guidance and supports will be introduced for tourism businesses on nature-positive measures at tourism facilities such as allowing wildflower meadows to develop; protecting wildlife habitats; and restricting use of weedkillers and pesticides, which can harm habitats and non-target species.

6.3.3

If planned and managed carefully, tourism can support a net gain in biodiversity quality, providing a benefit to visitors and to local communities. The Department will work with local authorities to identify and highlight examples of locations where tourism is contributing to improvements in habitats and a recovery in species numbers. These case studies will incorporate, where possible, natural capital approaches, and will be used to inform conservation actions and the careful development of visitor facilities, with a view to growing nature focused tourism.

6.4

Measures to Address Transport Emissions

Transport is a critical enabler for tourism, and reducing transport-related emissions for both for international arrivals and for visitors travelling within Ireland, is essential to achieving sustainability and climate goals. Accordingly, it will be important for the tourism agencies to encourage and promote extended and higher value stays as well as encouraging more domestic rather than overseas holidays. In addition, there is a growing opportunity around sea access for longer stay and regional visits. New and extended routes into Rosslare and Cork, particularly from Europe, present the opportunity to increase revenue to areas previously benefiting less from overseas visitation in line with sustainability objectives.

6.4.1

The tourism agencies and the Department will work to promote tourist travel to Ireland by ferry and sail/rail initiatives.

6.4.2

Recognising the importance of aviation to maintaining the tourism sector, the Government will continue to engage at International and EU level and with industry stakeholders to reduce aviation emissions including through the implementation of the Aviation Regulation.

To reduce transport related emissions, tourists will be encouraged to use public transport and active travel options. Providing comfortable and attractive public and active transport systems is important in influencing how visitors opt to travel and see Ireland. These modes of transport will need to be as convenient as possible for visitors, flexible and easy to use, with potential for integrated digital and multi-modal ticketing.

6.4.3

Increasing the use of public and active transport by tourists is a priority to achieving decarbonisation in the sector. As part of the implementation of the DEDPs, larger tourism attractions will be supported to examine the feasibility of using sustainable transport modes and the tourism agencies will explore the development of an online tool to enable decarbonised touring.

Efficient and convenient transport options are essential for visitors exploring Ireland and are particularly important in the context of encouraging a greater regional spread of tourism. It is essential that transport emissions associated with tourist travel around Ireland are reduced through the introduction of sustainable mobility approaches. This could include orientation plans for tourists, mapping electric vehicle infrastructure to tourism hotspots, transitioning car rental fleets to EVs, encouraging the coach tourism sector to adopt EVs, promoting active travel options such as cycling and walking and developing mixed mobility hubs. In this regard, all new and updated DEDPs will have a specific focus on sustainable transport and access measures.

6.4.4

Charging infrastructure is a critical enabler for a successful transition to low-carbon transport modes. The Department will work with the tourism industry and relevant public bodies to accelerate rollout of charging points for electric vehicles and bikes at or adjacent to key sites including visitor attractions, ports, airports, accommodation and on greenways.

As a shared transport mode, buses offer benefits over private car use, but nonetheless decarbonising Ireland's private-hire and public transport bus fleet will help to reduce emissions. In addition, car rental continues to play a significant role within the sector, and it is important to implement actions to transition to use of electric vehicles.

6.4.5

Government will work with bus operators and car hire companies to stimulate a switch from fossil-fuel vehicles to electric or other low-carbon options.

Ireland's inland waterways provide a well-connected web of Blueways spread throughout the island which allow tourists to explore scenic areas at a leisurely pace. Boating and cruising activity contribute significantly to the local economy of many areas particularly in the less developed destinations, which include Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, Ireland's Ancient East, and the northern stretch of the Wild Atlantic Way.

6.4.6

The Department and relevant agencies will work with the tourism industry to facilitate and market the use of more sustainable fuels in the rental fleets and other boats servicing the tourism sector.

6.5

Circularity and Waste Prevention

Waste must be minimised to conserve resources, reduce pollution and to aid the climate change effort. There are also significant economic benefits for enterprises who reduce their waste. Some tourism businesses have made great progress, with action taken to eradicate disposable single-use plastic items, which are a high-profile focus of the Government's waste policy. Further training and supports will be required for the sector to reduce waste further.

6.5.1

Relevant agencies will work with the tourism industry to reduce resource consumption and prevent unnecessary waste. Case-studies on avoided product use and waste prevention will be used to highlight best practice for implementation by the sector.

6.5.2

The tourism agencies will also incorporate metrics on circularity and recycling into any Sustainable Tourism Assurance Programme to ensure a fair and robust reporting of environmental commitment.

While the measures outlined above will ensure the industry contributes to waste reduction efforts, it is also essential that tourists themselves adopt sustainable practices. More generally, it is recognised that sustainable tourism presents economic opportunities with research showing an increasing number of tourists are prepared to spend more on sustainable accommodation and experiences when on holidays. 'Slow Tourism' advocates for a deceleration of the travel experience encouraging visitors to spend more time in fewer places, thereby engaging more meaningfully with the local culture and landscape.

6.5.3

To complement actions by operators on waste prevention, the tourism agencies will work with the tourism industry to develop an engaging and positive awareness campaign for tourists, on their role in water conservation, recycling and reducing food waste.

6.5.4

In view of the environmental and potential economic benefits from “slow tourism” the tourism agencies will develop appropriate campaigns which will elevate sustainable travel options, have a greater focus on slow activities and showcase the emotional benefits of greater immersion in nature.

The elimination of food waste can lead to significant financial savings for businesses. By reducing spoilage and plate waste, enterprises can significantly reduce their spend on purchasing, storage and disposal. From a sustainability perspective, reducing food waste can also significantly reduce greenhouse gases and Fáilte Ireland is committed to reducing food waste across the tourism sector. Simple practical changes in relation to menu planning, portion control and training on best practices for reducing food waste can deliver significant gains. Accordingly, it will be essential that all relevant staff are appropriately trained in how to minimize food waste.

6.5.5

Fáilte Ireland is a signatory of the national Food Waste Charter and will work with the EPA and the tourism industry to implement the objectives of the Charter. Furthermore, the agency will ensure that operational training and best practice in relation to food waste reduction will be rolled out in partnership with Skillnet Ireland.





6.6

Tourism-Environment Engagement

The work of the relevant state agencies charged with protecting our natural and built heritage has particular significance for Tourism. Some work is ongoing at Regional Tourism Co-ordination Group and DEDP Steering Group level, and at Government level, with regular meetings of the Biodiversity Working Group and The National Adaptation Steering Committee.

There is a need, however, to facilitate enhanced engagement between these stakeholders at agency level. Such engagement could help ensure that the longer-term development of the tourism sector is balanced with environmental preservation while also helping to mitigate any potential conflicts. This would also facilitate strengthened collaboration on topics of shared interest, such as climate adaptation planning for built and archaeological heritage.

6.6.1

To ensure enhanced collaboration on environment and climate issues, the Department and agencies will develop a process to ensure regular engagement between the tourism sector, bodies mandated to protect Ireland's natural and built heritage as well as agencies working to enhance environmental sustainability.

07

Implementation and Data



7.1

Policy Implementation

Achieving the overarching vision of this policy statement requires transformative change across all aspects of the tourism sector. Delivery of the specific proposals articulated within this policy statement will be overseen by the Department in association with the tourism agencies and the industry. In this regard a new Tourism Policy Oversight Group will be appointed by the Minister to advance the necessary actions, and the tourism agencies will align their 3-year Corporate Plans accordingly for the periods 2026-2028 and 2029- 2031. The Terms of Reference for the new Tourism Policy Oversight Group will also detail how the group can usefully exchange views on other tourism related matters.

In addition, the Department will ensure that the significance of tourism is recognised in the implementation of complementary actions from other relevant national policies and strategies, which support delivery of the policy statement's goals. To further this objective, the Department will advocate for the tourism sector through participation in committees and working groups, and by contributing to consultations and other policy development processes.

7.1.1

A Tourism Policy Oversight Group will be established by the Minister for Enterprise, Tourism and Employment following the publication of this policy statement to oversee implementation and report on progress. This group will comprise representatives from Government, tourism agencies, industry bodies, local authorities and other strategic partners.

Evaluating policy effectiveness is essential for tracking progress, identifying challenges, and informing future direction. A mid-term review of this policy statement will be conducted in 2028, followed by a final ex-post review in 2031 to assess overall implementation and impact.

7.2

Data and Statistics

Robust and representative data is critical for informing policy action and for correctly reporting performance on national targets. From an industry perspective, accurate data sources are required for guiding development and underpinning investment decisions. Robust, up-to-date statistics on tourism employment, performance and behaviour patterns are essential to informing Government and industry on the status and trends for the sector. Trustworthy and timely data is also critical to establishing recognition as an authentic sustainable destination for use in competing on the global stage for future tourism business.

Where possible, existing official sources will be used to provide reporting data, and metrics from Ireland's tourism agencies will also be used. In addition, however, a review of other potential data sources will be undertaken to examine how these could be used for the benefit of tourism stakeholders. It is also recognised that the broad-based nature of tourism can present challenges for gathering data that relate specifically to tourism. In addition to visitor satisfaction surveys, it will also be important to benchmark Ireland's sustainable tourism performance against other destinations. In this regard having comparable data sets and regularly reviewing new research topics will be important.

7.2.1

The availability of up to date, relevant and publicly available data is essential to monitor progress on the delivery of policy. To support the development of a useful and implementable indicator set for the tourism sector, the Department and the CSO will provide for regular engagement with the tourism industry. Furthermore, the Department, the CSO and relevant stakeholders will review any additional sources of data or gaps that need to be addressed to provide an enhanced understanding of AI in operations, marketing and service delivery tourism performance, its economic contribution and the composition of the sector.

7.2.2

The ongoing development of the EU Tourism Dashboard will also be examined to provide opportunities to develop insights on performance and trends in comparator countries. As part of this work, the performance of the sector will be benchmarked against countries with similar tourism profiles and investment.



Appendix

List of Policy Objectives

Delivering the Best Visitor Experiences

Ensure Ireland remains a high-class, competitive tourist destination by delivering high-quality, authentic and distinctive visitor experiences throughout Ireland

SECTION			POLICY OBJECTIVE
3.	3.1	New Culinary Tourism Strategy	3.1.1 As a priority, a new Culinary Tourism Strategy will be prepared to elevate the quality of the culinary offering and improve domestic and international expectations of Irish Food. This will build on ongoing work at local level and ensure a strong offering in all key destinations. The new Strategy will develop dedicated destination marketing campaigns showcasing the range and quality of food experiences and will also identify culinary related opportunities to boost year-round tourism and ensure a greater regional spread of tourists.
			3.1.2 All new and updated DEDPs will promote the unique food and beverage offerings in that destination and the engagement of businesses with the tourism sector. Sustainability, local production and authentic food experiences will be the key focus areas together with food festivals and food markets that can enhance the visitor experience. Potential opportunities will also be identified together with measures to develop appropriate food themes and focus areas to enhance the destination experience.
			3.1.3 Food and Beverage Visitor Experiences provide a strong basis for further growth. All new and updated DEDPs will identify Culinary Experiences to allow visitors experience the local offering and identify any gaps in the destination. Working with industry, the tourism agencies will establish campaigns based on regional food trails that highlight strong local specialities.
			3.1.4 The tourism agencies will undertake a targeted awareness raising campaigns with the sector to highlight the commercial and operational assistance available. As a priority, Fáilte Ireland will activate a suite of specific supports aimed at growing sales and improving profit margins. This programme will offer tailored supports to reflect individual business stage of development and ambitions for growth, including on digital transformation.
3.2		New Capital Investment Strategy for Tourism	3.2.1 Further public funding support will be provided for investment in tourism capital projects over the lifetime of this policy statement. These investments will prioritise securing a greater regional spread of tourists, particularly to less mature destinations including Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, Ireland's Ancient East, and the northern stretch of the Wild Atlantic Way, as well as projects that can help achieve a longer tourism season in relevant areas. Fáilte Ireland will develop a capital investment strategy to guide investment in the sector and deliver these objectives.
3.3		Development of State-Owned Land for Tourism	3.3.1 The Department will work collaboratively with relevant stakeholders to explore and advance opportunities for harnessing the tourism potential of State-owned lands, heritage sites, and cultural assets, with consideration given to natural capital principles where appropriate.

Delivering the Best Visitor Experiences

Ensure Ireland remains a high-class, competitive tourist destination by delivering high-quality, authentic and distinctive visitor experiences throughout Ireland

SECTION	POLICY OBJECTIVE
3.4 Greenways, Blueways and Walking Trails	3.4.1 Local authorities and other relevant agencies will continue to progress development of infrastructure such as greenways, blueways, walking trails (including through the National Walks Scheme) and active travel routes. This will include a renewed focus on solutions to link key tourist attractions, including the Trail Network in the Midlands and Blue Flag beaches on the coast with towns and villages.
	3.5.1 To harness the growing, high value inclusive tourism market, the Government will work with the tourism agencies to establish and promote Ireland as an internationally recognised accessible and inclusive tourism destination, offering a welcome to all.
	3.5.2 The Government will work with the tourism agencies to ensure that visitors enjoy their holiday without fear of discrimination because of sexuality, race, gender or ability. This will be reflected in the development and promotion of attractions, events and facilities.
36 Celebrating Ireland's Unique Heritage and Sport	3.5.3 Providing for universal accessibility is fundamental to extending the Irish welcome. To ensure all tourists can enjoy Ireland's tourism offering, the tourism agencies will work with the industry and advocacy groups to identify and address barriers and issues that can restrict access to tourist sites and services
	3.6.1 The tourism agencies, local authorities and other relevant agencies will collaborate to develop new defined routes at regional scale based on heritage and cultural themes. This will include additional opportunities to present Ireland's arts, cultural heritage and the Irish language to visitors in a manner consistent with the objectives of this policy statement.
	3.6.2 The Department and the tourism agencies will work with relevant sporting bodies to maximise tourism opportunities associated with our unique sporting offerings and heritage
3.7 Tourism Festivals	3.6.3 The tourism agencies will work with relevant bodies to increase the focus on nature-based tourism opportunities associated with our inland waterways system and landscape, including angling, cruising, water sports, and outdoor activities such as walking and hiking. In relation to less mature tourism regions, all new and updated regional tourism development strategies and relevant DEDPs will include specific proposals on how to optimise the inland waterway system from a tourism perspective.
	3.7.1 Fáilte Ireland will support a diverse portfolio of uniquely Irish festivals which can deliver strong tourism returns, support regional and seasonal dispersal and generate economic benefits.
	3.8.1 Ireland's night-time economy plays a vital role in attracting both domestic and overseas visitors. Government, the tourism agencies and other relevant stakeholders will continue to progress the recommendations of the Taskforce Report to support vibrant, inclusive nightlife across the country. Work will continue to support the various pilot projects including the NTE Advisors across the country to drive a more sustainable and diverse night-time offering.

Promoting a Vibrant and Creative Tourism Enterprise Sector

Ensure the right conditions are in place for a thriving, entrepreneurial and creative tourism enterprise sector, supporting businesses to invest, grow and scale, innovate their product and service offerings, diversify their revenue streams and deliver high levels of visitor satisfaction.

SECTION	POLICY OBJECTIVE
4. 4.1 Tourism at the heart of Enterprise Strategy	4.1.1 The State will continue to support tourism SMEs in establishing themselves, driving innovation, and building commercial resilience. In this regard, all relevant future strategies at national and local level will fully consider how best to support SMEs in the tourism sector.
	4.1.2 Fáilte Ireland will embed Better Regulation and streamline their working practices by reviewing the administrative requirements placed on businesses, employees and consumers they engage with and work with other agencies and bodies to progress the simplification agenda for the sector.
	4.1.3 The SME Test has been designed to drive consideration of less stringent compliance requirements for smaller companies, where appropriate and proportionate. The Department and Fáilte Ireland will apply the SME Test when developing new tourism policies, initiatives or offerings and ensure that the perspective of the tourism sector is considered where appropriate across Government.
4.2 Government Support for the Tourism Sector	4.2.1 In view of the economic importance of tourism for the Irish economy, the Government is committed to increasing the level of public investment in tourism in real terms for the period of this policy statement.
4.3 Fiscal Measures	4.3.1 The Government will seek to maintain a healthy and profitable environment for the tourism sector during the lifetime of this policy statement. Budget 2026 provides for a reduced VAT rate of 9% for food and catering services which will apply from July 2026. This represents a major Government commitment to the tourism and hospitality sector which will help with the stabilisation of food-led enterprises.
4.4 Regional Enterprise Plans and Tourism	4.4.1 New Regional Enterprise Plans will be developed and published in 2026 to support balanced development across Ireland. All plans will be cognisant of the tourism objectives set out in this policy statement and align with relevant Regional Tourism Development Strategies. In this regard, relevant tourism stakeholders including the tourism agencies will be fully engaged in the formation of the Plans.
4.5 Competitiveness and Tourism	4.5.1 The Government will support innovation and continual improvement in the competitiveness and sustainability of our tourism offering, in order to most effectively meet the expectations of future visitors and ensure Ireland is the best place to visit in Europe
4.6 Assisting Small Tourism Enterprises	4.6.1 Fáilte Ireland and LEOs ensure a coordinated approach in providing tourism SMEs targeted, relevant, and timely support aligned with their specific stage of development and growth potential as appropriate.
4.7 Emissions Reduction Supports	3.7.1 Through programmes from Fáilte Ireland, SEAI, and other public bodies, the tourism sector will be provided with significant supports to reduce energy costs and emissions and to report on the outcomes. Key actions will include improving insulation and the energy efficiency of buildings and conversion of heat sources away from fossil fuel energy.

Promoting a Vibrant and Creative Tourism Enterprise Sector

Ensure the right conditions are in place for a thriving, entrepreneurial and creative tourism enterprise sector, supporting businesses to invest, grow and scale, innovate their product and service offerings, diversify their revenue streams and deliver high levels of visitor satisfaction.

SECTION	POLICY OBJECTIVE
4.8 Digital Transition Strategy	4.8.1 To ensure that the Irish tourism sector remains at the forefront of the digitalisation evolution, the tourism agencies and other relevant stakeholders will develop and implement a sector-wide digital strategy. This will support tourism businesses in adopting digital tools and AI and enhance Ireland's global visibility through continued investment in digital channels and AI-optimised platforms like Ireland.com.
4.9 Access and Connectivity	4.9.1 Tourism priorities will be fully considered as part of the review of National Aviation Policy. In line with the PfG commitment, Government will work to lift the cap at Dublin Airport as soon as possible. A new Strategic Air Access Fund will be introduced to maximise the opportunity presented by the establishment of new air routes with inbound tourism potential. The Fund will be used to drive incremental business and establish a foothold in new tourism markets for Ireland. DETE will also engage with the Department of Transport and other relevant stakeholders in relation to enhanced ferry access for potential inbound tourists. 4.9.2 To ensure the continued growth of tourism in the regions over the lifetime of this policy statement, there will be continued prioritisation of developing and promoting access to regional ports and airports, with associated marketing support provided by the tourism agencies.
4.10 Domestic Marketing	4.10.1 In view of the significant expenditure by Irish residents on overseas holidays and the quality tourism product on the island, there will be an increased focus on encouraging and promoting Home Holidays. Specific marketing funding will be allocated for appropriate campaigns.
4.11 Overseas Marketing	4.11.1 To ensure that Ireland achieves the economic growth targets outlined in this policy statement, the Department and the Tourism Agencies will focus marketing efforts on those high-growth regions and market segments with the strongest prospects of achieving the growth objectives of this policy statement.
4.12 The Diaspora	4.12.1 The Tourism Agencies will develop leisure and business diaspora tourism proposals that will have a long-term legacy benefit with a focus on delivering on our regionality and year-round objectives.
4.13 Business Events	4.13.1 To realise the full potential of business events, a collaborative and coordinated whole of Government approach will be taken to the on-going development of the Irish business events industry, in line with Ireland's Business Events Strategy, for the delivery of increased value for tourism and beyond.
4.14 Major Sports Events	4.14.1 The hosting of major sporting events can provide a significant tourism boost to the host country. Potential tourism benefits will also be a key consideration in the development of a new International Sports Diplomacy Strategy following the publication of Ireland's International Sports Diplomacy Framework.

Empowering Communities

Empower communities to benefit from the economic and social progress that tourism has the potential to deliver, in a way that enhances quality of life and preserves our natural assets for future generations.

SECTION	POLICY OBJECTIVE
5. 5.1 Regional and Local Prosperity	5.1.1 A key objective is to spread the benefits of tourism to all regions, and this will be a priority consideration for all public investment decisions. In particular, the need to see less mature tourism destinations grow at a faster level than the traditional tourism regions will be a priority of Government and the tourism agencies. Regional Tourism Development Strategies will be activated through a series of DEDPs, and local tourism enterprises will have an enhanced role in the development of these strategies. 5.1.2 The Destination Towns Scheme and the DEDPs will be expanded during the lifetime of this policy statement, and the tourism agencies will work with industry to develop itineraries and packages to keep visitors within regions for longer.
5.2 Developing Tourism in The Midlands	5.2.1 It is recognised that the midlands region has not benefitted from tourism growth to the same extent as many more mature tourism destinations. The EU Just Transition Fund provides an opportunity to transform the tourism offering in the region. The Department and Fáilte Ireland as the intermediary body, will work closely with other State agencies and private stakeholders to ensure that all projects in receipt of EU Just Transition Funding are delivered by 2026. 5.2.2 In terms of delivering a high quality, sustainable tourism offering, all learnings gleaned from the EU Just Transition Projects will be fully factored into the design of future public funding schemes for tourism projects.
5.3 Tourism on a Shared Island	5.3.1 The Government is committed to ongoing cooperation in the overseas marketing of the island of Ireland as a holiday destination. In this regard, the Government will work with counterparts in Northern Ireland to ensure that Tourism Ireland continues to be adequately resourced to successfully carry out its remit and help achieve the policy objectives set out in this policy statement. 5.3.2 The Department, in consultation with the tourism agencies will continue to support Shared Island bids for joint initiatives which will enhance regional connectivity and create more cohesive visitor experiences across the island. 5.3.3 Under the All Island Strategic Tourism Group, which was established by the North South Ministerial Council, the Department and tourism agencies will work with counterparts in Northern Ireland to identify key areas of North/South coordination and co-operation to harness the tourism potential of the whole island, offering rewarding experiences for visitors, while supporting communities across the island. 5.3.4 Encouraging two-way flows of tourists between the South and the North can potentially benefit both economies as well as having a positive environmental impact when substituted for an overseas holiday. Accordingly, the tourism agencies North and South will work together to further develop appropriate opportunities across the entire island
5.4 Enhancing Seasonal Distribution	5.4.1 To ensure a tourism industry that benefits the entire community, extending the tourism season will be a priority consideration for all public investment decisions. The tourism agencies will have an enhanced focus on marketing the off-peak season, from October to May and will ensure that support for events, festivals and tourism infrastructure prioritise initiatives that can provide year-round visitors
5.5 Tourism Accommodation	5.5.1 To achieve the thriving tourism sector envisaged by this policy statement, it will be a priority of Government that all relevant accommodation currently being used for humanitarian purposes is transitioned back to tourism use over time.

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	5.5.2 To support sustainable growth in tourism across all regions, the Government will develop a Tourism Accommodation Strategy. This Strategy will guide the provision of an appropriate mix of accommodation options, exploring innovative approaches alongside conventional models, with particular focus on less mature tourism destinations. 5.5.3 New legislation will be enacted in 2026 to introduce regulatory controls and establish a register for short-term letting properties. In parallel with this, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage will publish a National Planning Statement for Short-Term Letting. This will allow the tourism sector to develop in a way that recognises and is complementary to the wider ambitions of local communities, both economically and socially.
5.6 Rewarding Careers in Tourism	5.6.1 Interactions with capable and courteous staff at tourism businesses are central to visitor satisfaction. A range of initiatives will be promoted by Fáilte Ireland, in collaboration with the Department and the tourism industry, to support quality employment practices and diverse career opportunities 5.6.2 To ensure a continued coordinated and efficient approach to address labour shortages, the Department will work with industry and across Government on key issues, such as ensuring access to required skills from overseas for priority occupations and the EGFSN will review the future requirements for the sector. 5.6.3 The Department will work with other relevant Departments, agencies, representative bodies and education providers to continue the work of the Hospitality and Tourism Careers Oversight Group, established to address labour supply and skills development issues for tourism businesses.
5.7 Dublin City Taskforce	5.7.1 DETE and the tourism agencies will continue to engage with the Department of the Taoiseach in relation to the achievement of the objectives of the Dublin City Taskforce Plan and improving Dublin's positive first impression and reputation with visitors, while ensuring that tourism implications are fully considered in all implementation measures.
5.8 Marine Tourism Policy	5.8.1 The Tourism Agencies and other relevant stakeholders will develop a new Marine Tourism Strategy to set out how tourism can be grown further in coastal communities. The new Strategy will include proposals in relation to the effective marketing of the Islands as a unique tourist experience and explore potential enhanced benefits from cruise tourism.
5.9 Tourism and the Local authorities	5.9.1 The Department will work with the CCMA, Fáilte Ireland and the local authorities to support the planning and delivery of visitor-focused infrastructure and services, including investment in attractions, public spaces, and facilities. This collaboration will promote co-ownership and alignment with local priorities, enhancing the overall visitor experience and strengthening Ireland's tourism offering. 5.9.2 DETE and Fáilte Ireland will assist and cooperate with the regional assemblies in the preparation of regional spatial and economic strategies to ensure that the interests of the tourism sector are appropriately reflected in the strategies and subsequent County Development plans.

Growing a Sustainable Future

Ensure Ireland's natural and built environment remains a key attraction for unique tourism experiences while ensuring the tourism sector plays its part in achieving our climate objectives.

SECTION	POLICY OBJECTIVE
6. 6.1 Climate Adaptation	6.1.1 To ensure the tourism sector is resilient to impacts of climate change and that we can sustain and enhance sustainable enjoyment of our natural environment and amenities, DETE will publish and implement a detailed Tourism Sectoral Adaptation Plan.
6.2 Sectoral Carbon Emissions	6.2.1 To ensure that tourism plays its part in achieving national and international emissions reduction targets, a baseline figure for the carbon emissions of the tourism sector will be calculated by Fáilte Ireland. This will require a thorough analysis of current emissions trends and sustainability measures. Subsequent plans to give effect to this policy statement will contain tourism specific emission reduction targets.
	6.2.2 Implementing effective climate actions across the tourism value-chain will be a priority focus. Future industry supports will take account of climate impact with assistance prioritised to applicants that demonstrate commitment to good practice on environment, biodiversity and climate action.
6.3 Protecting the Environment, Biodiversity and Habitats	6.3.1 Ireland's natural environment is an essential component of the tourism offering and to ensure it is preserved, DETE will continue to assess all national policies to ensure they support sustainable tourism and tourism communities. Fáilte Ireland as a designated body under the Planning Acts will input as required to ensure development proposals do not damage Ireland's habitats and protect the overall quality of the tourism offering.
	6.3.2 Ireland's biodiversity underpins the overall tourism offering and the quality of life in tourism communities. To enhance Ireland's biodiversity, guidance and supports will be introduced for tourism businesses on nature-positive measures at tourism facilities such as allowing wildflower meadows to develop; protecting wildlife habitats; and restricting use of weedkillers and pesticides, which can harm habitats and non-target species.
	6.3.3 If planned and managed carefully, tourism can support a net gain in biodiversity quality, providing a benefit to visitors and to local communities. The Department will work with local authorities to identify and highlight examples of locations where tourism is contributing to improvements in habitats and a recovery in species numbers. These case studies will incorporate, where possible, natural capital approaches, and will be used to inform conservation actions and the careful development of visitor facilities, with a view to growing nature focused tourism.
6.4 Measures to Address Transport Emissions	6.4.1 The tourism agencies and the Department will work to promote tourist travel to Ireland by ferry and sail/rail initiatives.
	6.4.2 Recognising the importance of aviation to maintaining the tourism sector, the Government will continue to engage at International and EU level and with industry stakeholders to reduce aviation emissions including through the implementation of the Aviation Regulation.

Growing a Sustainable Future

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SECTION	POLICY OBJECTIVE
	6.4.3 Increasing the use of public and active transport by tourists is a priority to achieving decarbonisation in the sector. As part of the implementation of the DEDPs, larger tourism attractions will be supported to examine the feasibility of using sustainable transport modes and the tourism agencies will explore the development of an online tool to enable decarbonised touring. 6.4.4 Charging infrastructure is a critical enabler for a successful transition to low-carbon transport modes. The Department will work with the tourism industry and relevant public bodies to accelerate rollout of charging points for electric vehicles and bikes at or adjacent to key sites including visitor attractions, ports, airports, accommodation and on greenways. 6.4.5 Government will work with bus operators and car hire companies to stimulate a switch from fossil-fuel vehicles to electric or other low-carbon options. 6.4.6 The Department and relevant agencies will work with the tourism industry to facilitate and market the use of more sustainable fuels in the rental fleets and other boats servicing the tourism sector.
6.5 Circularity and Waste Prevention	6.5.1 Relevant agencies will work with the tourism industry to reduce resource consumption and prevent unnecessary waste. Case-studies on avoided product use and waste prevention will be used to highlight best practice for implementation by the sector 6.5.2 The tourism agencies will also incorporate metrics on circularity and recycling into any Sustainable Tourism Assurance Programme to ensure a fair and robust reporting of environmental commitment. 6.5.3 To complement actions by operators on waste prevention, the tourism agencies will work with the tourism industry to develop an engaging and positive awareness campaign for tourists, on their role in water conservation, recycling and reducing food waste. 6.5.4 In view of the environmental and potential economic benefits from “slow tourism” the tourism agencies will develop appropriate campaigns which will elevate sustainable travel options, have a greater focus on slow activities and showcase the emotional benefits of greater immersion in nature. 6.5.5 Fáilte Ireland is a signatory of the national Food Waste Charter and will work with the EPA and the tourism industry to implement the objectives of the Charter. Furthermore, the agency will ensure that operational training and best practice in relation to food waste reduction will be rolled out in partnership with Skillnet Ireland.
6.6 Tourism-Environment Engagement	6.6.1 To ensure enhanced collaboration on environment and climate issues, the Department and agencies will develop a process to ensure regular engagement between the tourism sector, bodies mandated to protect Ireland's natural and built heritage as well as agencies working to enhance environmental sustainability

Implementation and Data

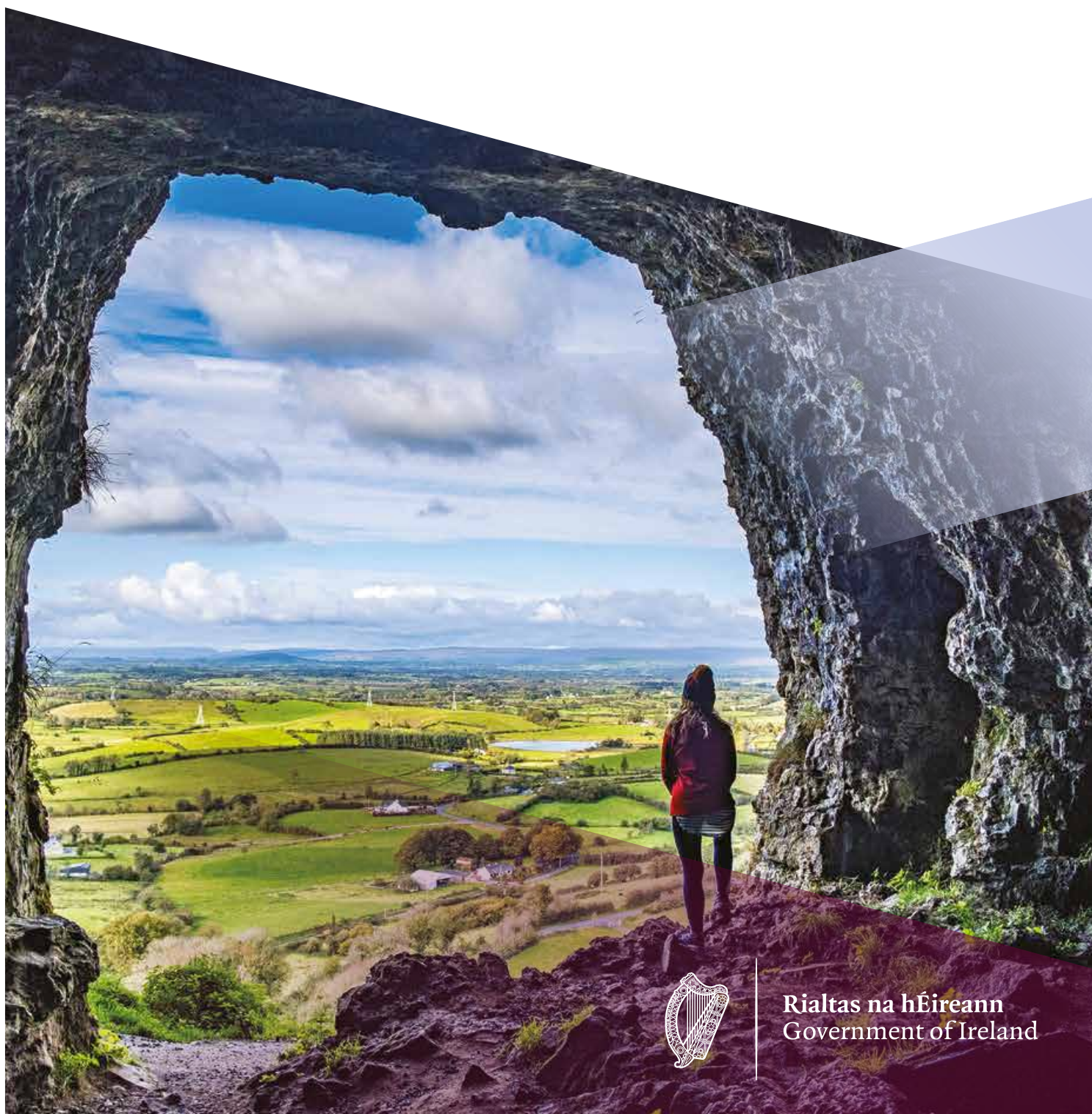
Ensure Ireland's natural and built environment remains a key attraction for unique tourism experiences while ensuring the tourism sector plays its part in achieving our climate objectives.

SECTION	POLICY OBJECTIVE
7. 7.1 Actions to implement policy objectives	7.1.1 A Tourism Policy Oversight Group will be established by the Minister for Enterprise, Tourism and Employment following the publication of this policy statement to oversee implementation and report on progress. This group will comprise representatives from Government, tourism agencies, industry bodies, local authorities and other strategic partners.
7.2 Data and Statistics	7.2.1 The availability of up to date, relevant and publicly available data is essential to monitor progress on the delivery of policy. To support the development of a useful and implementable indicator set for the tourism sector, the Department and the CSO will provide for regular engagement with the tourism industry. Furthermore, the Department, the CSO and relevant stakeholders will review any additional sources of data or gaps that need to be addressed to provide an enhanced understanding of AI in operations, marketing and service delivery tourism performance, its economic contribution and the composition of the sector.
	7.2.2 The ongoing development of the EU Tourism Dashboard will also be examined to provide opportunities to develop insights on performance and trends in comparator countries. As part of this work, the performance of the sector will be benchmarked against countries with similar tourism profiles and investment.

Glossary of Pictures

Page	Title of Picture	Credit
Front Cover	Benbulbin, Co. Sligo	Tourism Ireland photographed by Gareth McCormack
5	Bike Hire, Westport town, Great Western Greenway, Co Mayo	Courtesy Fáilte Ireland
6	Slieve League	Tourism Ireland photographed by Paul Lindsey
8	Causeway Coast and Donegal boat tour 17	Tourism Ireland photographed by Joshua McMichael
11	Boating in Leitrim	Tourism Ireland photographed by Jonas Fellenstein
12	Lough Feeagh, Nephin Beg Mountains, Co Mayo	Courtesy Gareth McCormack
14	Family walking, Belvedere house, Co Westmeath	Courtesy Fáilte Ireland
18	Old Rail Trail, Greenway, Co Westmeath	Courtesy Fáilte Ireland
21	Chimney Cove_surfers and rainbow, Co Cork	Tourism Ireland photographed by Joshua McMichael
22 & 23	2023 Samhain Festival, Longford	Courtesy Fáilte Ireland
24	Oysters, Aisling Hotel, Dublin City	Courtesy Aisling Hotel
27	Treetop Walk, Beyond the Trees Avondale, Co Wicklow	Courtesy Fáilte Ireland
28	'Livin' Off the Hook', Yoga, Hook Lighthouse, Hook Head, Co Wexford	Courtesy Fáilte Ireland
29	Hand cycling, Tralee-Fenit Greenway, Co Kerry	Courtesy Fáilte Ireland
30	2025, St. Patrick's Festival, Parade, Alf the Newt, Dublin City	Courtesy St Patrick's Festival Dublin
33	2024, Global Gaelic Games Social Festival, Fitzgerald Stadium, Killarney, Co Kerry	Courtesy Fáilte Ireland
34	2023, Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, The Homecoming, Mullingar, Co Westmeath	Courtesy Ben Millett for Fleadh Cheoil na hEireann, Mullingar.ie
35	Musicians in McHughs_ Tradfest_2025	Tourism Ireland by Brian Morrison
36 & 37	Golfers_06_Adare Manor Golf_Co Limerick_	Tourism Ireland
38	Glamping pods, Pod Umna Village, Portumna, Co Galway	Courtesy Brian Morrison
40	Wild Alpaca Way, Malin Head, Co Donegal	Courtesy Gareth Wray
42	Boat at Garnish Island	Chris Hill Photographic
43	2024, Celebration of Irish and American Friendship, Festival, Killarney, Co Kerry	Courtesy Killarney Chamber Festivals Ltd
45	Fleadh Cheoil Ennis Co Clare	Tourism Ireland
46 & 47	Aran Food Tour, Inis Mor, Aran Island, Co Galway	Courtesy Fáilte Ireland
48	Cape Clear Ferries, Tour, Co Cork	Courtesy Fáilte Ireland
51	Sightseeing train, Westport House, Co Mayo	Christian McLeod
52	Lord Mayor's Ball 2020, The Round Room at The Mansion House, Dublin City	Courtesy Conor McCabe
53	Croke Park Stadium, Dublin	Courtesy Croke Park Stadium
54	Cape Clear island Boat Trip Co Cork	Tourism Ireland by Joshua Hannah
58	Winterval, Christmas, Festival, Co Waterford	Courtesy of 256
62 & 63	Summit, Croagh Patrick, Clew Bay, Co Mayo	Courtesy Fáilte Ireland
64 & 65	Butterfly Flower at Kilarney House & Gardens_Co Kerry	Tourism Ireland photographed by Patrick Lennon
71	Adventure Sligo 12	Sligo County Council
72	Lough Boora Discovery Park, Tullamore, Co Offaly	Courtesy Fáilte Ireland
74	Gaia, Illuminated Sculpture of Earth, Trinity College, Old Library, Dublin City	Courtesy Barry McCall Photographer
77	Acushla Food Trailer, Croagh Patrick, Murrisk, Co Mayo	Courtesy Fáilte Ireland
88	Horse riding, Trekking, Doonagore, Co Clare	Courtesy Cahir Davitt / Davitt Photography
Back Cover	Caves of Keash, Co Sligo	Courtesy SligoWalks.ie





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