



# COUNTY SLIGO TOURISM STRATEGY 2018-2023

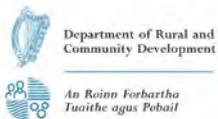




One of Ireland's most vibrant and iconic tourism destinations focused on the unique culture, heritage and natural assets of the county.

[www.sligotourism.ie](http://www.sligotourism.ie)

This Strategy has been funded by the LEADER Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.



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# Message from the Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council

As Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council, I warmly welcome the development of the County Sligo Tourism Strategy 2018 to 2023 which is the first dedicated Tourism Strategy for the county.



County Sligo with its unique and distinctive landscape possesses all the attributes to contribute to making it a compelling visitor destination. Its huge literary offering, its significant archaeological value and its long association with culture and creativity are but a few of its many strengths.

The adoption of a countywide Tourism Strategy means that there is an agreed road map in place to achieve the vision set for Sligo which is:

**“to have its rightful place as one of Irelands most vibrant and iconic tourism destinations focused on the unique culture, heritage and natural assets of the county”.**

To achieve this vision the strategy sets out four strategic priorities each with key actions and initiatives.

Growing the county’s visitor economy will deliver significant economic benefits as well as sustaining the social, cultural and environmental values for local communities. Tourism presents an opportunity to boost economic activity within the county, to support existing employment and businesses while also creating new enterprises and jobs. Tourism success will also act as a catalyst for growth in other sectors, including the creative arts, food and education.

Collaboration has been at the heart of the development of this strategy which was informed by the tourism sector, community sector, state bodies and individuals who recognise Sligo’s tourism potential. In particular Sligo Tourism Ltd working closely with Sligo County Council provides the ideal structure to deliver on this strategy.

I would like to thank everyone involved for their input and commitment to this strategy and encourage the fostering of further collaboration and partnership to ensure that the strategy is implemented effectively and sustainably across the whole county which will deliver a stronger tourism sector and ensure job creation and greater prosperity for the citizens of our beautiful county.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Seamus Kilgannon". The signature is written in a cursive style.

**Cllr Seamus Kilgannon,  
Cathaoirleach Sligo County Council**

# Foreword from the Chair of Sligo Tourism Ltd

Sligo aspires to be a top 10 tourist county destination within 5 years, employing 3,400 and generating €149m annual revenue. Delivering on such an ambition, however, requires a particular focus and unity of purpose.



The County Sligo Tourism Strategy 2018-2023 provides the strategic focus and vision for Tourism development in the County. Led jointly by Sligo Tourism Ltd. and Sligo County Council with contributions from local, regional and national tourism stakeholders, it provides a strategic roadmap for the development of world class product experiences to the backdrop of a Yeats theme. Formulated after a wide consultation exercise, it is reflective of the needs of the local and regional tourism sector while being informed by best practice within the industry.

In that regard, it provides a focus on marketing and communications through the use of web and digital technology raises destination awareness under a unified County Brand and Story while also collaborating with Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland to maximise the potential of the Wild Atlantic Way for the benefit of the County.

It seeks to build on the industry capability through tourism awareness programmes, skills audits and training plans to address gaps, create visitor service plans and industry and business to business (B2B) networking.

Strategic objectives include the development of a major attraction with a capacity for 100,000 visitors per annum, secondary attractions of 50,000–70,000 visitors and all supported by a vibrant arts, adventure, culture, music and quality food offering.

Delivering on such an ambitious strategy will be challenging and to assist in that process, Sligo Tourism Ltd. has been restructured and additional resources identified that will underpin the success of the strategy. I wish to acknowledge the Board and Sligo County Council for their leadership and vision in this matter. With their continued support, I am confident that the implementation of the actions as set out in the Strategy will provide a foundation for the continued sustainable growth of tourism in Sligo.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ciarán Hayes". The signature is written in a cursive style.

**Ciarán Hayes,**  
**Chair of Sligo Tourism Ltd.**



# Introduction

CHAPTER

1

# 1 Introduction

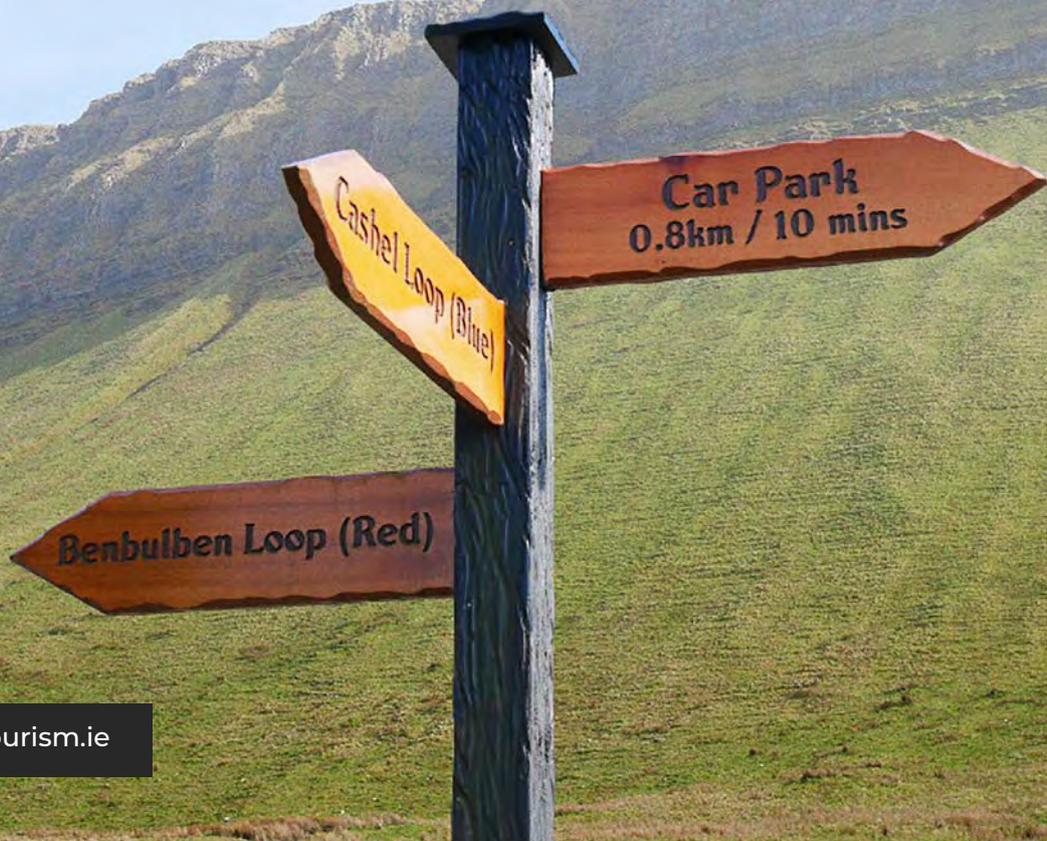
The County Sligo Tourism Strategy for the period 2018 to 2023 sets out the road map for County Sligo's tourism policies, marketing and investment. The Strategy and Action plan is modelled on the research, consultations, submissions and best practice with stakeholders in the industry.

## **Its goal is:**

To ensure the growth of the industry in an orderly and sustainable way, delivering world-class visitor experiences and achieving the highest possible economic and social return on tourism activities for the County.

The Strategy was commissioned by Sligo Tourism Ltd and developed in collaboration with Sligo County Council. Tourism requires a cross-cutting approach and a diverse range of approaches, projects and stakeholders involved. Coordinating and involving them is a key to reaching the objectives proposed.

The Strategy identifies the key priorities that will enable the stakeholders to effectively contribute to the development of County Sligo as a prime tourist destination. Competing in a highly competitive global market, County Sligo wishes to develop and strengthen ties with other counties and destinations, to embark on collective projects that will benefit the industry.





# Executive Summary

CHAPTER

# 2

## 2 Executive Summary

The purpose of this strategy is to co-ordinate an approach to increase the contribution of the County's tourism sector to the economy, to generate and sustain employment and to improve quality of life within County Sligo. It recognises that successful tourism destinations operate in a highly coordinated manner across public and private sector stakeholders.

The leadership and collaboration required for the implementation of this Strategy is provided through the implementation structures. Sligo Tourism Ltd is the lead implementing body. It will work in close in cooperation with Sligo County Council and the implementation working groups. This will result in a cross industry partnership approach involving public bodies, private and community sector interests driving the strategy forward.

The successful implementation of this strategy will make County Sligo a compelling and must-see tourism destination along the Wild Atlantic Way. The core of the strategy is to build differentiating advantage using the many unique qualities of County Sligo as the key themes and attractors and at the same time linking this in strongly to the Wild Atlantic Way proposition.

The major theme/attraction of scale chosen is the development of the Yeatsian heritage and legacy of County Sligo. This theme connects and resonates strongly with the culture, heritage, outdoors and scenery of County Sligo and therefore offers huge potential to create many different and compelling visitor experiences of interest to a wide range of market segments. Three secondary themes/attractions of scale will be prioritised for development, again based on unique aspects and strengths that county Sligo possesses.



These are **1) Outdoor Activities**, including the water based resources of the County, **2) Archaeology** and its history and **3) Culture and Creativity**. The excellent food provenance of county Sligo along with its culture such as music and the arts shall be themes that cross cut and contribute excellent to the experiences developed.

The development of world-class visitor experiences will be based on firm evidence and intelligence that reflects visitor's motivations and preferences. This will require the industry to collaboratively work to create experiences that offer authenticity, exploration, engagement with the host region and elements of personalisation. County Sligo has a superb baseline of product upon which to build these experiences. This includes its scenery, heritage and culture, food, music and water resources.

Building awareness of the destination and what it has to offer will be an ongoing part of marketing activities. The Marketing Programme will embrace and leverage existing and emerging best in class digital technology. To generate increased business from wholesale and business to business markets, a much enhanced continuous programme of sales and marketing, including trade show attendance will be put in place.

The Customer Experience is a core part of the overall visitor experiences. This strategy recognises that the industry must make the customer experience paramount. To ensure this annual visitor service plans and training plans will be implemented to increase the capability of the industry to meet and exceed customer expectations. The education and development of industry skills will be driven via an annual training plan, underpinned by continuous training needs analysis. As tourism is everybody's business, tourism awareness and county Sligo ambassador programmes will create this awareness and understanding across the county.

Building a distinctive County Sligo proposition through leveraging the existing experiences and building on the Sligo brand will enable County Sligo to compete and win nationally and internationally.



## By 2023 County Sligo will:

### REALISE ITS VISION

Have its rightful place as one of Irelands most vibrant and iconic tourism destinations focused on the unique culture, heritage and natural assets of the county.

### ACHIEVE RESULTS

A top 10 performing County with  
3,400 employed in Tourism sector  
€149m revenue generated by Tourism sector  
548,000 visitors

## Through the delivery of 4 Strategic Priorities

### PRODUCT & EXPERIENCES

- › Flagship Theme / Attractor based on Yeats
- › 3 Secondary themes based on Outdoor Activities, Archaeology and Culture and Creativity
- › Internationally known festivals of difference
- › Innovative market ready and saleable experiences
- › County wide trails in food, walking, heritage and outdoor activities

### MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

- › Unified county brand and story – Sligo Sets your Spirits Free
- › Best in class web and digital presence for Sligo experiences
- › Strong coordinated B2B and wholesale sales activities
- › Strong collaborative marketing campaigns at national and international level

### INDUSTRY CAPABILITY

- › Annual skills development plan implemented
- › Annual visitor service plan implemented
- › County Sligo ambassador and tourism awareness programmes
- › Industry and Business to Business networking to grow collaboration and overall business
- › Continuous training needs analysis
- › Strong linkages with education providers

### LEADERSHIP & COLLABORATION

- › Top level leadership from Sligo Tourism td and Sligo County Council
- › Expert working groups to implement actions and initiatives
- › County and national partnerships developed
- › Evaluation, monitoring and review of strategy implementation
- › Public communication and engagement process
- › Acquisition of data and intelligence

## Delivered by industry Intelligence and Collaborative Actions

Decisions and actions informed by evidence and evaluated on the potential to deliver best returns

Market and Industry databases to be developed and maintained and used for sales, marketing and training purposes

Cross Industry collaboration to create innovative products, services and experiences

Focus on the future through constant development of new experiences, matching market trends and motivations



# Development of the Strategy

CHAPTER

3

# 3 Development of the Strategy

This section outlines the role and structure of the two principal drivers and delivery partners for the County Sligo Tourism Strategy. They are Sligo Tourism Ltd and Sligo County Council.



Sligo Tourism Ltd was founded in 1998 as a sectoral support project to drive the marketing and capacity development of the tourism industry in the county. It has a Board membership made up of public and private stakeholders including Local Government, State Agencies and Service Providers. Collectively the board bring a wealth of experience and skills to the organisation.

The Local Government Act 2014, granted Sligo County Council a new responsibility to provide strategic leadership and direction at local level in the area of economic and community development. Thus, Sligo County Council has a key delivery and development role for tourism in the county.

In 2016, Sligo County Council addressed Action 1.5.1 of the County Sligo Local Economic Community Plan 2016-2017, which was to “establish a forum to lead local tourism development”. Under the leadership of Sligo County Council, involving other key tourism stakeholders such as Fáilte Ireland<sup>1</sup>, a review was conducted of structures, leadership and resources in the tourism sector in the county. This resulted in Sligo Tourism Ltd receiving an expanded role for tourism development and tourism promotion in County Sligo. The expanded role and remit of Sligo Tourism Ltd includes the drafting of Tourism Policy/Strategy that defines product, investment, marketing and industry development priorities.

<sup>1</sup> Fáilte Ireland is the National Tourism Development Authority

The realignment of roles of Sligo County Council and Sligo Tourism Ltd presents the opportunity for both parties to work together in close partnership to provide leadership and expertise to deliver the aims and goals of this Strategy. There is now in place the structures that will:

- Provide solid leadership and guidance to the tourism industry, which can grow to become a very significant economic sector in the county.

- Be capable of providing the best support and representation to the industry and all stakeholders in the county.
- Work closely and effectively with all stakeholders, whether local, county, regional or national to develop the tourism industry in County Sligo.

To make the vision and objectives of this plan a reality require the support and cooperation of the many private and public sector stakeholders working together with Sligo Tourism Ltd and Sligo County Council.

AUGHIRIS HEAD



# Tourism Industry Analysis

CHAPTER

4

# 4 Tourism Industry Analysis

## 4.1 Global and Macro Trends

According to the World Travel & Tourism Council, globally 292 million jobs are supported by tourism which accounts for 1 in 10 jobs in the global workforce and Tourism provides 10.3% of the world's GDP. By 2027, it is anticipated that the sector will be supporting over 380 million jobs, as Travel and Tourism continues to grow. In 2016 tourism grew faster than the global economy as a whole and has done so for six consecutive years. Globally almost 1 in 5 of all new jobs created in 2016 were linked to Travel & Tourism.

Recent research undertaken by Sabre in 2014, states that 50% of the travelling population by 2020 will be millennials. These travellers are extremely peer led (sharing on social media is a key platform for their interactions and consumable media). They measure attractiveness of destinations via **experiences** they can partake in, **authenticity** of the experience and **exploration** of unusual and hard to find sights and locations.

The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) 2017 Annual Economic Reports give deep insights into the global travel industry and factors that will shape its future growth.

The general outlook is positive, but some global travel challenges are identified including the general slowdown in consumer spending, especially in emerging markets such as China, terrorism threats and the unknown impacts that Brexit may pose.

Going forward, those destinations able to capitalise on changing expectations with speed and agility are more likely to succeed and grow. Visitor experience is now integral to core travel product offerings. Experiences are generally centred around authenticity, personalised experiences, removal of friction and on-demand functionality. Translating this into workable strategy means that destinations will have to:



**Lever existing and emerging technologies** – The potential provided by the Internet of Things is both immense. Destinations need to understand what technologies consumers are ready to adopt, and what experiences will drive real value. Between increased overall connectivity and rapid rise in mobile device usage, the use of immersive technology to augment experiences will rise, such as virtual reality.

**Customer Experience** – Tourism providers must shift thinking to make customer experience paramount. This will require an increased awareness of customer expectations, re-imagined experiences and appropriate technology strategies, and differentiated offerings to provide unmatched travel experiences.

**Mobile Technology** - Over the next 4 years, another 1 billion people globally will be coming online in emerging markets; for the vast majority of these people, a mobile device will be their only computing device. Customer engagement will continue to see massive shifts towards mobile communications, engagement and information provision.

**Changing Thinking** – Old business models will have to be reinvigorated, with a total focus on the customer, their expectations, technology uses, booking habits etc. Mobile experiences will have to be more immersive and responsive.

**Visitor Experiences** – Research indicates many experiences leave customer needs unmet. These include the:

- › Desire for authenticity, active discovery and being connected.
- › Expectation of transparency and flexibility.
- › Appreciation for feedback loops.
- › Eagerness for simplified interactions and payments.

Understanding and identifying these needs among customers opens an alternative path and offers competitive advantage to a destination.

## 4.2 Tourism Trends – Ireland

The global marketplace is changing at an ever-increasing rate so an understanding of trends, customers and source markets is vital in framing strategy. Visitor motivations are becoming increasingly varied and complex, the emergence of new destinations and experiences as well as easy access to information via the digital world makes the tourism industry a very competitive market place. Examination of recent Irish tourism performance and trends will aid understanding of:

- › Visitor motivations and reasons to visit.
- › Understanding future consumer behaviour.
- › Understanding competition.
- › How to develop future proofed business and strategy models.

Tourism in Ireland continues to grow substantially, with record growth in 2015, 2016 and 2017. A record 10.6m out of state tourists visited Ireland in 2017, bringing in almost €5.8bn in revenue the strongest year on record. These numbers now surpass the targets set in the national policy “People, Place and Policy, Growing Tourism to 2025” for 2025. A significant challenge now faced in popular tourist destinations in Ireland is that of lack of capacity of visitor attractions and the accommodation stock to cater for the number of visitors. These present opportunities for county Sligo to present itself as an “uncrowded” and appealing destination.

This growth follows a number of years of contraction up to 2012 arising from the economic crisis and recession in the early part of the decade. Overseas tourism to Ireland is growing at a much faster rate than domestic tourism with strong growth recorded from all international markets.

The rate of increase in visitor spend from overseas visitors has broadly matched the growth rates in numbers indicating little variation in the spend per visitor across this time period. It is interesting to note that despite the lower growth rates of domestic tourists and decline in Northern Ireland visitors from a high of 1.7 million in 2014 to 1.45 million in 2016, the relative spend per head has increased over this time. This suggests increased consumer confidence from Irish people as the economic conditions of the country improve. However it cannot be taken that this trend will continue on its strong upward gradient as consumers constantly look for value and will switch to destinations which offer better value if prices in Ireland increase.

The Tourism Ireland, Situation & Outlook Analysis Report - June 2017 gives the following analysis and outlook for Irish Tourism.

- Impressive growth recorded from North America (+27%) and developing markets such as Australia (+17%).
- The unknown impact that Brexit may have such as reductions in air access from the UK, imposition of tariffs, exchange rate fluctuations etc.
- Modest growth in European market at 2%
- Continued decline in the Great Britain market at -10.7%.
- Industry sentiment for 2017 remains positive
- Value for money must continue to be a key message especially in Great Britain.
- The long-term implications of increases in accommodation rates and capacity constraints remain an issue with tour operators going forward.
- Accommodation capacity constraints is a challenge in the main tourism centres.
- Exchange rate movements especially Sterling present ongoing challenges.

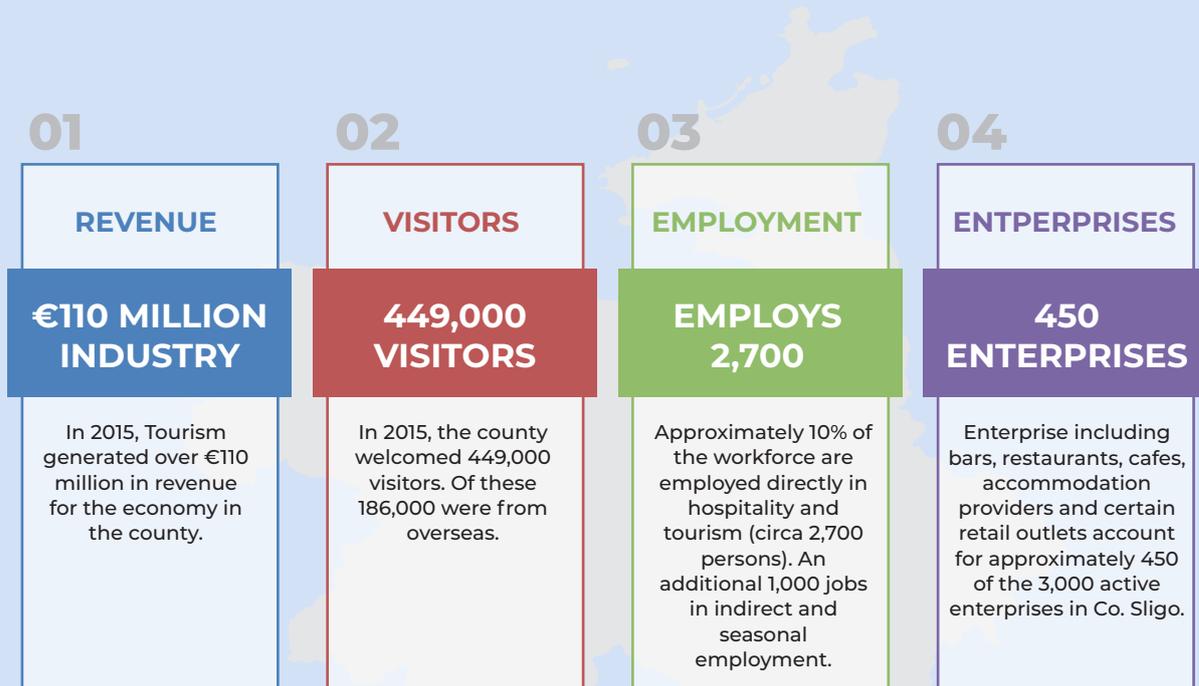


### 4.3 Tourism in County Sligo

The tourism sector in County Sligo is an important component and driver of the economy. It contributes over €110 million annually to the local economy and generates almost 450,000 visitors. It accounts for approximately 2,700 jobs in over 450 enterprises, which represent almost 15% of the total enterprises in the county. County Sligo ranks mid-point in Ireland in terms of both visitor spend and visitor numbers achieved. Given its wealth of natural and cultural resources, the county has the capacity to become a top 10 county within 4 to 5 years.

In 2015, the latest year in which county by county data is available, County Sligo attracted 186,000 overseas visitors and 263,000 domestic visitors. Overseas visitors generated €51m in revenue and €61.2m from domestic visitors. It is estimated that in 2016 the number of visitors to Sligo increased to 464,000, generating revenue of €117.5m. This represents growth of 3.3%.

Figure 1: Tourism in Co. Sligo is a major component of the economy.



### County Sligo - Key Performance Indicators

Sligo as a county performs in a mixed manner when examining the average spend per visitor to the county.

- Spend per overseas visitor in County Sligo is 23% below the national average.
- Spend per North American visitor is 45% of the national average (excluding Dublin), 43% of national average including Dublin.
- Spend per Mainland European visitor is 72% of the national average (excluding Dublin).
- Spend per Great Britain visitor is 119% of the national average (excluding Dublin).
- Spend from domestic market is strong in Sligo as are numbers indicating the importance of this market segment to county Sligo.

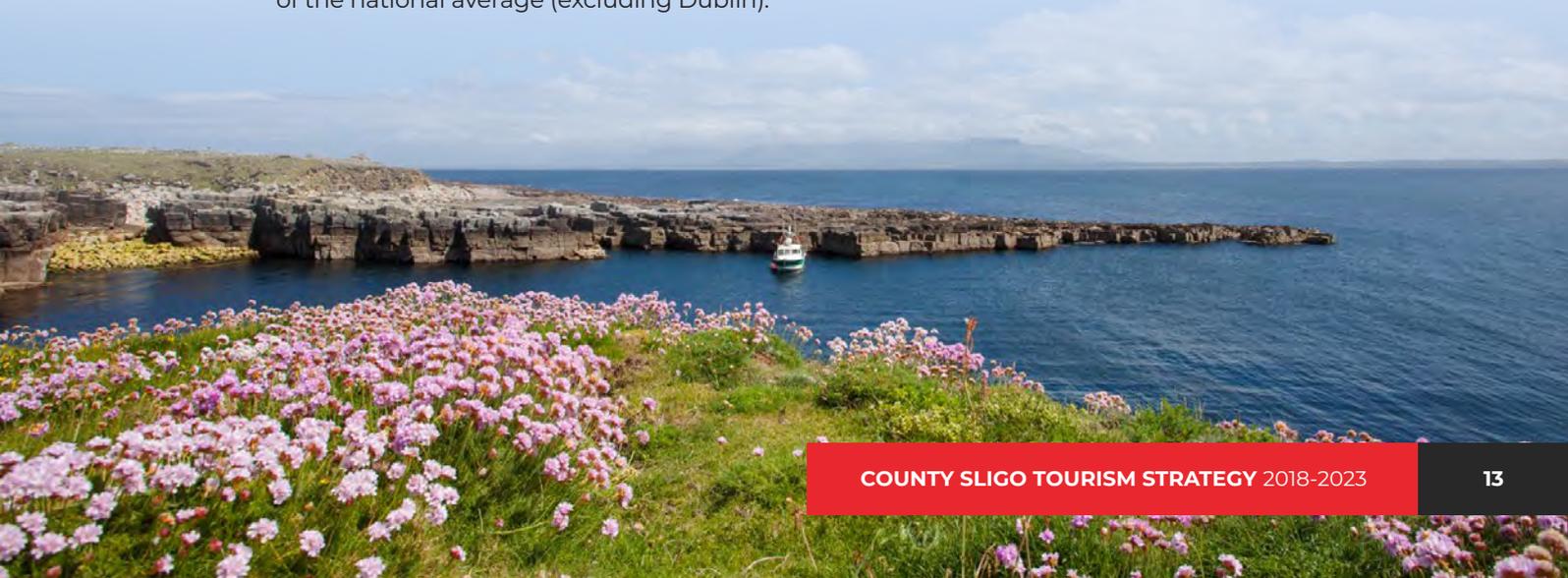
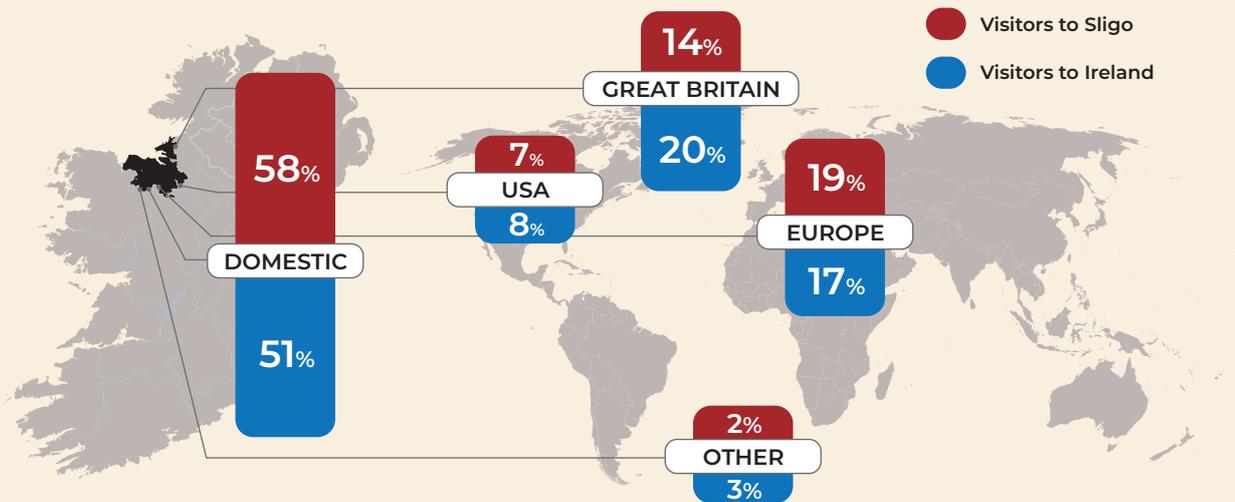


Figure 2: Visitors to Co. Sligo by Source Market - 2015



### Source Markets

County Sligo differs in two significant ways from the national source market trends. It has a much higher reliance on the domestic market at 58% compared to 51% nationally. Despite its closeness to Northern Ireland and the larger Sligo connections in the UK, only 14% of total visitation is from Great Britain compared to 20% nationally.

In terms of source markets, County Sligo shows the following characteristics.

- > 58% of total visitors are from the island of Ireland, compared to the national average at 51%.
- > 33% of overseas visitors are from the UK, well behind the national average of 41%.
- > Sligo has a higher reliance on the Mainland European market with 46% of overseas visitors compared to 35% nationally.
- > Its share of North American visitors is 16% of total overseas the same as the national average.

### Visitor Spend by International Visitors

When comparing the revenue earned per visitor, County Sligo lags well behind other counties in terms of the spend earned from North American and Mainland European visitors, achieving only 45% and 72% of the averages respectively. It is slightly ahead with spend from Great Britain visitors when compared to the rest of Ireland excluding Dublin. This likely indicates that visitors are spending considerably less time in Sligo.

Table 1: Visitor Spend Comparisons

Overall Revenue per visitor	Dublin	Rest of Country	County Sligo
North America	€466.33	€435.96	€200.00
Mainland Europe	€330.65	€321.85	€232.56
Britain	€202.63	€302.26	€322.58
Other Overseas	€742.02	€373.41	€444.44
Overall Visitor Average Revenue	€347.58	€346.06	€267.38

## 4.4 Key Market Segments for County Sligo

### Overseas

According to the statistics, county Sligo experienced a steady annual increase of overseas visitor numbers since 2012 approximately doubling the national growth rates in 2014 and 2015. Mainland Europe is currently county Sligo's fastest growing overseas visitor market, followed by Great Britain in terms of numbers and revenue since 2012. Visitation and revenue from North America have remained static. Visitors from other areas have declined, although revenue from these source markets has increased.

In terms of overseas markets, Mainland Europe has shown strong consistent growth due to the suitability of the product and experiences of county Sligo to this market. This segment will be a key overseas segment to grow and develop over the life of this plan. As the Great Britain market is important in terms of its volume and spend it should also be a priority to target.

### Domestic

The domestic market contributes 58% of all visitors to County Sligo and is therefore the largest source market. It is the largest contributor of revenue and bed nights in the off peak seasons. While this plan has a focus to grow the overall percentage of out of state visitors, the domestic market will always be important for Sligo. Therefore this strategy will continue to strongly target and promote county Sligo to the Domestic market, especially those visitors from Dublin and the east coast given the large volumes of population in this region. This will continue to be a significant market segment to provide business in the off peak season and a contributor to extending the season for tourism operators. Significant resources will be invested in retaining and attracting this market segment to county Sligo. The millennials will be an important target customer from both the overseas and domestic target markets.

## Business Tourism

In 2015, business tourism was worth €669m to the Irish economy, reflecting a 35% increase since 2011. It accounts for 16% of overseas tourism spend in Ireland and one of the highest yield sectors in tourism. Each Business Tourism delegate is worth an average €1,500; almost three times that of the leisure tourist. County Sligo has superb facilities in beautiful surroundings with capacity to accommodate from 10 to 950 delegates, a range of quality accommodation, food and activities. In terms of access recent upgrades on the N4 and N17 have shortened the journey time to Sligo, with Dublin and Belfast just 2.5hrs. Over the next 3 - 4 years the county will see its largest ever road investment programme with significant improvements for the N4, N17, N59 and N15 routes, making the county much more accessible. Stakeholders will work closely with the Fáilte Ireland's Business Tourism Unit and with Tourism Ireland to develop Sligo's full potential as a business tourism destination, especially for business in the off peak season.

## 4.5 Competitive Comparison

Sligo's neighbouring counties include several established tourism destinations particularly Mayo and Donegal, which have a substantially higher volume of tourism. In 2015 County Donegal received 603,000 visitors and County Mayo 765,000. With many similarities between the product in these counties and County Sligo, this indicates more potential for County Sligo to grow its numbers. It is a particular challenge for County Sligo to address within the Wild Atlantic Way to encourage more of these visitors to stay in partake in experiences in Sligo. The product and experiences development initiatives as set out in this strategy aim to address this imbalance.

## 4.6 Conclusions

Based on the analysis presented, the following conclusions are drawn that are relevant to the future strategy for tourism in County Sligo.

- While County Sligo performs well in capturing domestic market business, there is a need to diversify the visitor base to provide more balance in the customer mix. There is a need for a strategy of diversification to attract greater overseas visitors especially from the growing Mainland European segment and to counter any potential negatives of Brexit.
  - The domestic market needs to continue to be a key market segment to promote and sell County Sligo to, especially in relation to its importance as a provider of off peak business.
  - New measures should be put in place to actively sell and promote County Sligo as a location for business tourism, linking the fine business facilities of the county with the great product and experiences on offer.
  - The tourism industry in County Sligo has to remain competitive and offer value for money to customers. These are key criteria for the highly competitive domestic and Great Britain market segments.
  - The quality and depth of the range of visitor experiences in County Sligo has to be improved and broadened to increase the overall length of visitor stay and spend.
  - All visitor experiences both new and existing conform to the expectations of travellers including the qualities of authenticity, personalisation, exploration, connectivity and ease of access.
- The tourism industry in county Sligo has to set in place a culture and ethos of adopting the best practices in digital technology and communications and constantly adopting the practices and technologies to match those used by consumers in relation to travel.
  - Sustainability of the county's assets and resources has to be provided for as an integral part of the tourism strategy.
  - Build the destination to one that is renowned for world class customer experience.
  - The strategy should focus on attracting some of the visitors who are touring the Wild Atlantic Way and the region to stop and stay in County Sligo.





# Tourism Policy Context

CHAPTER

5

# 5 Tourism Policy Context

## 5.1 Introduction

The success and competitiveness of a tourism destination depends not only on the collection of products, services and experiences but also on the application of clear coherent policies and collaboration among stakeholders. Starting at national level policies and objectives filter down into regional and county policies and priorities. The County Sligo Tourism Strategy must be set within the framework of existing national, regional and county policy. Without this, the strategy has less chance of success as it will fail to capitalise on the many initiatives and programmes that national policy implement. This section sets out the relevant national and regional policy frameworks that this strategy will align to.

## 5.2 People, Place and Policy, Growing Tourism to 2025

Published in March 2015, People, Place and Policy, Growing Tourism to 2025 is the Government's National Tourism Policy and it sets out ambitious goals for tourism in Ireland.

The policy sets out ambitious headline targets for Irish Tourism to 2025. These are:

1. By 2025, revenue from overseas visitors, excluding carrier receipts<sup>2</sup>, will increase to €5 billion in real Terms (i.e. excluding the effects of inflation).
2. Employment in the tourism sector will be 250,000 by 2025, compared with around 200,000 at present.
3. There will be 10 million visits to Ireland annually by 2025.



<sup>2</sup> Payments made to inbound carriers to Ireland such as airlines, ferry companies and tour companies

The policy statement is specific in terms of the actions that will be implemented to achieve the goals. The marketing of Ireland as a visitor destination will be evidence based and targeted at a range of geographical and segmental markets with the highest revenue growth potential. The tourism industry will be expected to make a greater contribution to destination marketing activity in regions and segments where awareness of Ireland is already high. The policy statement provides for the realignment of tourism marketing around experiences that motivate visitors and the consumer segments that are most likely to select Ireland as a destination. Related to this on the supply side is a re-framing and repositioning of those assets and experiences in which the most promising market segments have expressed an interest.

This has resulted in the three national propositions of:

- › The Wild Atlantic Way
- › Ireland's Ancient East
- › Dublin

State and public supports for capital investment provide a lasting improvement in the overall quality of the visitor experience. Specifically support for festivals and events will be weighted towards events that have potential to become established and reach financial viability. The policy prescribes an enhanced role for local authorities in leadership, innovation and development and identify supports to aid this. Within the policy, the government has committed to maintaining and developing the cross border relationships and structures for tourism established under the Good Friday Agreement. As a border county, this is especially relevant to Sligo, where a significant share of visitors and revenue is derived from Northern Ireland.

### 5.3 Wild Atlantic Way<sup>3</sup>

The Wild Atlantic Way is Ireland's first long-distance touring route, stretching along the Atlantic coast from Donegal to West Cork. The overall aim of the project is to develop a long-distance touring route that will achieve greater visibility for the west coast of Ireland in overseas tourist markets. Once fully-realised, the Wild Atlantic Way will:

- › Assist in increasing visitor numbers, dwell time, spend and satisfaction along all parts of the route.
- › Re-package the Atlantic seaboard as a destination to overseas and domestic visitors.
- › Improve linkages between, and add value to, a range of attractions and activities.
- › Improve on-road and on-trail interpretation, infrastructure and signage along and around the route.
- › Direct visitors to less-visited areas.
- › Build on the work completed in these areas already and assist businesses, agencies, local groups and other stakeholders along the area to work together.
- › Reinforce the particular strengths and characteristics of all of the areas located along the west coast, while offering the visitor one compelling reason to visit.

It is essential therefore, that the development of tourism in County Sligo will be aligned to the Wild Atlantic Way proposition.

<sup>3</sup> Wild Atlantic Way is a Failte Ireland trademark and one of Failte Ireland programme brands

## 5.4 Realising our Rural Potential – Action Plan for Rural Development 2017

The Action Plan for Rural Development is aimed at delivering real change for people living and working in rural Ireland. The Plan contains 276 actions across five key pillars, all of which aim to improve both the economic and social fabric of rural Ireland. The Action Plan for Rural Development embraces the recommendations of the Commission for Economic Development of Rural Areas report completed in 2013. Pillar 3 of the Action Plan recognises the importance of tourism to the rural economy and is aimed at maximising the rural tourism and recreation potential with key objectives that include:

- › Increase tourist numbers to rural Ireland by 12% by 2019.
- › Support sustainable jobs through targeted rural tourism initiatives, including through the support of key marketing initiatives such as Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way, as well as developing the potential of Ireland's Lakelands.
- › Develop and promote Activity Tourism in rural areas through the development of blueways, greenways and other recreational opportunities.
- › Develop and promote natural and built heritage through investment and development of Gaeltacht areas, enhanced promotion of National Parks and Nature Reserves and other natural and built resources.

## 5.5 North East/North West Action Plan for Jobs 2015-2017

The North East/North West Action Plan for Jobs 2015 – 2017 describes tourism as a sector of strength to be built upon in the region. It sets as one of its key ambitions to capitalise on the Wild Atlantic Way experience in the North West to contribute to the targets in the Governments Tourism Policy Statement. The actions set out in the plan relate to the development of new tourism offerings and a greater level of 'packaging' of the tourism products within the Region to ensure the successful exploitation and capture of particular market segments. The plan places a strong focus on cross border collaboration and identifies the East – West Greenway linking Sligo with Derry and Larne and a cross border literary trail as projects of significant merit.

## 5.6 County Sligo Local Economic and Community Plan

The County Sligo Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021 (LECP) aims to improve the wellbeing of the people and the economy of the county through enhanced strategic planning, better targeting and co-ordination of resources and more meaningful impacts for local communities. In the County Sligo LECP tourism is recognised as a priority and one that contains large potential for economic and employment growth. The development of this strategy directly addresses Objective 1.5 of the LECP:

**“Develop and implement an integrated and sustainable tourism strategy for the county and engage all sectors in the collective promotion and development of Sligo”**

The LECP recognises the role of the Local Authority to provide top level leadership and its development function in relation to tourism. Many of the objectives and actions contained in the plan reflect the role that Sligo County Council is taking in relation to tourism. This strategy will build and expand on these objectives and actions.

In relation to product and infrastructure development, some key projects identified include:

- The development of discovery points along the Wild Atlantic Way at Mullaghmore Head, Streedagh Point, Rosses Point, Strandhill, Aughris and Dunmorán Strand, Easkey Beach and Enniscrone Beach.
- Maintain and improve Sligo's piers and harbours in particular those close to the Wild Atlantic Way viewing points.
- National Mountain Bike Centre, Coolaney.
- Maritime Centre Strandhill.
- Coastal protection works to safeguard local amenities and tourism facilities.
- Tourism product in north Sligo based on the Armada story.
- Support and co-ordinate festivals and events to maximise their economic potential.
- Make Sligo's rich literary and cultural history, in particular the Yeats family legacy, central to the county's international tourism product.
- Develop food trails that combine activities and experiences based on culture.

Importantly in terms of implementation, the plan places a strong emphasis on collective action between private and public sector stakeholders. This reflects the prominence placed



on this approach in the national policy People, Place and Policy, Growing Tourism to 2025.

## 5.7 Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023

The County Development Plan recognises the great resource the County Sligo has for tourism. It highlights the cultural, literary, historical and archaeological heritage of the county as key assets. The plan recognises the importance of the protection of heritage assets and their contexts and the potential that exists within the county for the industry to expand further. It cites that this can be a driver of activity in more peripheral rural areas, many of which are areas of scenic value. The plan identified some challenges including a lack of accommodation stock to support growth in visitor numbers especially in peak periods and deficits in the numbers and range of visitor attractions and amenities.

Within the plan it is the aim of Sligo County Council to promote the development of new tourist attractions, particularly with regard to untapped tourism potential. The Council will co-operate with neighbouring local authorities, cross-border bodies and other agencies to promote and establish sustainable tourism initiatives in less-developed tourist destinations, particularly marginalised rural areas, although it is recognised that rural tourism remains a relatively small niche in the overall tourism context. Unlocking and developing the potential of cultural tourism associated with archaeology, landscape, literary and musical heritage and its festivals is another key objective. The existing accommodation stock of hotels and other accommodation providers provides a good platform for supporting the development of the tourism sector in the county.

## 5.8 County Sligo Heritage Plan 2016-2020

Tourism has a close relationship with heritage given the strength of Ireland's natural and built heritage. The County Sligo Heritage plan carefully considers the tourism value of the county's heritage assets and sets out a series of recommendations and actions that ensure the sustainable exploitation and preservation of these assets. They include:

- Commission heritage guides to showcase County Sligo's Heritage.
- Liaise with key stakeholders and the local community to ensure the conservation, management and interpretation of the internationally important Spanish Armada wreck site at Streedagh.
- Liaise with key stakeholders in the care and maintenance of County Sligo's built heritage and public realm.
- Commission a study which engages local communities in examining the potential of a future application for UNESCO World Heritage Site Status for County Sligo's Neolithic centres of Cuil Irra (centred at Carrowmore) and Lough Arrow (centred at Carrowkeel).
- Research and develop county heritage trails/ themed heritage trails, with a focus on publicly accessible heritage sites and attractions.
- Develop a project to audit heritage assets along Sligo's Wild Atlantic Way.

## 5.9 Conclusions

National policy recognises the economic, social and cultural importance of tourism to Ireland. National policy sets a framework whereby cross industry collaboration among private and public sector actors is encouraged and whereby investments are made to develop visitor experiences that motivate and appeal to the most lucrative market segments. This in turn filters into other relevant national and regional policies such as the Action Plan for Rural Development. At county level, the key policy document is the Local Economic and Community Plan which sets out the community and economic development priorities for the county. Tourism features as a strong driver of economic growth identifying the need for investment in product, marketing and visitor experiences. It emphasises the need for collective action between the private and public based stakeholders and the commitment of the Local Authority to provide top-level leadership. This development of this strategy directly addresses an objective of the LECP and the delivery and implementation structure will formalise the leadership function within the county.



# Building the County Sligo Strategy

CHAPTER

6

# 6 Building the County Sligo Strategy

The foundations of the County Sligo Tourism Strategy were developed from an evidence-based perspective.

Six main aspects were considered in the development of the strategy:

1. Trends and outlook for Tourism in Ireland and Sligo in particular
2. The existing performance of County Sligo
3. Public and Industry consultation
4. Strengths of County Sligo
5. Challenges faced by County Sligo
6. National, Regional and County based policy in relation to Tourism

This approach resulted in this strategy being developed from an evidence based perspective with actions and initiatives designed to address current challenges, build on the strengths and performance of the county, while at the same time identification of new projects and initiatives required to meet the vision and targets set. It will integrate with and support other relevant county, regional and national strategies.



## 6.1 Consultation Process

A series of county wide and extensive public consultations and consultations with key stakeholders and stakeholder groups were carried out to gather the views, opinions and inputs for the strategy.

Six sector meetings were held with over 100 attendees from across the county. These meetings were spread across the various component sectors of the industry being:

- › Festivals and Events Focus Group
- › Adventure and Outdoors Focus Group
- › Accommodation Focus Group
- › Heritage and Culture Focus Group
- › Entertainment and Retail Focus Group
- › Food Focus Group

Individual consultation meetings were held with:

- › The Board of Sligo Tourism Ltd
- › The two Municipal Districts of Ballymote/Tobercurry and Sligo
- › The Local Community Development Committee
- › Sligo County Council SPC 3 – Planning, Community & Economic Development, Arts & Culture

Individual consultation meetings and conversations took place with key private and public sector stakeholders at national and local level. These included, for example, Fáilte Ireland, Sligo BID Company, Tourism Ireland, Sligo LEADER Partnership CLG, IT Sligo. A call for public submissions was made which received 48 responses from individuals, groups and businesses across the county.

The feedback and information gained from consultations was wide ranging and comprehensive, taken together a number of important trends emerged upon which there was consensus across the industry. These are presented in summary form below:

### Product and Visitor Attractions

- › Recognition of the lack of major scale visitor attractions north of Galway with the capacity to drive visitation and more tourism numbers to the north west region. It was acknowledged that county Sligo has the resource and capacity to deliver such a regional attraction with public and private investment.
- › Yeats is best known proponent of County Sligo, and the Yeatsian theme is unique to the county. Considering this nonreplicable value it emerged that it should be the first tier flagship theme and attractor to be developed from a visitor experience point of view for the county. There is much potential to create additional visitor experiences using the Yeats legacy and associations with the county. An idea could be to develop a comprehensive Yeats trail as a starting point, for example a combination of a driving, walking and boat trail encompassing landmarks from Yeats writings and Jack B Yeats paintings. It has the potential as the theme for a major attractor from an experience and marketing perspective for County Sligo.
- › Sligo has relative strengths with particular product and experiences such as its water based resources (coastal and inland), outdoor activities, archaeological heritage, music, stately homes, the Spanish Armada story and spectacular scenery. Collectively these elements should be developed as the second tier of major themes and attractors.
- › County Sligo has invested significantly in recent years in walking infrastructure. The county now has a superb network of walking trails that can cater for all levels and grades of walking. The walking infrastructure has the capability to form a significant part of visitor experiences and should represent a strong offering from the county in the outdoor activities sector, giving competitive experience and marketing advantage. Additionally the county has further potential to expand its walking infrastructure including potential greenways along disused rail lines.
- › County Sligo has a strong heritage and presence of a range of stately homes. A number operate as high end accommodation providers offering associated experiences, while investments in Lissadell House and Hazelwood House in visitor experience will add to the rich offering and distinctiveness of County Sligo. The presence of these houses and their stories and public availability is a major market presentation point for the county.
- › The provision of a covered event space in Sligo City would be a major incentive and attraction for outdoor events and entertainment.
- › Support the development of affordable accommodation especially to cater for weekend and peak season highs.
- › Particular product development needs and priorities for the county that were cited include:
  - + Greenway development
  - + Walking trails and associated experiences
  - + Strandhill Surf Centre
  - + Coolaney Mountain Bike Park
  - + Yeats Association with various aspects of the county including Lissadell / Drumcliffe / Lough Gill / Sally Gardens / Sligo City etc
  - + Spanish Armada story
  - + Proposed developments at Enniscrone and Tubbercurry

### Visitor Servicing

- › The need for localised visitor servicing, especially in relation to phone queries which are currently dealt with via a central call centre. It was felt that it would be more preferable that these are managed at local level.
- › It is important that all businesses and service providers working in tourism (and outside it) are aware of County Sligo's tourism priorities and be able to communicate this in an effective way to tourists.
- › A programme of awareness of the importance of tourism and knowledge of the experiences available within the county should be rolled out.
- › Delivering top class customer service should be a priority for the industry and included within the strategy.

### Festivals and Events

- › Positioning of key events at off peak periods and extend offering to a year round programme.
- › A festivals and events coordination officer is essential to grow and manage the collective offering.
- › Focus on development of a small number of larger festivals to attract visitation and increase the profile of Sligo as a location for such events.
- › Develop an annual calendar of events and make available digitally.
- › Potential to develop more events based around the outdoor recreation, especially to make more use of the county's walking infrastructure.

### Industry Coordination and Collaboration

- › Industry coordination and cooperation needs to take place on an entire county and inter county basis.
- › Professional support is needed to support the industry to create market ready experiences and sell these. These are especially required in the areas of outdoor adventure, food and festivals / events.
- › Coordination of the accommodation base during times of heavy demand to maximise the return to Sligo.
- › Industry collaboration efforts have to improve as this will be a critical part of the success of the strategy.

### Sales and Marketing

- › Strengthen and increase the number of relationships with tour operators for wholesale business.
- › To strengthen and promote the unified County Sligo Brand which is Sligo – "Sets your Spirit Free".
- › The online marketing presence needs to be a standalone, vibrant and modern presentation of a singular message about the county.
- › The necessity of an industry ready and available marketing collateral database (photo library, wholesale contacts, visitor databases, guidance for the industry in terms of marketing and sales activities.)
- › Coordinated attendance at trade fairs and utilisation of best practice sales techniques and tactics.
- › Better representation of Sligo on the WAW website, Discover Ireland and Ireland.com websites.
- › The past success of industry coordinated and organised marketing campaigns and the collective approach used, such as those delivered by Team Sligo should be revisited.
- › Have stronger promotions featuring value for money offering of Sligo in the Domestic market.

## Experiences

- › Support the development, marketing and sale of a range of saleable experiences on both singular themes, (e.g. food experiences) and across themes (e.g. adventure, food and culture).
- › All visitor offerings should include and promote strong and unique aspects of the county's visitor experience. These include the Sligo food provenance, outdoor recreational experience and music culture and experience.
- › Extending visitor times and opening hours on attractions and experiences, and especially during non peak periods as a method of building and growing off peak business to the County.

## Strategic Direction

- › Acknowledging that resources are limited, choices will have to be made regarding investments, which should be made where best return can be generated in terms of revenue earned.
- › Plan for a rebalance in the overall customer mix through developing more international business.
- › Present Sligo as a stronger proposition for Meetings, Incentive, Conference and Events business.

## Training and Development

- › The importance on an ongoing and regular series of training workshops for staff working in the industry on subjects such as tourism trends, customer service, sales and marketing, communications, knowing your area etc.
- › Sligo Ambassadors programme for staff, volunteers, communities and interested stakeholders.

## 6.2 Strengths and Challenges

This section sets out the current strengths that county Sligo has as a visitor destination and challenges facing the industry that this strategy seeks to address. The strengths mainly lie in the strong qualities of the visitor experience particularly in relation to the outdoor recreational activities, food, culture and the unique associations of county Sligo with WB Yeats, and the archaeological heritage and maritime resource.<sup>4</sup>

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
Strong spend and visitation levels from the Domestic Market.	Relative poor visitor spend levels from overseas visitors.
Good access by air from Ireland West Airport, especially from the UK.	Higher reliance on the domestic market and need to re balance the overall sales mix.
Sligo has ample natural resources and raw material to develop a range of experiences sought by todays tourists.	Declining visitation from Northern Ireland, Great Britain and North America.
Arrival of low cost transatlantic carriers to Ireland could stimulate greater visitation from US.	Brexit uncertainty related to ongoing political and negotiation issues with the EU.
Sligo is a compact destination with a huge offering from active outdoors (coastal and inland), entertainment, shopping, arts and drama, culture, heritage. It has a great range of local craft and food markets available on a year round basis.	In the competitive environment that is tourism, Sligo needs to market and present the county as a 'must stop and see' destination along the Wild Atlantic Way.
Pipeline investments secured to address product deficits in the numbers and range of visitor attractions and amenities that include the National Mountain Bike Centre, Coolaney, Maritime Centre Strandhill, Pontoon on River Garavogue.	The need for differentiation. Visitors are motivated by experiences and will opt for a destination which offers an authentic experience that meets their needs, one where they can immerse themselves in the culture. Developing and delivering tailored, unique, world-class experiences in County Sligo that resonate with the target markets will be critical to ensure competitiveness and growth.
Regional Partnership with Ireland West Airport, Knock.	Ensuring that there is sufficient suitable and affordable accommodation for visitors especially at peak times.
Enhanced role for Local Authorities for tourism development under National Tourism Policies.	The resources required to market County Sligo internationally.
County Sligo's position along the Wild Atlantic Way.	Significant additional investment needed to diversify product offerings and provide for a sustained marketing and sales programme.
Increased resourcing given to Sligo Tourism Ltd.	To build, maintain and enhance the quality of the range of attractions and activities on offer while staying relevant to what potential visitors are looking for. The real driver for holiday visitors is the number of things to see, do and experience.
The heritage of Traditional Irish Music with historical links and world famous 'Sligo Style' linking the influential Sligo greats of Coleman, Morrison and Killoran. County Sligo has a reputation for excellence across all music genres and have developed a series of leading music festivals that showcase this helping to build the reputation of Sligo as a Music City and County.	Paths to Purchase. The way people find, book and discuss their holiday is increasingly carried out online and on social networks. This trend has also created a more value sensitive and review sensitive customers. County Sligo must excel in offering value and excellent customer care.
Sligo Airport is an operational licenced Airport and is available for commercial and private aviation. This is a key factor in attracting high spend group travel such as in the golf and MICE segments.	To build a stronger base of business tourism and MICE <sup>4</sup> business in the county, especially in the off peak periods.

<sup>4</sup> Meetings, Incentive, Conferences and Events

A photograph of a forest path with tall trees and a red overlay box. The path is covered in fallen leaves and gravel, leading into a dense forest of tall, thin trees. The lighting is dappled, suggesting sunlight filtering through the canopy. A red rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text 'Strategic Priorities and Objectives'.

# Strategic Priorities and Objectives

CHAPTER

7

# 7 Strategic priorities and Objectives

The purpose of the strategy is to co-ordinate an approach to increase the contribution of the County’s tourism sector to the economy, generate and sustain employment and improve quality of life within County Sligo.

The following Vision Statement is adopted.

## Vision Statement

**That County Sligo gains its rightful place as one of Irelands most vibrant and iconic tourism destinations focused on the unique culture, heritage and natural assets of the county.**

**By 2023 County Sligo to be a top 10-performing county, earning €149 million in revenue and receiving 548,000 visitors per annum, employing 3,400 people and having a strong and diversified all year round tourism economy**

### 7.1 Strategic Priorities

To achieve the vision of the strategy four inter related strategic priorities are set out as below, each with key initiatives and actions

1. Product and Experience Development
2. Marketing and Communications
3. Industry Capability Development
4. Leadership and Collaboration

### 7.2 Strategic Objectives

To deliver on the strategic priorities a number of key objectives are set out.

The development and implementation of this strategy is consistent with the main objective for Tourism contained in the County Sligo Local Economic and Community Plan.

**“Develop and implement an integrated and sustainable tourism strategy for the county and engage all sectors in the collective promotion and development of Sligo”**

**The key strategic objectives listed below underpin and relate to the four strategic priorities. These objectives set the main direction for thought and action in relation to the delivery of the strategy and form the basis upon which the annual work programmes should be built upon.**

1. **Themes / Attractions of Scale** – To develop at least one major theme / attraction of scale capable of sustaining over 100,000 visitors per year in the county. This will support increased visitor spend, bed nights and act as a major marketing focus piece for the county. This theme is selected on the basis that it can give County Sligo a Market Differentiation leading to Advantage, that cannot be copied. In this respect the Yeatsian theme possess all these attributes and is chosen as the major theme and attraction of scale to develop.
2. **Secondary Themes / Attractions of Scale** – To grow or develop up to three secondary themes / attractions that are capable of sustaining 50 – 70,000 visitors per year. These will showcase and give stand out to the particular resonating differentiating factors that Sligo has in a tourism context. Secondary flagship visitor themes are selected based on their relative strength and ability to capture visitors and offer compelling experiences. In this respect, they are:
  - i. Outdoor Adventure – includes walking, water sports, maritime activities, and associated activities.
  - ii. Archaeology and history– includes Neolithic heritage of Sligo, the Spanish Armada story and other associated experiences.
  - iii. Culture and Creativity – includes, music, food, arts.

Coupled with these themes are the possibility of future investments in such product such as potential upgrading of the Carrowmore Visitor Centre, Potential Greenway Investment on the old Western Rail Corridor and the Maritime Centre at Strandhill.
3. **Wild Atlantic Way** - Make this the corner stone of all international marketing and sales endeavors. Therefore market ready and saleable experiences to align to and link into the WAW proposition and any sub WAW propositions for Sligo. Close working relationships with Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland will be the cornerstone of achieving this objective.
4. **Industry Collaboration** – To increase the capability of industry to collaborate and cooperate as a mechanism to drive and retain business. Specifically this will involve actions around:
  - i. International and domestic marketing.
  - ii. Coordinating events such as festivals.
  - iii. Creating saleable experiences especially for the B2B market and wholesale market.
  - iv. Increase capacity of trade to sell at trade shows and in B2B markets.
  - v. Coordinate trade show participation and selling.
5. **Digital Marketing** – To develop and maintain a best in class programme of digital marketing and customer engagement. This has to reflected across the entire purchase path from the inspiration stage to the post holiday stage. As visitors are increasingly using online sources of information and social channels across all stages of the path to purchase the programme has to embrace these including elements such as widely available Wi-Fi. Personal interaction with knowledgeable locals is also an essential element of delivery the customer experience and will be addressed via the Visitor Service Plan.

6. **Product Investments** – First and foremost to utilise the core strengths of the county, aiming to develop and bring these experiences to world class standards. This to be done in line with objectives 1 and 2 above. This shall build on already secured and pipeline investments such as Coolaney Mountain Bike Park, Maritime Centre, Strandhill.
7. **Branding** – The Sligo – “Sets your Spirit Free” brand will be developed and built upon as the cross county unified brand and approach, that will encapsulate all of the experiences and story of the whole county and deliver a unified theme and message.
8. **Market Presentation** – To present coherent menu of choices of ready to go and doable experiences for all of the various target markets (e.g. Family, Culturally Curious, Great Escaper, Social Energisers, Outdoor Enthusiasts<sup>5</sup>). This means developing and presenting a menu of options for each target of actual “off the shelf” experiences in Sligo. They need to be constantly refreshed for relevance, new experiences added, aligned to time of year, holiday patterns etc.
9. **Events and Festivals** – A tactical approach towards the growth and development of events and festivals as drivers of visitation. For the first 2 years of the strategy, support will be geared towards 6 – 7 larger events that: Demonstrate a uniqueness and ability to attract bed nights (overseas preferable) and grow business at off peak times.
10. **Sligo City and Environs** – This is the central hub and largest concentration of accommodation and activities. A vibrant and busy urban quarter will benefit tourism through the entire county. Sligo is also a city with a strong history, heritage and stories. It has particular investment needs that the strategy will support from physical investment to interpretation of the story and history, culture and creativity of the city. Investment projects include a covered area for events in city centre, support networking of the product of the city such as creating linked town walks, information points, events guide and calendar, electronic visitor servicing via apps etc.
11. **Driving business throughout the county** – To spread the impacts of tourism throughout County Sligo through linked experiences, trails and touring routes. This will integrate and drive visitation and tourism to the important clusters of product and experiences across south and west Sligo.
12. **Outside County** – To Incorporate events / activities and experiences outside of the county boundary to enhance the county offering and marketing

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<sup>5</sup> Fáilte Ireland Research and Classification

## 7.3 Strategic Priority Initiatives and Actions

To deliver on the strategic priorities, and fulfil the strategic objectives, this section sets out the key initiatives and actions required under each of the four strategic priorities.

### Priority 1 – Product and Experience Development

**Facilitate investment in infrastructure, new products and experiences that align with the county's best strengths and opportunities and open investment opportunities for both the public and private sector to enhance to visitor experience in the county.**

#### **This will be achieved by the following Initiatives:**

1. A concentrated focus on developing the Yeats theme as the leading theme / attractor for tourism in County Sligo from both a product and marketing point of view.
2. Develop a second tier of thematic experiences and attractors based on the themes of:
  - i. Outdoor Adventure – includes walking, water sports, maritime activities, and associated activities.
  - ii. Archaeology – includes Neolithic heritage of Sligo, the Spanish Armada story and other associated experiences.
  - iii. Culture and Creativity – includes, music, food, arts.
3. Integrating the culture, heritage and food provenance of County Sligo as a cross cutting element on all themes that will enhance the overall visitor experience and delivery of these experiences to visitors.
4. Encourage, support and facilitate investment in new or renewed experiences along with high quality product aligned to the Wild Atlantic Way and aligned to the most lucrative target market segments for County Sligo.
5. Identify and develop saleable and market ready experiences and groups of experiences for international markets, B2B<sup>6</sup> markets and domestic markets. These will be structured to align with chosen market segments.
6. Link all of the product within the county and neighbouring counties to create linked trails and touring experiences so as to disperse the impacts of visitation to the county.
7. Facilitate the delivery of a planned and coordinated event and festival series that attract overnight stays and events that support the differentiating features of the County Sligo story.

<sup>6</sup> B2B is an abbreviation for Business to Business Sales. It refers to sales of product and services to wholesale operators such as Tour Operators.

*Continued >*

### Key Actions

- › Work with project developers to support the development of the first and second tier theme / attractors for County Sligo.
- › Facilitate the implementation of the Events and Festival support plan for the County including the appointment of a festivals and events coordinator.
- › Facilitate an accommodation supply and demand study to ensure investment in new and existing accommodation matches the visitor market needs and contribute to planning policy in the county.
- › Assist the development of touring routes, thematic trails and product clusters aligned to market segments. (domestic, overseas, trade, business).

- › Develop and roll out a county wide Visitor Service Plan to maximise visitor opportunities and ensure a consistent high quality customer experience and service excellence approach in the industry.
- › To work with Fáilte Ireland to develop Visitor Experience Development Plans for the Sligo Coast as part of the Wild Atlantic Way Programme.

### Key Performance Metrics

- › €6m of public funding secured and invested in the county in new tourism products and infrastructure by 2023.
- › An annual growth rate in the economic contribution delivered by the festivals and events sector of 15%.
- › One major theme / attractor advanced.
- › Three secondary themes / attractors advanced, two of which will be completed.

## Priority 2 – Marketing and Communications

**This priority focuses on the promotion of the county of Sligo in partnership with key stakeholders and industry. Its main aim is to present a unified message and story about County Sligo and deliver compelling reasons to visit.**

### **This will be achieved by the following Initiatives:**

1. Developing and coordinating the management of a best in class digital marketing programme to ensure a visitor focused presentation of what the county offers.
2. Strong engagement and cooperation with Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland in the joint promotion and execution of marketing and sales programmes and initiatives for the county.
3. Ensuring that all marketing decisions and campaigns are based on sound research and industry knowledge.
4. Making use of best practice, methods and tools in digital technology and marketing
5. The creation of an integrated county wide interpretation plan and story for the county that will underpin all marketing and promotional initiatives.
6. Developing key partnerships to promote the county with other stakeholders such as neighbouring counties including those in Northern Ireland, Ireland West Airport, Knock and other bodies who have a remit or interest in promoting Sligo. (e.g. Diaspora Societies and Networks, Creative Ireland Strategy).
7. Measuring the return on marketing spend to maximise impact and encourage private sector investment.
8. Conducting research with buyers/ travel trade, both domestically and internationally that define what the visitor is looking for from county Sligo or determine what county Sligo can deliver for their consumers.

### **Key Actions**

- › Secure funding from private and public sector sources for the implementation of the annual County Sligo Tourism Marketing Plan.
- › Work closely with national tourism bodies (Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland) in supporting and participating in their overseas and domestic marketing campaigns. Contribute substantial content to [www.ireland.com](http://www.ireland.com), [www.discoverireland.ie](http://www.discoverireland.ie) and [www.wildatlanticway.com](http://www.wildatlanticway.com).
- › Utilise best practice marketing channels, both traditional and digital, to create two-way communication with visitor segments and drive online conversion and sales conversion.
- › Deliver market impact assessment that allows the public and private sectors to make informed decisions around marketing programmes that will drive and grow the industry.

- › Develop a single marketing collateral database for use in the promotion of the county. This will include for example image database, trade contacts, visitor database, press and media contacts, digital marketing guides.
- › Develop a visitor focused web presence and digital media presence that will encourage the tourism industry to integrate with it. Facilitate the industry to provide saleable and market ready experiences to populate this digital presence.
- › Work with partners to maximise marketing spend, lever public and private investment and share marketing campaigns.

### Key Performance Metrics

- › Increase visitor numbers by 18% to 548,000 visitors per year as tracked by CSO and Fáilte Ireland visitor statistics over the life of the plan
- › Increase revenue earned by 26% to €149 million per year as tracked by CSO and Fáilte Ireland visitor statistics over the life of the plan.
- › Bring to market at least 30 saleable experiences per year and increase the online consumption and conversion rates.



## Priority 3 – Industry Capability Development

**Improve the supply and quality of tourism experiences in the county through delivery of training, education, networking opportunities and facilitation of closer working collaborations among industry stakeholders both private and public.**

### This will be achieved by the following Initiatives:

1. Carry out training needs analysis, which will be revised annually to determine the key training and development needs and skills gaps in the industry.
2. Focusing on delivering needs based county wide training programmes linked to an annual training plan.
3. Developing the leadership capacity of the industry to drive cooperation and collaboration at county and regional level.
4. Developing the leadership capacity of industry to cooperate at operational and strategic level. For example the cooperation on B2B sales and, sharing of resources to maximise economic contribution from events, bundling experiences, centralised ticketing.
5. Understanding visitor and industry trends and sharing these with the industry on a regular basis.
6. Managing and promoting an annual tourism awards programme.

### Key Actions

- Develop a countywide tourism industry database of all businesses, communities, operators and provider to enable direct engagement with industry and public and community stakeholders.
- Develop and implement a Tourism Education programme to address the identified gaps, develop the capability and competitiveness of the county's industry. The training programme will be informed by the results of the training and skills needs analysis.
- Engage with education and training providers to provide tourism and hospitality skills and career promotion in the county as a mechanism of supporting the industry and addressing labour and skills gaps.
- Utilise business, sectoral and voluntary networks to promote the availability of training programmes, encourage county wide participation and as vehicles to encourage the take up of training programmes from the industry.

Organisations such as Chambers of Commerce, Sligo BID, VFI, Sligo Food Trail, Restaurants Association of Ireland, Public Participation Network will be key partners.

- Facilitate the implementation of the recommendations and actions of the annual of the Visitor Service Plan for the county.
- Support the industry through the provision of research and insights that identify consumer trends, emerging opportunities and competitor destination initiatives that are shaping tourism.

### Key Performance Metrics

- Minimum 25% of tourism operators in County Sligo participated in training programmes over the life of this plan.
- Growth of industry engagement and collaboration to levels where County Sligo is seen as a model example of collaboration in Ireland.
- County Sligo is known nationally and internationally as a destination with outstanding customer service.

## Priority 4 – Leadership and Collaboration

**Provide a clear direction for tourism industry in County Sligo that will facilitate growth and development through strong leadership, advocacy and industry engagement.**

### This will be achieved by the following Initiatives:

1. Developing strong and mutually supportive relationships at local, regional and national level with public bodies, local and regional authorities and government and national agencies.
2. Engage with local tourism groups, associations, bodies and communities.
3. Increase strategic and operational engagement with industry operators and businesses at county level to deliver business and revenue growth.
4. Focus on managed and orderly growth having respect for the cultural, natural, environmental and heritage resources of the county.

### Key Actions

- › Review on a continuous basis in conjunction with stakeholders the implementation of the Strategic plan. A major review of implementation and outputs from the plan will take place at the end of 2019. This will allow an opportunity to revise the strategy as required for the remaining 3 years.
- › On an annual basis review operations and processes with a view to helping Sligo Tourism Ltd and Sligo County Council to improve performance in executing this strategic plan.
- › Develop and implement a public communication and engagement plan to raise awareness of the importance of tourism to the economy and tourism developments.
- › Support stakeholders to access public and grant funding for tourism projects for the county.
- › Engage with key government agencies to review and support the implementation of relevant parts of various national plans and strategies relevant to tourism in the region. Examples include the Wild Atlantic Way Programme, Inland Fisheries Ireland Plans.

- › Develop evidence-based research and strong support statements and submission in relation to issues that impede the growth and competitiveness of the tourism industry in County Sligo or in relation to future national and regional policy that will impact tourism in County Sligo.
- › Engage with stakeholders at regional, national and international level to explore and develop collaborative opportunities.
- › Support stakeholders and organisations that are dependent on going public sector funding to explore opportunities to become less dependent on public funding by creating new revenue streams or increased service delivery.

### Key Performance Metrics

- › Long term funding agreements in place between Sligo Tourism Ltd and public and private stakeholders to ensure delivery of this plan to 2023.
- › Increase the numbers employed in the tourism sector by 700 to 3,400 persons by 2023.



# Implementation

CHAPTER

8

# 8 Implementation

## 8.1 Overview

The County Sligo 2018 – 2023 Tourism Strategy sets the direction and provides the framework for the growth, investment and development of tourism within the county. The plan provides the key initiatives across the four key strategic priorities, which matched with a more detailed action plan and annual work plans will align to the strategy’s goals and direction.

Sligo Tourism Ltd and Sligo County Council will work collaboratively with all relevant private and public sector stakeholders to achieve the plan. The implementation of the strategy will be supported by a detailed annual work plan, which shall be agreed collaboratively among all stakeholders and the Board of the company.



The plan will continually be monitored and evaluated on its progress and against the performance metrics as set out. Achievement of targets will require all stakeholders involved to commit to the provision of the required resources (financial, human, technical, and marketing). They will also need to commit to a new-shared working approach across the industry.

## 8.2 Values

Sligo Tourism Ltd and Sligo County Council are committed to achieving the long-term vision goals for the industry, and look forward to working collaboratively with partners to grow the industry to its potential. The plan and its implementation shall be guided by the following values:

1. **Collaboration** – To develop and maintain positive and engaged stakeholders, who promote the development of the vision and solutions.
2. **Leadership** – To lead by example and actively implement, promote and support the strategy and take responsibility for outcomes.
3. **Innovation** – Provide a proactive and adaptable environment that embraces emerging trends and opportunities, where new directions are considered in the achievement of goals and objectives.
4. **Teamwork** – To empower people with shared responsibility, provide access to expertise.

### 8.3 Delivery Structure

Sligo Tourism Ltd has principal responsibility for the implementation of this plan. Sligo County Council will provide policy, leadership support and act as an implementation partner and provide support to the various working groups and projects. Additionally Sligo County Council has a key role in driving and developing infrastructural aspects of the visitor economy and will take the lead role in many of these initiatives or in conjunction with the community and private sector. The Board of Sligo Tourism Ltd will be responsible for putting in place the required human, technical and financial resources and collaboration necessary for the implementation of the plan.

The top-level leadership and direction for the delivery of the strategy rests with the Board of Sligo Tourism Ltd. The Board will work in partnership and collaboration with Sligo County Council and its working groups to ensure actions are delivered and results achieved. It will support and assist the private and public sector stakeholders to implement the work programme and projects.

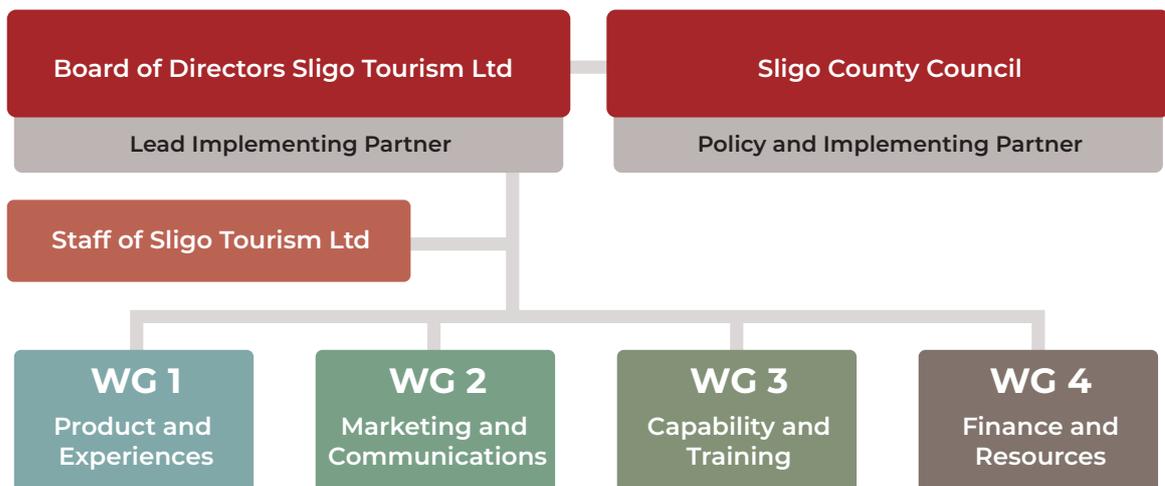
The Board shall establish four working groups to assist and support the implementation of the plan. The working group's members will

have specialist expertise in the subject area. The working groups will have delegated responsibility to oversee their particular work programme and achieve the levels of collaboration required to implement them successfully. As required on a project-by-project basis, other working groups shall be established to oversee and direct the implementation of projects. There will be a working group for each of the strategic priorities of 1) Product and Experiences, 2) Marketing and Communication's and 3) Industry Capability and Training. The fourth working group shall be responsible for Finance and Resources, since this is a cross cutting requirement for all actions and initiatives under the plan, this working group will be established to procure the necessary resources for the implementation of the plan. Actions and initiatives under Leadership and Collaboration will remain the responsibility of the Board of Sligo Tourism Ltd, as Initiatives in this respect integrate with and relate to all of the other strategic priorities of the plan.

The working groups shall be:

1. Product and Experiences
2. Marketing and Communications
3. Industry Capability and Training
4. Finance and Resources

**Figure 3: Implementation Structure**



## 8.4 Role of the Working Groups

In addition to Board members of Sligo Tourism Ltd, the Working Groups will consist of expert members drawn from the private and public sector, with an expertise and knowledge of the subject matter. Members do not have to work in the tourism industry or reside within the county. The working groups will serve as a group of advisors charged with, and responsible for:

- › Monitoring and measuring the progress of implementation of the strategy.
- › Setting and agreeing the annual work programme for approval by the Board of Sligo Tourism Ltd.
- › Identification of priority actions consistent with this Strategy.
- › Oversee procurement of resources for implementation of annual work plan.
- › Delivery of the actions contained in their annual work programme.
- › Review the implementation of the work programme on a regular basis and make recommendations and observations to the Board of Sligo Tourism Ltd.
- › Review forward plans and tactics and suggest modifications if necessary.

The working groups will also act as a resource to liaise with, and encourage the cooperation and participation of industry in the implementation of the Action Plan. They shall actively seek partnerships with other organisations that can assist in implementing the Action Plans. The working groups will meet as needs be.

## 8.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Board of Sligo Tourism Ltd will put measures in place to regularly monitor the implementation of the strategy. Firstly data collection and compliance monitoring will be established to allow the Board to gather all relevant information pertaining to the implementation of the strategy. This will allow identification, explanation of, discrepancies between planned and actual performance.

The Board will on an annual basis review the annual work programmes of each working group to ensure that they are consistent with strategy. Each annual plan should reflect the business operation and recognise changes happening in the industry such as external economic conditions or innovations. Approval of annual work plans will be governed by specific action-based and dated milestones which are supported by evidence based research and consistent with the strategy.

The Board shall on a bi annual basis monitor and review the implementation of work programmes as per the annual work plans. It will examine successes and variations, analyse the causes and consequences of why goals have not been achieved, and react appropriately in each case. The Board will underpin the commitment towards the strategy to ensure positive results at all times.

## 8.6 Focus on the Future

The strategy will focus on growth and continued innovation. Significant resources will be required to maximise the growth potential of the current level of business i.e. increase revenue from existing visitor numbers through more enhanced and resonating experiences. It is proposed for the strategy to be realised over the next 5 years that a three-pronged approach is taken towards implementation to ensure that resources can be concentrated to build on the existing but also explore new possibilities.

This proposed management framework is recommended as it keeps the organisation focused on constantly growing existing business and on creating future revenue streams. This framework will ensure that emphasis is not always on driving current business streams, but

rather introduces an element of diversity so that the industry is always monitoring changes in the market, customer demand or competitive activity. Therefore, it helps eliminate the risk from maintaining a status quo approach.

**Figure 4: Allocation of Resources – Implementation of Strategy**



## 8.7 Funding Mechanisms

The implementation of the plan will require a range of funding streams to cover operational costs and programme costs such as marketing and sales, training and product investment. Significant support from public funding will be required as will match funding provided from industry. There are currently a number of sources of funds available to Sligo Tourism Ltd and its partners. The buy in from the private sector to support the plans implementation financially

will be critical to its success. The majority of public funding streams have to be matched by funds raised from the private sector.

The main potential sources of public funds and support are listed underneath. It is likely that new support streams may be introduced over the life of this plan and the implementing partners will ensure that all avenues of funding support are explored.

**Figure 5: Potential sources and applications of funds for the plan under the main resource requirement areas.**

Product and Experiences	Marketing	Training	Operational
Fáilte Ireland Capital Grants Programme	Jointly funded promotions with Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland	Programme operated by Fáilte Ireland	Sligo County Council
National Rural Development Programme		Local Enterprise Office	National Rural Development Programme
Central Government Funding Programme	National Rural Development Programme	National Rural Development Programme	Employment Support Programme
Employment Support Programme		IT Sligo, St. Angelas College, SICAP and MSLETB	
Festivals Support Programme		Transnational and Cross Border Programme	
Transnational and Cross Border Programme			



# Outputs and Results

CHAPTER

9

# 9 Outputs and Results

The forecast growth delivered because of this strategy will deliver many positive outputs and results for County Sligo.

These include:

- › Investment in key infrastructure, product and service to establish county Sligo as a destination capable of meeting the motivations of the visitor of the future and competing as a leading destination within Ireland and abroad.
- › Strengthen industry ties and cooperation so as to maximise efficiencies and return on investment.
- › Embrace and utilise digital technology in delivering marketing programmes that strongly resonate with chosen markets
- › Improve all aspects of visitor servicing to enhance the quality of experience along with increasing spend and dwell time per visitor.
- › Build industry capability through education and development, matched to the identified needs.



## 9.1 Headline Outputs and Results

**Table 2: Headline Outputs**

<b>HEADLINE OUTPUTS - 2023</b>			
Product and Experience Development	Marketing and Communications	Industry Capability and Development	Leadership and Collaboration
1 major theme / attractor with 100,000 visitor capability advanced – Yeats theme	Dedicated Sligo consumer website using best in class digital technology and practices updated monthly	250 industry staff per year attending training and upskilling	4 implementation working groups in place for duration of strategy and achieving targets
3 secondary themes / attractors with 50,000 visitor capability each advanced	Coordination of activities and attendance at trade shows resulting in additional consumer, wholesale and MICE business.	200 people per year taking part in 8 "Know your Destination" Programme	Stronger working partnerships developed with stakeholders at county, regional and national level
Up to 7 festivals with visitor capability of 20,000 each supported and developed	Thematic presentation of Sligo based around 1) Outdoor Adventure, 2) Archaeology 3) Culture and Creativity	30% increase in major B2B trade show participation per annum	Annual evaluation of implementation of strategy
Public Investment of €6m secured for product development	Vibrant and continuous digital marketing programme, engaging customers and building awareness and profile of Co. Sligo	Annual industry training needs analysis completed that informs annual training and development plan and the annual Visitor Service Plan	Successful public communication and engagement plan to raise awareness of the importance of tourism to the economy
30 market ready experiences developed / coordinated per year	Minimum investment of €100,000 per annum in county based marketing plan	Up to date tourism business and stakeholder database	Increased support provided for collaborative projects and initiatives in the county
Development of 6 countywide trails in Food, Walking, and Heritage.	Strong working cooperation with Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland and delivery of joint marketing and promotional programmes		Employment increased in the tourism sector to 3,400 jobs

## 9.2 Visitor and Revenue Forecasts

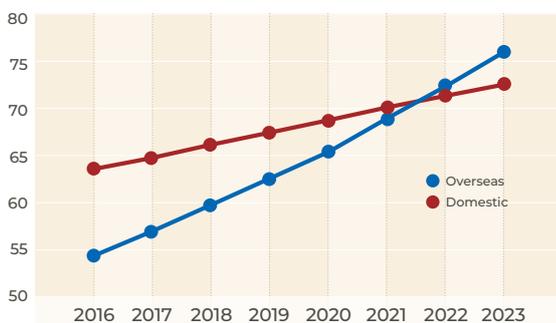
The total visitors projected for County Sligo over the life of the Strategy is based on the long term historic trends and coupled with the specific and targeted actions in this strategy. This will lead to sustainable growth of both visitor numbers and revenue and achieve the desired market mix. The forecasts indicate annual compound growth rates of 3% for overseas visitors and 2% for domestic visitors. This will lead to a better overall

mix between overseas and domestic visitors by 2023 to a ratio of 43% overseas and 57% domestic. Similarly, visitor revenue is projected to grow at 5% per annum for overseas visitors because of more resonating experiences and longer dwell time, thus lessening the gap presently experienced by county Sligo. Revenue from the domestic market is targeted to grow at a rate of 2% per annum.

**Table 3: Headline Performance Metrics**

Performance Metric	2016 (Estimates)	2023 Target	Change	
Overseas Visitor Numbers	192,000	236,000	44,000	23%
Domestic Visitor Numbers	272,000	312,000	40,000	15%
Overseas Tourism Revenue	€54,000,000	€76,000,000	€22,000,000	41%
Domestic Tourism Revenue	€63,500,000	€73,000,000	€ 9,500,000	15%
Total Employment	2,700	3,400	700	26%

**Figure 6: Visitor Number Projections 2016-2023**



**Figure 7: Revenue Projections 2016-2023**



## Appendix 1

### Sligo Tourism Ltd Board of Directors

Name	Organisation
Ciarán Hayes (Chair)	Sligo County Council
Ann Campbell (Deputy Chair)	Bed Breakfast Ireland
Michael Carty	Sligo County Council
Joe Corcoran	Sligo Airport
Chris Gonley	Sligo LEADER Partnership Co Ltd
Cllr Rosaleen O'Grady	Sligo County Council
Cllr Marie Casserly	Sligo County Council
Cllr Hubert Keaney	Sligo County Council
Cllr Seamus Kilgannon	Sligo County Council
Cllr Michael Clarke	Sligo County Council
Liam Kiely	Local Enterprise Office
Gerry Moore	Sligo Chamber of Commerce
Des Faul	Sligo Chamber of Commerce
Seamus Preston	Hotel Representative
Anthony Gray	Sligo Food Trail
Mary McGuickin	IT Sligo
John McGettrick	Community Attractions
Gail McGibbon	Sligo BID

## Appendix 2

### Members of Sligo County Council

#### Ballymote – Tobercurry Municipal District

Cllr Dara Mulvey	Cllr Joseph Queenan
Cllr Jerry Lundy	Cllr Margaret Gormley
Cllr Keith Henry	Cllr Michael Clarke
Cllr Paul Taylor	
Cllr Martin Baker	

#### Sligo Municipal District

Cllr Rosaleen O'Grady	Cllr Tom McSharry
Cllr Marie Casserly	Cllr Chris MacManus
Cllr Declan Bree	Cllr Seamus Kilgannon
Cllr Thomas Healy	Cllr Gino O'Boyle
Cllr Hubert Keaney	
Cllr Sinead Maguire	

## Appendix 3

### Members of Sligo Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

Cllr Sinéad Maguire (Chair)	Sligo County Council
Cllr Séamus Kilgannon	Sligo County Council
Cllr Chris Mac Manus	Sligo County Council
Mr Ciarán Hayes	Sligo County Council
Mr John Reilly	Local Enterprise Office
Mr Kieran O Dwyer	North West Dept. of Social Protection
Ms Patricia Garland	HSE West
Ms Mary Brodie	Mayo, Sligo, Leitrim, ETB
Mr Chris Gonley	Sligo LEADER Partnership Co. Ltd.
Mr Hugh MacConville	Trade Union Pillar
Mr Aidan Doyle	Business Pillar
Mr Michael Kirby	Environment Pillar (PPN)
Mr Seán Tempany (Vice Chair)	Farming Pillar
Ms Bernadette Maughan	PPN - Social Inclusion
Mr Gerald O'Connor	PPN - Community & Voluntary
Ms Jackie Sweeney	PPN - Community & Voluntary
Ms Sharon Boles	PPN - Social Inclusion

## Appendix 4

### Members of SPC 3 - Planning, Community and Economic Development, Arts and Culture

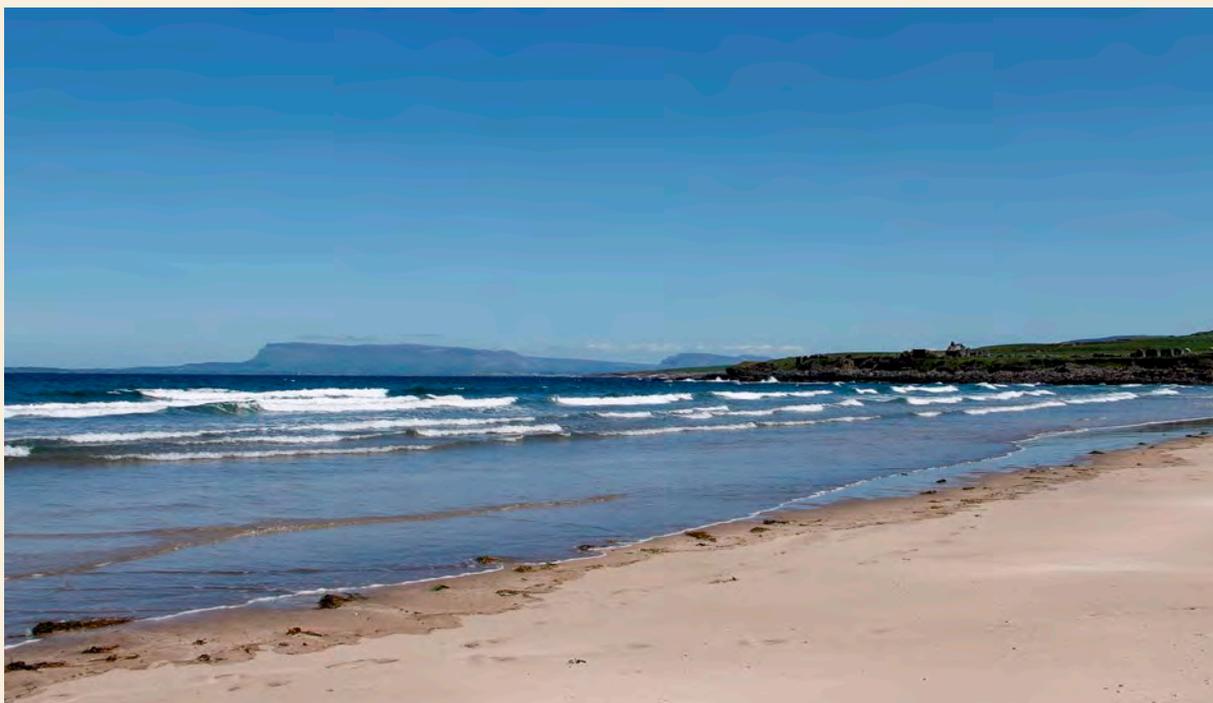
#### Councillors

Cllr Chris MacManus	Conor Mc Carthy <i>(Business Employers /Sligo Chamber of Commerce)</i>
Cllr Hubert Keane	Gerry Queenan <i>(Agriculture/Farming)</i>
Cllr Marie Casserly	Anthony Mc Cormack <i>(Trade Union/SIPTU)</i>
Cllr Rosaleen O'Grady	Community /Voluntary Sector <i>(vacant at present)</i>
Cllr Seamus Kilgannon	Social Inclusion <i>(vacant at present)</i>
Cllr Sinead Maguire	
Cllr Tom MacSharry	
Cllr Paul Taylor	

## Appendix 5

### Members of the Tourism Team for the preparation of the County Sligo Tourism Strategy 2018-2023

Mr Joe Corcoran	Sligo Tourism Ltd
Ms Síle Garrett Haran	Sligo Tourism Ltd
Mr Neil Faulkner	Sligo Tourism Ltd
Ms Dorothy Clarke	Sligo County Council
Ms Margaret McConnell	Sligo County Council
Ms Aisling Smyth	Sligo County Council
Mr Jimmy O'Brien	Sligo County Council
Mr Michael Carty	Sligo County Council
Ms Siobhán Ryan	Sligo County Council



## Acknowledgements

Listed hereunder are the organisations and groups who made a contribution to the drafting of the County Sligo Tourism Strategy 2018-2023. In addition to the many individuals who on their own behalf made a contribution. Sligo Tourism Ltd would like to acknowledge all these efforts and wish to offer a huge thank you to all.

Alainn Tours	Garavogue Bar	Department
Allied Irish Bank	Grange and Armada Development Association ( GADA)	Sligo County Librarian, Sligo County Council
Annie West Illustration	Havin a Laugh	Sligo Field Club & Sound Records.
Ava Systems Ltd	Hawk's Well Theatre	Sligo Food Trail
Bank of Ireland	Hazelwood House	Sligo Food Trail
Baroque Festival	Hens and Stag Sligo	Sligo Greenway Co-op
Beltra Country Market	Heritage Forum Sligo	Sligo Institute of Technology
Bourke Cockran Foundation	Heritage Office, Sligo County Council	Sligo International Choral Festival
Brouder Marketing	Irish Hotel Federation	Sligo Jazz Project
Cairde Festival	Island Riding stables	Sligo Kayak Tours
Carraig Climbing	Kayak Tours Sligo	Sligo LEADER Partnership Co CLG
Cawley's Guesthouse Tubbercurry	Local Community Development Committee	Sligo Live
Clayton Hotels	Local Enterprise Office, Sligo	Sligo on Ice
Co. Sligo Leader Partnership CLG	Made in Sligo	Sligo Sports and Recreation Partnership Ltd
Coleman Heritage Centre	Moygara Castle Project	Sligo Tourist Development Association Ltd
Community & Enterprise Economic Development Department, Sligo County Council	Mullaney Bros Ltd	South Sligo Summer School
Cos Cos Festival	Music Generation Sligo	Strandhill Lodge and Suites
County Sligo Heritage & Genealogy Centre	North West Adventure Tours	SUP for ALL
Creation Media Ltd	NW Archeology	Temple House
Development Company Coolaney	Omedia	The Draft House, Strandhill
Drumcliffe Church	Osta	The Embassy Bar and Restaurant
Eagles Flying	Ox Mountain Adventure Camp	The Model
Easkey Community Council	PPN Environmental Pillar	Tourism Ireland
Edenvilla B&B	Radisson Hotel	Tubbercurry Chamber of Commerce
Environment Action	Seashore Guesthouse	Tubbercurry Old Fair Day
Environment Department, Sligo County Council	Seatrails	White Hag Brewery
Fado Archaeology	Sligo Arts Service, Sligo County Council	Wild Wet Adventures
Failete Ireland	Sligo Baroque Festival	Wilderness Ireland
Feed Cafe	Sligo BID	Yeats Day
Friends of Sligo Gaol	Sligo County Council Community & Economic Development	Yeats Lodge B&B
		Yeats Society Sligo



Sligo Tourism Ltd and Sligo County Council  
are committed to achieving the long-term  
vision goals for the industry, and look forward  
to working collaboratively with partners to  
grow the industry to its potential.



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