

Forward Planning Section,
Planning and Environment,
Wicklow County Council,
County Buildings,
Wicklow Town

06th January 2020

Re: 'County Development Plan Review

By email: planreview@wicklowcoco.ie

A Chara,

This submission has been prepared by Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority Fáilte Ireland, in response to the public notice seeking submissions in relation to the preparation of a new County Development Plan 2021-2027.

The Authority welcomes the publication of the Issues Paper and thanks the County Council for the opportunity to comment on this document and to facilitate engagement with the local authority during the course of the formulation of the new County Development Plan.

This submission seeks to ensure that the emerging County Development Plan is adequately informed and takes due consideration of tourism as one of the most important and indigenous economic sectors in the county, the region and nationally. We are particularly keen to see a cross sectoral approach between tourism and other sectors and the need for integrated planning policies and strategies.

Please see attached the Paper entitled Developing Tourism in Wicklow produced by Fáilte Ireland, which should be read in consultation with this submission.

The Significance of Tourism to the Irish Economy

Tourism is one of the largest and most important sectors of the national economy, providing employment for approximately 260,000 people. In 2018, out-of-state (Overseas and North Ireland) tourist expenditure amounted to €5.6 billion. With a further €1.7 billion spent by overseas visitors on fares to Irish carriers, foreign exchange earnings were €7.4 billion. Domestic tourism expenditure amounted to €2 billion, making tourism a €9.4 billion industry. Before allowing for receipts paid to Irish air and sea carriers by overseas tourists, the government earned estimated revenue of €1.8 billion through taxation of tourism. This grows to €2.2 billion when carrier receipts are factored into the analysis, of which €1.7 billion came from out-of-state tourism and the balance from domestic tourism. In 2018 the tourism industry accounted for 4.0% of all tax revenue.

With regard to County Wicklow, Fáilte Ireland's figures indicate that in 2017 275,000 overseas visited the county generating revenue of €73m with a further 319,000 domestic visitors generating an estimated €49m in revenue. Wicklow is part the Ireland's Ancient East brand.

A successful tourism sector also creates significant benefits for many other sectors such as agriculture, food and drinks, accommodation providers, transport and retail. For this reason tourism is a particularly important activity and spatial land use in its own right to be accommodated within the emerging County Development Plan notwithstanding its contribution to enhancement of Quality of Life and the enhancement of places of residence, work and play and can positively affect both physical and mental wellbeing which is a key principle of the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES).

Fáilte Ireland seek to ensure the following in the context of the emerging County Plan:

- To acknowledge and recognise tourism as a key economic driver for the county which supports job creation and sustains communities;
- To provide a dedicated tourism chapter including policies and objectives for tourism;
- Tourism should be planned for as a spatial land use. Tourism features should be mapped in the County Development Plan in a similar way that other functions and roles are presented.

- Key nodes of tourism activity in the County should be identified – both existing and proposed specific tourism centres (major tourism attractions, outdoor activities etc.);
- Existing transport links between nodes and identified trails – whether walking, cycling or road based including greenways and blueways should also be identified.
- Strategic tourism centres (principal towns containing tourist facilities) where key services such as accommodation providers etc. are located. Further guidance is available at: <http://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/Publications/Failte-Ireland-Tourism-Destination-Towns-Guidelines.pdf?ext=.pdf>.
- Sensitive environments where the provision of services and development must be sensitive and appropriate to the robustness / sensitivity of the receiving environment and in particular its existing tourism significance;
- Areas of unrealised tourism potential where proactive policies will aim to encourage the development of this sector;
- Branding – reference and use of Fáilte Ireland Tourism Brand(s) logos (Ireland’s Ancient East) applicable to the county;
- Proactive planning policies including provision of supporting infrastructure such as visitor car parking, toilets, café or catering facilities – particularly in sensitive locations;
- Sustainable travel between sites with the promotion of public transport along key routes; Informed design and location guidelines for the development of tourism related facilities in sensitive amenities. Key to this would be the consideration of particularly special areas which may not normally be considered – such as the proposed views of proposed developments from riverside, prominent or elevated locations etc;
- Full realisation of the economic potential of increased visitor revenue and increased dwell time with high quality tourism infrastructure including accommodation providers, restaurants, holiday homes, etc.;
- Protection and enhancement of the tourism resource with information and interpretation provided and the actual resources carefully managed and protected.
- Update of the Wicklow Wind Energy Strategy, objectives and policies, whereby Fáilte Ireland recognises the value and necessity of strengthening, improving and expanding energy infrastructure in the county and region, and that this in turn supports the growth of the

tourism sector. Whilst Fáilte Ireland is generally supportive of the development of transmission infrastructure and is supportive of the economic benefits associated with its growth and development, potential impacts on landscape and the natural environment (including those on tourism) must be considered and this must be clearly expressed in the emerging County Plan.

Key Issues for the Emerging Plan to Address

The Issues Paper identifies a number of questions or issues for the new plan to address. A number of these influence tourism development. In responding to these areas of interest, Fáilte Ireland would maintain that the appropriate consideration, planning and protection of tourism through forward planning and development management are keys to development of the tourism industry.

The questions relating or effecting tourism detailed in the Issues Paper and Fáilte Ireland's response are as follows:

How should tourism be developed throughout County Wicklow without compromising our valuable resources including our scenic landscape and rich heritage?

Fáilte Ireland welcomed the inclusion of a growth strategy for the region in the EMRA RSES which is both asset and evidenced based to ensure sustainable growth across the region, having regard to the parameters as defined by the National Planning Framework. The general theme of sustainable compact growth of both urban and rural areas is welcomed. It is vital that this is implemented and supported through the development plan core strategy.

Tourism services and facilities should be clustered within established settlements as this will serve to protect the quality of the Irish environment; foster strong links to a whole range of other economic and commercial sectors and sustain the host communities; and utilise existing ancillary services and facilities such as water and wastewater infrastructure, power supply etc, rather than creating a requirement for further development in the Irish landscape.

The pathway to sustainable rural development outlined in the 2017 Action Plan for Rural Development and supported through key objectives of the National Planning Framework and EMRA RSES provided guidance on achieving protection of the environment and balancing development. Consolidated growth to support rural towns and villages while protecting natural landscapes will contribute to economic and environmental sustainability while promoting sustainable tourism as a contributor to the rural quality of life.

Is there a need for more tourist facilities within the County? If so, what is needed and where should they be located?

As highlighted in the Wicklow Tourism Strategy there are a number of key priority areas including;

Develop New Accommodation. Wicklow must expand the volume and quality of the visitor accommodation available to visitors. This is the biggest constraint to growth of the visitor economy. With around 3% of all Ireland overnights and spend and just over 2% of available serviced visitor accommodation stock, expanding the supply would create the foundations for success.

Develop Key Towns as Visitor Hubs. Wicklow, Bray, Greystones, Enniskerry, Blessington and Arklow are places which have the potential to function as visitor hubs. Places where international visitors attracted to Wicklow can come and stay for a day or two as part of a wider itinerary. Wicklow Town has been earmarked for Fáilte Ireland Destination Towns funding (Round 2 allocations) in Spring 2020 when further developmental work has concluded with the local authority.

Grow Thematic Experiences. Development of new experiences that capitalise on the thematic strengths of Wicklow and which align to the stories in Irelands Ancient East will strengthen the Wicklow offer dramatically. (This is expanded upon further below – refer to Visitor Experience Development Plans - VEDP’S)

Masterplan for Glendalough. In 2017 Fáilte Ireland announced funding from its Capital Grants budget for Glendalough. The funding is in the context of Fáilte Ireland’s strategic partnership with the OPW to assist in the refurbishment and enhancement of key visitor attractions. The Glendalough-Laragh area serves as a gateway to Glendalough and the Wicklow Mountains National Park, the area is a key

tourist attraction, attracting both domestic and international visitors. In 2018 Glendalough attracted 732,824 visitors making it one of the top three free visitor attractions in Ireland. The village of Laragh provides tourism services and facilities for hill walkers, cyclists and tourists such as accommodation, food and drink and craft shops.

Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority and Coillte, Ireland's largest commercial forestry company have announced plans to re-develop Avondale House and Forest Park into a state-of-the-art visitor attraction.

A total of €8 million will be invested in the re-development of Avondale House and Forest Park with Fáilte Ireland contributing more than €6.1million to the project. The redevelopment of Avondale House and Forest Park is hugely significant from a tourism and economic perspective for Ireland's Ancient East and for Wicklow. The development of this new world class visitor experience provides a major opportunity for tourism businesses across Wicklow to leverage this significant investment. Fáilte Ireland would welcome policy objectives to support the development of Avondale House and Forest Park in the Draft Plan.

How can County Wicklow capitalise on the potential associated with Ireland's Ancient East?

The key to unlocking the growth potential of an area is the development of experiences that will motivate potential tourists to firstly visit there and secondly to dwell in the area. These new experiences are less concerned with visitors passively seeing or doing things; they encourage tourists to immerse themselves actively in the locale, interacting with people, engaging the senses, and learning the history and stories of the places.

Fáilte Ireland's response to this challenge has been the creation of a framework to develop and deliver visitor experience development plans (VEDPs) along with strengthening destination towns. This approach identifies the key assets of an area and provides a framework to present the experiences and stories of that area in a way that tourists can readily and easily understand. It clearly identifies tangible actions and a process for businesses to shape their respective tourist experience(s) in line with the overall experience brand proposition and the key motivating themes for their area.

In Wicklow, Fáilte Ireland has developed the 'Vikings' Visitor Experience Development Plan, which sets out to strengthen the county's offering as a Viking destination. As part of this plan, clusters of Viking experiences in Waterford, Wexford and Wicklow are being researched under the working title 'Viking Coast'. Initial results from consumer testing show that international consumers find the concepts motivating and interesting. The next phase of research underway involves testing itineraries with tour operators and buyers. A number of Wicklow businesses are now taking part in a bespoke 15-month Great Houses & Gardens Experience Development Programme. This programme is looking at the house and garden experiences available across the county including ways to develop guiding, events, cost and revenue management and sales distribution.

Fáilte Ireland would like to see inclusion of a policy/objective to support the delivery of VEDP's.

Also, to come to an area, tourists need reassurance that there will be enough attractions to see and activities to do during the day, a sufficient range of accommodation options and a night-time economy to provide evening options. The most effective and efficient way to deliver this for tourists is through destination towns that cater for our tourists. Therefore, it is crucial that improvement and investment across a wide range of touch points – including transport links, accommodation supply, public realm attractions, restaurants, a vibrant night-time economy, tourist management etc are acknowledged and supported in the draft development plan.

Are there any outdoor tourism and recreation facilities that the County lacks?

Wicklow has a breadth and a depth to its tourism offer that means it is well placed to develop a thriving tourism economy. It has world renowned heritage and natural assets, gardens and historic houses, outdoor activities and recreation including the Wicklow Way and a growing network of trails, a National Park, woodlands and uplands, sandy beaches and scenic landscapes, film locations and food culture; it is within reach of huge domestic and international markets; it has some high quality resort properties; and it has some interesting towns and villages.

Greenways are key tourism infrastructure and play an important role in Irish tourism. They boost the appeal of Ireland in the travel market, add value to the existing high tourism offering and support the

development of rural communities and job creation in the rural economy, as well as the protection and promotion of natural assets and biodiversity. It is our ambition for Ireland to be recognized internationally as a year-round activity destination. There has been significant growth in cycling tourism in Ireland in recent years. In 2018 it was the 2nd largest activity with 450,000 overseas visitors participating in cycling while on holiday. A projected annual growth of 4% per annual is expected to 2028.

The extension of the Blessington Greenway to a 43km route of walking and cycling trails which will incorporate the villages of Ballyknockan, Valleymount and Lacken has recently been allocated €5m in funding under the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways. The development of the greenway would provide both economic and social benefits to west Wicklow and further enhance the outdoor tourism and recreation facilities of the county. Fáilte Ireland would therefore, welcome the inclusion of a policy/objective to support the delivery of this project.

How can the County Development Plan encourage the reuse of historical buildings that have fallen into disuse?

The relationship between tourism and heritage has potential synergistic benefits. The preservation of heritage to improve tourism can in turn support that preservation. This is not restricted to heritage sites and should also include elements such as urban design (e.g. shop frontage restrictions in heritage towns).

The adaptive reuse of existing historic buildings is one of the best ways a community can improve the economic, social and environmental sustainability of its village or a town. According to the Heritage Council “The connection between reuse and economic vitality is strong. In the Irish Times’ 2016 list of best shops, 57/100 were located in historic structures. Similarly, of the top 100 restaurants in Ireland as chosen by the McKenna Guides in 2018, 74 were located in historic structures. Finally, many of the higher profile co-working spaces in Ireland are in old structures (e.g. The Digital Hub, Dogpatch, Fumbally Exchange Waterford, Ludgate Hub). Proactive planning policies and objectives which support the reuse and refurbishment of protected structures and older buildings of architectural, cultural, historic and aesthetic merit which, make a positive contribution

to the character, appearance and quality of local streetscapes and the sustainable development of the county should be included in the plan.

Are there any issues in relation to water or wastewater facilities in your area?

The importance high-quality Wastewater Treatment Plants to ensure treated wastewater will not harm or pollute the surrounding environment when it is discharged into it is crucial to protect our coastal areas, rivers and lakes. The quality of bathing waters is also paramount to the tourism sector. In Ireland, we are particularly fortunate to have a varied and beautiful coastline with many pristine beaches that are open to the public to enjoy. To ensure their standard, it is imperative to continue to make strident efforts to protect and improve our waters.

Fáilte Ireland notes that currently untreated wastewater is currently discharging into the Irish Sea at Avoca and Arklow. The delivery and development of the Arklow Wastewater Treatment Plant needs to be prioritised. The continuing discharge of raw sewage is a threat to the development and promotion of on water and in water activities and attractions. It also has the potential to prevent the further development of tourism infrastructure i.e. due to lack of wastewater treatment capacity and facilities.

What transportation improvements are needed throughout the County?

Tourism and transport go hand-in-hand and tourism displays a very high dependency on public transport in particular for its successful operation. It is an objective of Fáilte Ireland to continue to shift our visitors onto sustainable modes of transport which will also result in a significantly improved visitor experience. Transport in existing strong tourism areas needs to be supported and consolidated. A priority should be to provide a wider range of targeted public transport options for tourists who wish to travel from urban areas to rural based tourist attractions and amenities. Possible delivery mechanisms to be explored would include the extension of the Rural Transport Network to include tourism objectives and key tourism sites. Enhanced walking and cycling facilities also have a

key role to play in utilising our resources and moreover opening up access to the abundance of natural assets.

A number of state agencies are responsible for the delivery of public transport services in Ireland with the work of Transport for Ireland being of particular significance from a tourism perspective particularly with integrating the various modes of transport and aiming to bring together information and services to help make public transport a little easier for you to use.

The importance of integration of all forms of public transport is highlighted above. Outside of the main urban areas such as Dublin, Galway and Cork, tourism in Ireland for the most part takes place in rural areas. As a result, it is vitally important that public transport connect seamlessly with other modes of transport for the last link of the visitor's journey (the so called "last mile") to their accommodation or a visitor attraction etc. At present in many areas the interchange of services at train and bus stations can be haphazard. Greater collaboration between all transport providers including bus, rail, taxi is required to ensure this "last mile" is travelled in a sustainable manner.

From a transport perspective, a priority should be to provide a wider range of targeted public transport options for tourists who wish to travel from urban areas to rural based tourist attractions and amenities particularly in the more rural areas of the western side of the county. Possible delivery mechanisms to be explored would include the extension of the Rural Transport Network to include tourism objectives and key tourism sites. Enhanced walking and cycling facilities also have a key role to play in utilising our resources and moreover opening up access to the abundance of natural assets.

Tourism Strategy for Wicklow

Wicklow forms part of Ireland's Hidden Heathlands Regional Experience Brand. Although relatively new the brand is tapping into a growing tourism trend for soft activities by encouraging visitors to be 'active in nature' and to explore the region by going off the beaten track. The brand's appeal also very much lies in its offer for visitors to get away from the stresses and pressures of modern life and to experience the tranquillity of rural Ireland. The brand aims to make a significant impact on tourism

across the midlands delivering increased visitor numbers and spend, season extension and creating jobs.

Wicklow is well placed to optimise the potential for tourism through proper planning and development. The consideration of natural and heritage resources, strategic planning for accommodation and promotion of inter-agency tourism strategies in the upcoming development plan will build on the previous success of strong tourism consideration in Development Plans.

Wicklow as a largely rural county is important for tourism as tourism in Ireland, for the most part, takes place in rural areas. These areas are home to rich heritage and immense natural beauty that support a varied tourism offering. These assets should be acknowledged and explicitly referenced as a growth enabler for Wicklow.

Towns and villages in Wicklow should be a focus for tourism provision, as key towns act as a base or hub for a whole host of activities and attractions within their immediate environs and hinterlands.

Fáilte Ireland would reinforce that it is vitally important to ensure provision is made for the expansion in accommodation and facilities within towns and along with supporting infrastructural investment including transport links, public realm etc.

Conclusion

Fáilte Ireland welcomes the review of the Wicklow County Development Plan and recommend that the consideration of tourism in the Eastern Midland Region RSES and our comments are addressed in the published Draft Development Plan in order to take due consideration of tourism as one of the most important and indigenous economic sectors in the region and Ireland.

Should you have any queries on this please do not hesitate to contact me.
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Environment & Planning Manager, Fáilte Ireland

Appendix A – Fáilte Ireland’s Guidance on Sustainable Tourism

Fáilte Ireland promotes the incorporation of the principles of sustainability in the tourism policy section of the County Development Plan. Fáilte Ireland has developed five key principles that ensure developments achieve a balance between appropriate tourism development and economic, environmental and social sustainability. Developments will be assessed having regard to compliance with these and the associated policies.

Principle 1: Tourism, when it is well managed and properly located, should be recognised as a positive activity which has potential to benefit the host community, the place itself and the visitor alike. Sustainable tourism planning requires a balance to be struck between the needs of the visitor, the place and the host community.

Principle 2: Our landscapes, our cultural heritage, our environment and our linguistic heritage all have an intrinsic value which outweighs their value simply as a tourism asset. However, sustainable tourism planning makes sure that they can continue to be enjoyed and cherished by future generations and not prejudiced simply by short term considerations.

Principle 3: Built development and other activities associated with tourism should in all respects be appropriate to the character of the place in which they are situated. This applies to the scale, design and nature of the place as well as to the particular land use, economic and social requirements of the place and the surroundings.

Principle 4: Strategic tourism assets – including special landscapes, important views, the setting of historic buildings and monuments, areas of cultural significance and access points to the open countryside, should be safeguarded from encroachment by inappropriate development.

Principle 5: Visitor accommodation, interpretation centres and commercial / retail facilities serving the tourism sector should generally be located within established settlements thereby fostering strong links to a whole range of other economic and commercial sectors and sustaining the host

communities. Sustainable tourism facilities, when properly located and managed can, especially if accessible by a range of transport modes, encourage longer visitor stays, help to extend the tourism season and add to the vitality of settlements throughout the year.

Underlying these principles for Sustainable Tourism, the definitions of economic, environmental and social sustainability against which any tourism project assessed are defined as follows:

Economic sustainability must be considered to ensure that the tourism sector is managed. The key strengths of the County include landscape, heritage, natural environment, lifestyle and amenity pursuits. The sector is highly affected by seasonality and there are extremes in visitor numbers as key attractions contrasted with smaller attractions which struggle to maintain visitor numbers. These ‘peaks and troughs’ should be carefully managed to ensure the protection of natural resources. Tourism innovation should also be encouraged – particularly where it brings about environmental benefits. Finally, for projects to be economically sustainable they should meet the needs of the permanent and also visitor population alike, so the preparation of robust business plans for all such developments will ensure proposals are viable and sustainable.

Environmental sustainability will be central to the development and protection of a viable tourism sector and this is a key consideration in the County where tourism attractions are located in environmentally sensitive areas and close to historic areas where the quality of the built heritage and environment must be protected from inappropriate development – whether tourism related or not. The ‘mainstreaming’ of policy guidance tools such as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will undoubtedly address any deficits in relation to many of these key policy areas.

Social sustainability is arguably more difficult to assess. Many of the potentially negative impacts of tourism development can however be addressed through careful consideration of the social and cultural nature of the receiving environment. The impacts that large-scale developments can have on existing local communities’ policies can be assessed having regard to the impact of visitor numbers on local quality of life, culture and heritage – with a particular emphasis placed on unique areas such as culturally sensitive areas where small impacts over time may have a significant cumulative effect.

FÁILTE IRELAND SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL SCHEMES

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Fund 2018

Fáilte Ireland has partnered with the Department of Rural and Community Development to provide funding of almost **€11million for 78 projects across 24 counties** – including Wicklow – under Measure 2 of the 2018 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme.

The scheme is part of the Government's Action Plan for Rural Development and provides funding for new outdoor recreational infrastructure. It also supports the maintenance, enhancement and promotion of existing outdoor recreational infrastructure in Ireland.

Fáilte Ireland has invested a total of **€3million** into the scheme with the aim of enhancing existing tourism recreation infrastructure and ensuring that the economic benefits of tourism are spread regionally across the country.

RURAL REGENERATION & DEVELOPMENT FUND

Fáilte Ireland works closely with the Department of Rural and Community Development to deliver quality visitor experiences nationwide to ensure local communities can benefit from tourism growth, both economically and socially. Fáilte Ireland has partnered with its strategic partners – Coillte and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – on two applications under the Department's Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF):

Coillte: International Mountain Biking Project

This flagship national project will develop international standard Mountain Biking Centres which will provide recreational, health and tourism benefits. The locations include Ticknock/Ballinastoe (Wicklow & Dublin). The overall project, which will be delivered by 2022, was awarded a total of €10.26million including over €950,000 from Fáilte Ireland.

NPWS: "Regenerating Rural Ireland by Transforming the Visitor Experience at Ireland's National Parks and Nature Reserves"

This is a flagship national project stemming from the recently published Tourism Interpretative Masterplan for Ireland's National Parks, which will enhance and significantly upgrade the visitor experience across Ireland's portfolio of National Parks and Nature Reserves in a number of locations including Wicklow.

UPCOMING FÁILTE IRELAND INITIATIVES FOR WICKLOW

VISITOR EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR WICKLOW

Fáilte Ireland has initiated a number of Visitor Experience Development Plans across the country. These are 3-5 year commercial development plans for a region, which bring the public and private sector together to drive visitors and revenue to lesser known areas and attractions, especially in the off-peak season. The themes of the Visitor Experience Development Plans have been designed to enhance each area's strongest tourism assets and appeal to core overseas markets. Vitrally, these plans will be delivered in a way that encourages visitors to spend more time in an area, without compromising the environment or culture of the region.

VIKINGS: In Wicklow, Fáilte Ireland has developed the 'Vikings' Visitor Experience Development Plan, which sets out to strengthen the county's offering as a Viking destination. As part of this plan, clusters of Viking

experiences in Waterford, Wexford and Wicklow are being researched under the working title 'Viking Coast'. Initial results from consumer testing show that international consumers find the concepts motivating and interesting. The next phase of research underway involves testing itineraries with tour operators and buyers. The outcomes of this research will feed into the Viking Development Activation Programme in the coming 18 months.

TALES OF TWO WORLDS: A number of Wicklow businesses are now taking part in a bespoke 15-month Great Houses & Gardens Experience Development Programme. This programme is looking at the house and garden experiences available across the county including ways to develop guiding, events, cost and revenue management and sales distribution.

DESTINATION TOWNS – OPEN FOR APPLICATIONS

Through Fáilte Ireland's Destination Towns initiative, every Local Authority in the country – including Wicklow County Council – will be able to bid for funding of between **€250,000 and €500,000** to develop up to two towns in their area that have the potential to become a tourism hub.

The new scheme, which is now open for applications, will provide funding for the Local Authority to enhance public spaces and attract more overseas visitors. The Ireland's Ancient East team is working closely with the council on its funding submission. The closing date for applications is September 2019.

PLATFORMS FOR GROWTH INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

Platforms for Growth is Fáilte Ireland's new four-year capital investment programme worth **€150million**. The programme specifically targets product themes and types known as 'platforms', which have the greatest potential to grow tourism in Ireland. The first of the platforms to be launched is **Immersive Heritage and Cultural Attractions**, which will focus on developing world-class attractions that appeal to overseas visitors who are looking for hands-on experiences.

The programme will fund projects of scale (greater than €2.5million) and falls under the Government's Project Ireland 2040 strategy which supports sustainable growth in the Irish tourism sector to drive higher revenue and job creation around Ireland. Platforms for Growth is now open for applications until 17th July 2019 and a series of workshops will be held around the country. Find out more: www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth

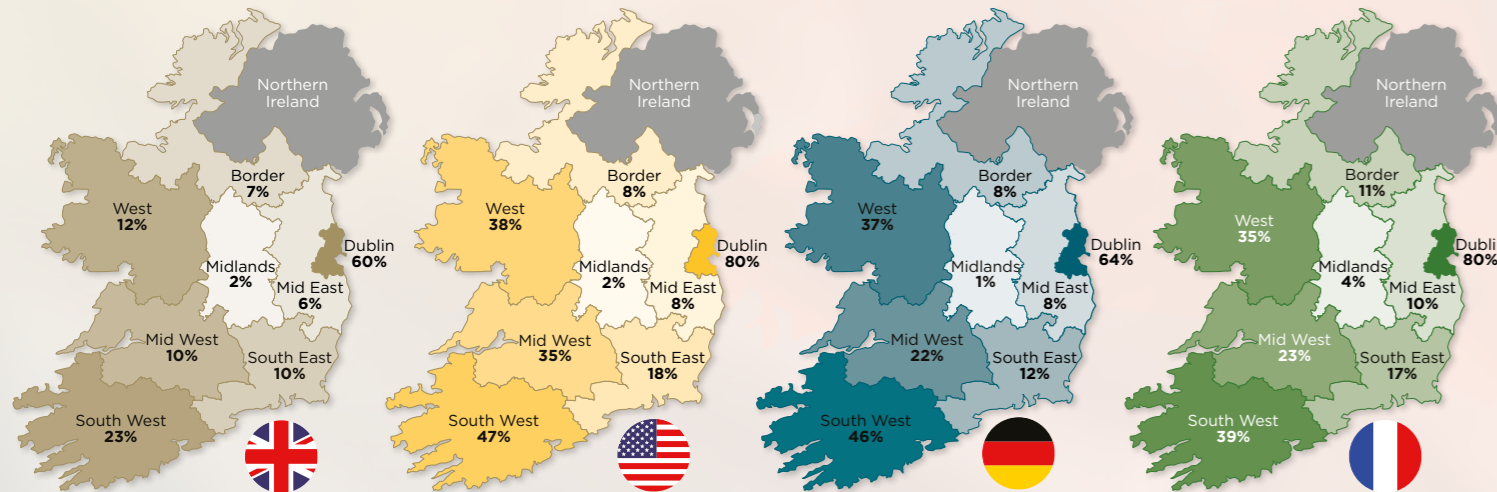
DEVELOPING TOURISM IN WICKLOW



TOURISM JOBS & REVENUE



REGIONS VISITED BY KEY OVERSEAS MARKETS



*Holidaymakers can visit more than one region, therefore the sum of regions adds up to more than 100%

Counties which make up regions: DUBLIN. MIDLANDS Longford, Westmeath, Offaly, Laois. MID-EAST Wicklow, Kildare, Meath, Louth. SOUTH WEST Cork, Kerry. SOUTH EAST Waterford, Kilkenny, Carlow, Wexford. MID-WEST Clare, Tipperary, Limerick. WEST Galway, Mayo, Roscommon. BORDER Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan.

2018 ACCOMMODATION SUPPLY IN WICKLOW

- 23 Hotels with 3,330 beds
- 29 Self-Catering units with 159 beds
- 5 Caravan/campsites with 1,740 beds
- 2 Guesthouses with 79 beds
- 2 Hostels with 188 beds
- 11 Irish Welcome Standard with 676 beds
- 29 Bed & Breakfasts with 262 beds

*Fáilte Ireland registered/approved accommodation. Source: Capita

In general, holidaymakers spend the largest portion of holiday nights staying in hotels (38%). Guesthouses/B&Bs are next most popular for overnight stays (21%). American and British holidaymakers favour hotels, while the French and Germans prefer guesthouses and B&Bs.

PROJECTS FUNDED THROUGH FÁILTE IRELAND CAPITAL INVESTMENT IN WICKLOW (2015-2019)*

ATTRACTIONS



FÁILTE IRELAND FUNDING TO DATE



TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT



Total project costs may change

*Fáilte Ireland funded projects often include match funding from key partners such as local authorities, the Office of Public Works, Coillte and the National Parks & Wildlife Service.

FÁILTE IRELAND SUPPORT FOR FESTIVALS

Fáilte Ireland has identified festivals as a key driver for tourism growth, particularly during off-season times. Investment in and business development support for festivals is helping to drive growth in the regions and entice both domestic and overseas visitors to different parts of the country in the off-peak season.

Fáilte Ireland also provides funding for local festivals through its 'Regional Festivals and Participative Events Programme', which has been managed by Local Authorities since 2018.

FESTIVAL FUNDING IN WICKLOW (2018 & 2019)

Over the past two years, Fáilte Ireland has invested **€26,000** into festivals in Wicklow.



NEW FESTIVAL IDEAS

As well as the range of major national festivals Fáilte Ireland supports, the 'Festival Innovation Programme' was launched in 2018 to support unique and high tourism impact festivals and events which will stand out internationally. Festivals are encouraged to apply on our website: www.failteireland.ie/festivalsandevents