

VISITCORK

# Growing tourism in Cork a collective strategy



## Foreword

A vibrant tourism sector is crucial for every major region in the world. It creates jobs and contributes significantly to the local economy. There has been an increase in visitor numbers across Ireland and Cork finds itself in an excellent position to capitalise on this upturn. Cork also sits within the experience brands, Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way, which represents a massive opportunity as Cork can further benefit by leveraging their success.

However, we must act now to affirm Cork's position in the consideration set and to ensure that we can grow our share of visitors and revenue. Cork as a tourism proposition is, as yet, not fully known across many international markets and segments. Although there is some good work being developed, the lack of a consolidated plan means Cork will not be best placed to capitalise on the projected growth in visitor

numbers of 21.3 percent or the projected increase in revenue of 27 percent for the period 2015–2020.

With this in mind, Cork strategic tourism group have created a new tourism proposition for Cork: 'Cork is Ireland's 'Maritime Paradise' with a significant maritime history spanning over a thousand years, set in a beautiful soft coastal environment where the land, the people and their culture will allow you to discover a quirky way to stimulate all of your senses.

Collaboration amongst the key stakeholders is crucial. We must develop a single-minded focus which will help to ensure the brand is developed in a seamless and measurable way to the visitor. To realise this, a well-coordinated execution of the agreed actions and a supporting structure to lead this with the many stakeholders will be essential. The efforts of the Cork

strategic tourism group and local authorities in fostering this collaboration and partnership is invaluable.

Together we are working to put Cork back on the map as a destination brand, while showcasing everything Cork has to offer to the visitor.

This plan aims to identify key priorities in each business sector – actions that will help to further enhance the visitor experience, thus giving the Cork tourism proposition real substance.

### **Ger O'Mahoney**

Chair, Strategic Tourism Task Force

Partner PWC

### **CORK STRATEGIC TOURISM TASK FORCE MEMBERS**

#### **Fiona Buckley**

Head of Strategic Partnerships & Futures, Fáilte Ireland

#### **Deirdre Cole**

Project Officer Fáilte Ireland

#### **Paula Cogan**

Director of Sales & Marketing  
The River Lee Hotel, Interim  
Director of Sales EMEA & Strategic  
Accounts, The Doyle Collection

#### **Derry Cronin**

Managing Director of the Cronin  
Travel Group and VP of the ITOA

#### **Ann Doherty**

Chief Executive Cork City Council

#### **Tim Lucey**

Chief Executive  
Cork County Council

#### **Peter Nash**

Head of Strategy Development  
Tourism Ireland

#### **Ann-Marie O'Sullivan**

CEO AM O'Sullivan PR Ltd.



## Contents

- 01 GLOSSARY OF TERMS
- 02 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
- 03 THE NATIONAL CONTEXT
- 04 TOURISM IN CORK - THE CHALLENGE
- 05 THE VISION FOR DESTINATION CORK - THE OPPORTUNITY
- 06 THE OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH
- 07 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
- 08 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK
- 09 CRITICAL MEASUREMENTS OF SUCCESS
- 10 APPENDIX

# 01 Glossary of Terms

## CORK

Refers to both city and county.

## PROPOSITION

The core, single-minded reason to choose Cork that will motivate visitors and will differentiate Cork. It is not intended that this will be seen by visitors, rather it will guide the development of experiences and communications material.

## HERO THEME

The hero is what will differentiate Cork and be a leading substantiation to the overall Cork proposition.

## INDUSTRY

Visitor attractions, activity providers, transport, accommodation and other hospitality providers

## VISION

A future focus that will guide all actions.

## THE SUPPORTING THEMES

The supporting themes are important to how people will consume the proposition. They are not hero themes, but they are key ways in which a visitor experiences a destination. Visitor satisfaction here is crucial.

Within the key hero theme and supporting themes, a number of signature experiences and supporting experiences will be developed to deliver on the proposition. Signature Experiences will include the branded experiences, Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way. Supporting experiences could include food and beverage and the cultural, music and artistic vibe.



## 02 Executive Summary

The objective for this project is clear: to grow Cork's share of domestic and international visitors. This will be achieved by maximising Cork's potential as a tourism destination within Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way. At present, Cork is not fully appreciated either internationally or domestically for all it has to offer. Research shows that international visitors are unaware of what Cork has to offer and domestic visitors are not considering Cork as a potential domestic holiday as they have an outdated view of what is on offer\*.

(\*Source: 2015 Primary Research)

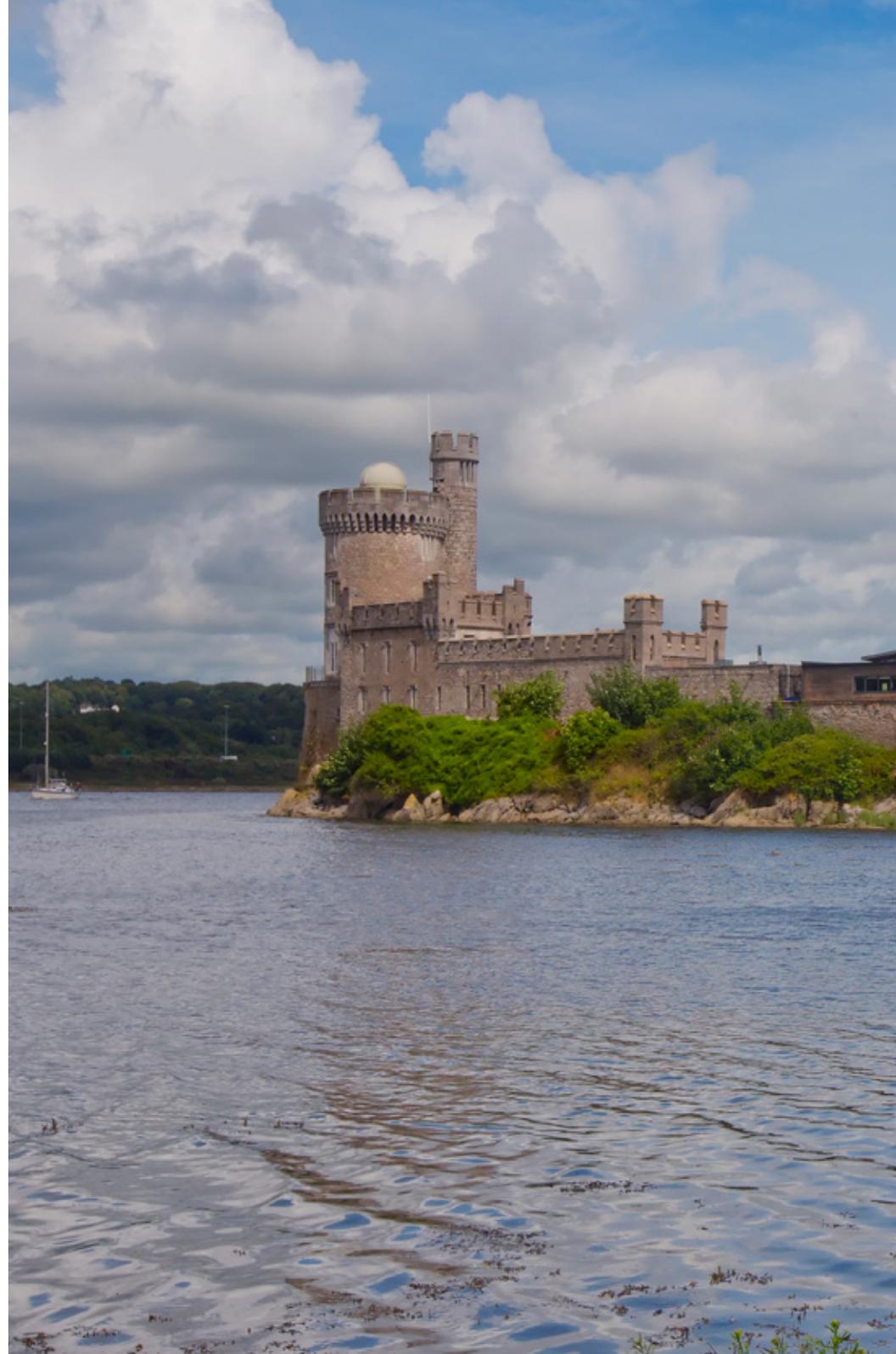
Born of the recognition of a need for a coordinated tourism effort for the county, Cork County and Cork City Councils jointly commissioned this strategic tourism development project with the support of Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland and industry stakeholders.

The Cork Strategic Tourism Task Force was therefore established with representatives from City and County Councils, local industry, Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland.

This report will set out the strategy that will make Cork a compelling and must-see tourism destination. Cork is in a unique position; not only does the county boast a wide range of interests that stretch right across the county, it is also perfectly situated within two of the experience brands that Ireland has to offer.

By leveraging these experience brands and developing a distinctive tourism proposition for Cork within them, it can compete both nationally and internationally with other tourist destinations. This will build upon the good work being developed in Cork by industry, local authorities and the tourism bodies.

Primary research was conducted together with several rounds of stakeholder engagement to develop a compelling, authentic proposition supported by an implementation framework with clear ownership and deliverables. This is to ensure that Cork is future-proofed in growing its share of domestic and international visitors.



# 03 The National Context

Tourism is a crucial sector for national and regional economies and it has the potential to contribute significantly to local economic revival. At present, tourism, in real terms, brings in roughly €3.5 billion per annum to the national economy. This growing indigenous industry is already a massive contributor to employment figures. It is estimated some 200,000 people are employed in the industry at present.

Tourism and the strength of the economic market also serve as a reminder to international investors that Ireland is back in health following the economic crisis and this in turn will encourage more businesses to invest in the country. The Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport set out an ambitious tourism policy which the Government hopes to achieve by 2025. The new policy, entitled People, Place and Policy, Growing Tourism to 2025, places focus on growing a tourism sector significantly over the next ten years.

### THE AIMS OF PEOPLE, PLACE AND POLICY GROWING TOURISM TO 2025 ARE:

- Revenue from overseas tourism, in real terms and excluding air fares and ferry charges, will grow to €5 billion in 2025 from €3.5 billion in 2014
- 250,000 people will be employed in tourism, compared with an estimated 200,000 at present
- There will be 10 million overseas visits to Ireland, compared to 7.6 million in 2014

### WORKING WITHIN KEY EXISTING POLICIES

Within this policy, both Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland have significant roles to play at a national and international level, while local authorities will play a role in local economic and community development, leading on destination product and tourism infrastructure development at a regional level.



Revenue from overseas tourism... will grow to €5 billion in 2025 from €3.5 billion in 2014



250,000 people will be employed in tourism, compared with an estimated 200,000 at present



There will be 10 million overseas visits to Ireland, compared to 7.6 million in 2014

\*Source: Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport



It is essential that LEADER funding and other funding is significantly influenced by this strategy to define maximum impact.

Fáilte Ireland is the National Tourism Development Authority responsible for developing and improving the Visitor Experience in Ireland and enabling the Irish industry to perform effectively in domestic and international markets, in order to deliver competitive advantage and sustainable growth for the industry.

Tourism Ireland's primary objective is to promote the island of Ireland as a tourist destination in international markets, encouraging overseas visitors to choose Ireland over competing holiday destinations.

At a national policy level, Cork is recognised as a potential growth platform for inbound traffic. *'A National Aviation Policy for Ireland'*, specifically identifies the unique position of Cork Airport as a 'gateway' to each of the two main tourism policy propositions - Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way - and recognises that Cork Airport offers a significant advantage to the region and as a potential hub for visitors coming to Ireland.

As part of this strategy both Local Authorities and Fáilte Ireland are committing to prioritising capital investment in the region for key experience development projects.

## 03 The National Context

In this vein, both Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland will utilise the National Guiding Principles, which are set out below:

### 1.

The resources of the National Tourism Development Authority (Fáilte Ireland) will be prioritised in favour of programmes which assist the tourism sector to secure an increased share of international leisure and business tourism.

### 2.

In leisure tourism, efforts will be concentrated on further developing three existing experience brands (Ireland's Ancient East, the Wild Atlantic Way and Dublin).

### 3.

In Business Tourism, all international efforts will be optimised under the *Meet in Ireland* brand, under which the Cork Convention Bureau operates in overseas markets.



### 4.

In Cruise Tourism, the activities of the Port of Cork, the local authorities, Cruise Ireland and relevant stakeholders will deliver on the agreed outcomes of the National Cruise Strategy, due for completion in Q1 2016.

### 5.

The national aviation policy for Ireland including strategy for Cork Airport, as a gateway, will be necessary to integrate into the strategy.

### 6.

Enterprise support programmes will be aimed specifically at international sales strategy and skills, revenue growth and yield management.

### 7.

Adoption of the VICE model of sustainable tourism development, planning outcomes in terms of their impact on Visitor, Industry, Community and Environment will be adopted.

### 8.

The national objectives of economic growth in revenue and jobs will be kept to the fore, to reflect the ambitions of National Tourism Policy, Local Government Policy and the National Programme for Jobs.

### 9.

Collaboration amongst private and public sector stakeholders will be critical to ensure a 'joined up' approach to tourism development.

On review Cork has plenty of strengths and weaknesses but key its future success is making it a famous, must-visit destination with a single proposition that is fully engaged with by stakeholders on the ground.

### STRENGTHS

- » Geographic location between Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way.
- » Strong current assets across the county e.g. West Cork, Fota Island, Blarney Stone, Ballymaloe, Middleton Distillery, the Blackwater and Doneraile
- » The characterful people
- » Strong tradition of music of all types
- » Progressive Thinking
- » Strong International trading legacy
- » The artisanal producers and the English Market
- » Second largest natural harbour in the world
- » Marine and coastline accessibility.
- » A young, vibrant population
- » High standard of accommodation offered in 3/4/5 star hotels and guest houses.

### THREATS

- » Other destinations internationally
- » Other parts of Ireland e.g. Ireland's Ancient East, Wild Atlantic Way and Dublin

### OPPORTUNITIES

- » Ireland's Ancient East
- » Wild Atlantic Way
- » A single proposition
- » Increased visitor numbers
- » Increased access to Cork by air and sea
- » Relative proximity to international gateways, Dublin and Shannon.
- » Single minded engagement on the ground
- » Stories and experiences that cross promote each other
- » Development of the Event Centre.

### WEAKNESSES

- » The lack of awareness of the City and County
- » Negative domestic perceptions
- » The lack of a single cohesive proposition
- » The lack of joined up thinking on the ground
- » A lack of many iconic tourist attractions



# 04 Tourism in Cork - The Challenge

Today, Cork attracts approximately 17.5% of all overseas visitors who come to Ireland and is second only to Dublin in terms of tourist bed nights.

The success of Cork's inclusion in the Wild Atlantic Way has been of great benefit to the county. Tourism figures have been improving year-on-year throughout Ireland, and it is imperative that Cork capitalises on this uplift.

The majority of visitors to Cork are from Great Britain, and mainland Europe. Often they pass through Cork via access points such as Cork Airport/Port of Cork. However, research shows they often do not consciously decide to visit Cork\*.

It is not always a planned destination on their itinerary. The consequence of this is fewer bed nights and therefore lower revenue generated in the local economy.

(\*Source: 2015 Primary Research)

It is imperative that all stakeholders (local authorities, industry, Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland) have a single-minded focus and understand fully all that Cork has to offer as a destination. There is a need to create and develop a distinctive visitor proposition with the consumer at the centre of all decision making. The aim is to deliver a visitor-facing, world-class visitor experience that is delivered and promoted in a coordinated manner.

**WHY NOW?**  
2015 is the perfect time to re-evaluate Cork's tourism offering for a number of reasons.

1. Ireland is experiencing significant growth within the tourism sector and Cork needs to position itself in such a way that it can grow its share of visitors who come and spend time and revenue in Cork.
2. Cork has a unique location that no other county in Ireland can lay claim to. It lies within the two key

experience brands developed by Fáilte Ireland – Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way – which have been built into the national policy document People, Place and Policy, Growing Tourism 2025. These experience brands are being marketed internationally and are expected to deliver in a significant uplift in visitor numbers to the regions. Cork's location represents a huge opportunity for the county to embed itself within these two core experience brands.

If Cork is to take advantage of the additional numbers visiting the area and grow its number of bed nights, a considered and integrated approach to its tourism strategy and a compelling, motivating proposition needs to be developed.

3. A brand proposition for the Cork economy was finalised by stakeholders in 2013 that looked at the creation of an integrated place brand. The proposition for the Cork place brand has been defined as 'A powerful mix for your success ... in the best small country in the world to do business.'

This brand defined four key pillars of economy, education, quality of life and visitor. The visitor pillar remained to be developed and integrated within the overall Cork proposition, and a leisure tourism proposition is required if Cork is to grow its tourism related economy. The first three have been completed and this report marks the completion of the fourth pillar, the visitor pillar.

On review, Cork has an abundance of strengths and opportunities that must be leveraged to create a famous, 'must visit' destination amongst visitors that is engaged by stakeholders on the ground.

# 05 The Vision for Destination Cork The Opportunity

There is an opportunity to:

- Make Cork a 'famous for' and 'must visit' destination for domestic and international visitors, whilst leveraging Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way
- Create sustainable growth by developing responsible tourism across Cork
- Create significant revenue and economic contribution to the local economy

The ambition is to create sustainable growth for tourism in Cork. The growing significance as an economic driver or the importance of attracting increased revenues from both overseas and domestic markets to support businesses, communities and jobs cannot be overlooked. The average visitor to Cork spends €94.59 a day for example\*.

(\*Source: Cork City Data, 2013 and Cork Visitor Survey)

This will complement and build upon plans already being undertaken by industry.



# 06 The Opportunity for Growth

## Development of a Strategic Framework 2016–2020

This framework must include three important elements:

### VISITOR-CENTRICITY

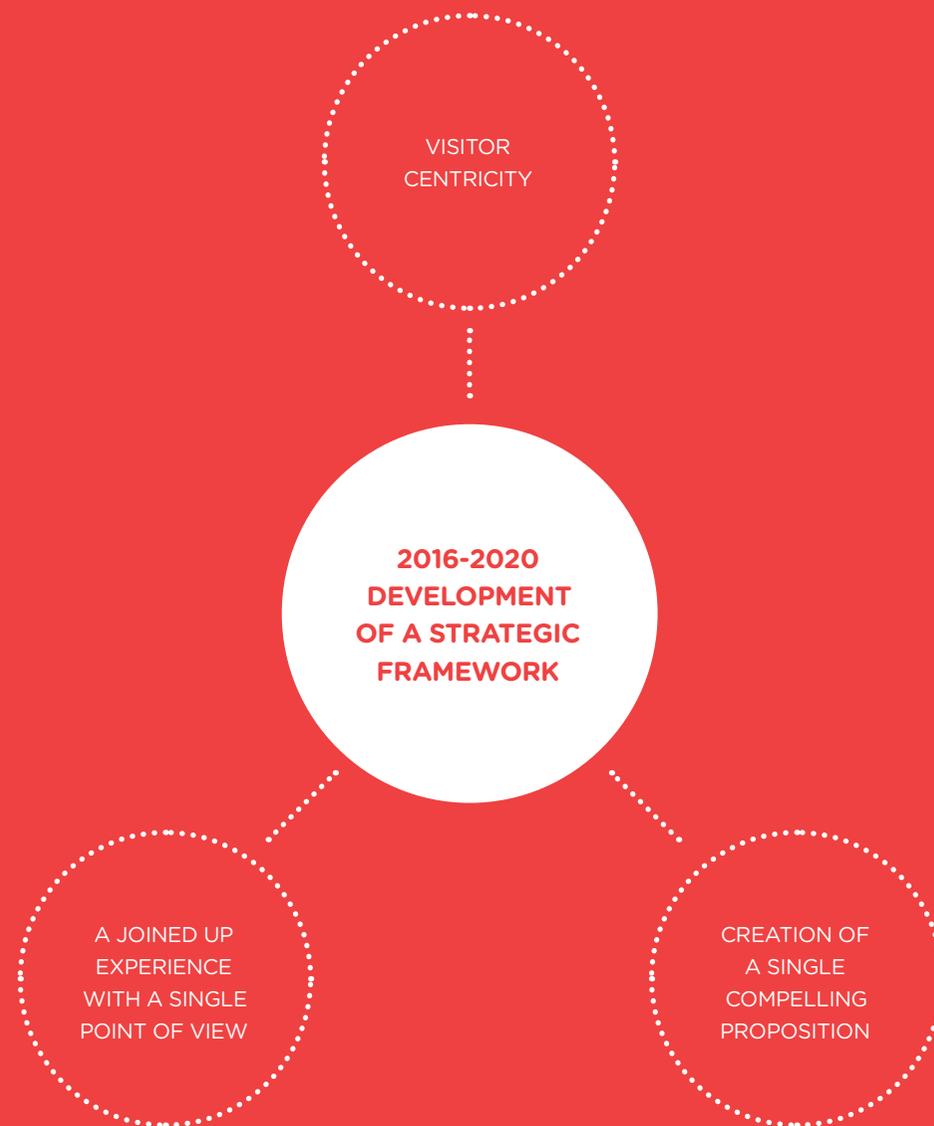
Ensuring the visitor is at the centre of all actions. The creation of a visitor-centric experience is a core objective. All other objectives must work to deliver this.

### CREATION OF A SINGLE COMPELLING PROPOSITION

Giving visitors a reason to visit Cork via the creation of a compelling yet responsible, visitor-led tourism proposition.

### A JOINED-UP VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Developing a singled-minded reason joined-up tourism experience with a single point of view and clear priorities, and one that embraces existing promotional vehicles, as well as developing new ones among public and private operators.



# 07 Strategic Framework

Ensuring the visitor is at the centre of all actions. The creation of a visitor-centric experience is a core objective. All other objectives must work to deliver this.

## WHO IS THE VISITOR?

There are three key international segments and domestic segments that the Cork tourism strategy will target:

## INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC PRIORITY SEGMENTS

Three international and domestic segments have been identified as priorities for Cork. They are warm to Ireland, attracted to what Cork can offer and represent a significant opportunity. All age groups (15+) are represented.



## CULTURALLY CURIOUS

The Culturally Curious seeks authentic experiences. They want to get under the skin of an experience; they want to immerse themselves in the local stories and artisanal produce. Often this cohort will travel as a couple or on their own, as opposed to going in large groups. They want to broaden their minds by exploring new landscapes, history and culture. They are motivated by the discovery of local areas that offer real and quality experiences accompanied by engaging stories.



## SOCIAL ENERGISERS

Social Energisers like to holiday in groups or as couples. They are looking for cool, exciting trips somewhere new and vibrant. They want exciting and intense, action-packed holidays. They want to be busy both day and night. They tend to be a younger cohort in their twenties, or early thirties, although not exclusively so. Social Energisers are attracted to event-led activity including music and water sports.

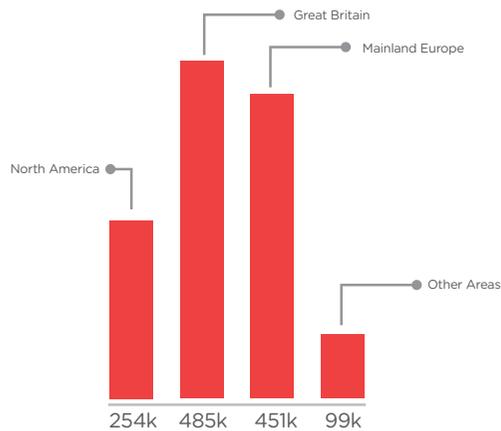


## GREAT ESCAPERS

Great Escapers are usually couples, often with babies or quite young children. The most important aspect of any break for them is the chance to spend quality time together. They value time out from busy family lives and careers. They want to rebalance themselves and take stock of their lives and what is important. They want to come home refreshed and revitalised with their batteries recharged.

For more detail please see Appendix 3

## Where do current visitors come from?



### PRIMARY MARKETS FOR INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

There are four key target markets, the U.S.A., Great Britain, France and Germany. In 2013 these markets (including the rest of Europe) accounted for 97% of leisure visitors to Cork.

(\*Source: Cork City Data 2013 and Cork Visitor Survey)



### OTHER SPECIFIC LOCATIONS TO TARGET

#### Routes to and from Cork in our key markets

Specific locations will be more of a focus because of direct access to Cork. Other key markets, which have access to the international gateways, Dublin and Shannon, will be targeted.

#### France

Bordeaux; Carcassonne; Paris; Rennes

#### Germany

Düsseldorf; Munich

#### UK

Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Jersey, Liverpool, London (City Airport; Gatwick; Heathrow; Stansted); Manchester; Southampton; Newcastle and Leeds.

#### U.S.A

Boston (May 2016); New York (2017)

#### Other significant cities

Amsterdam; Barcelona; Brussels, Madrid

## Give visitors a reason to visit Cork via the creation of a compelling, visitor-led tourism proposition

### Three leading visitor motivations\* that offer opportunities for Cork

There are three defining visitor motivations that will be drivers for tourism over the next decade and will therefore be critical in shaping a true visitor-led proposition.

#### 1. LOCAL IMMERSIVE EXPLORATION

Consumers have developed a deeper appreciation for locally relevant and authentic experiences. Mind-sets have shifted to a keen interest in community-based exploration where getting to know what local places have to offer in a meaningful way enhances the experience.

#### 2. EXPERIENCE ECONOMY

People signal their status via the consumption of experiences rather than goods and travel forms a key part of this. Unique experiences are social currency, and not just for the

affluent. Visitors seek them out, share them and live in FOMO (fear of missing out) of others who have them.

#### 3. CREATIVE IMMERSION

Visitors seek to develop their creative potential through the travel experience. Instead of buying a vase they want to learn how to make one. This trend encompasses cooking, dancing, sports and wellness. Visitors expect to participate in the experience and leave connected with the destination and reconnected with themselves through new learnings.

(\*Source: MCCP Trendstream tm)

#### 4. IMPLICATIONS

- There needs to be a focus on developing experiences which are immersive and allow visitors to get to experience true local life
- Cork must show it has distinctive, unmissable experiences on offer and that can be experienced in multiple ways



## Developing a tourism proposition for Cork

A number of strands of research were undertaken to understand the needs of the visitor, as well as public engagements with the trade, to help define how best to position Cork as a destination.

### KEY LEARNINGS FROM THE RESEARCH

Potential visitors have a narrow understanding of what Cork has to offer

International visitors have no real awareness that Cork is both a city and county and limited knowledge of what to do in Cork. Unsurprisingly, Cork is not featuring on their itineraries. It is a blank canvas. It currently has no iconic experiences beyond the Blarney Stone. Visitors to Fota Island are less inclined to visit the rest of Cork. They see Fota Island as a destination in itself.

For domestic visitors Cork is synonymous with West Cork, which holds nostalgic memories of their own childhood-family holidays.

There is a lack of an understanding of what the city and the rest of the county has to offer.

### KEY LEARNINGS FROM THE RESEARCH\*

Once Cork is discovered there are many pleasant surprises

Visitors who found themselves in Cork were pleasantly surprised by the:

1. Soft, beautiful, peaceful coastline - making escaping more serene and easy
2. A strong artisanal and foodie culture, enabling discovery and multi-sensory experiences
3. Authentic, compact city, making it easy to connect and feel at home
4. Quirky place giving way to unexpected experiences



**“When I was a child we used to go to Goleen in Cork, and I have brought the children there ...it was beautiful, we loved it.”**

Connected Families

**“If we had known there was a funky side to Cork then we would have stayed longer”**

Culturally Curious

**“I discovered the fish was fresh. She was after buying it at the market that morning ... I said that’s fantastic”**

Culturally Curious

**“The people are lovely anytime I have met people from Cork they have always been great craic”**

Social Energisers

**“Cork is a compact city and easy to walk around, you can give people, in an hour and a half, a good idea of what the city has to offer. It is not so crowded like Dublin but it is still a city.”**

Great Escapers

**“I did not realise Cork was a city and a county (GB 47%; France 62%; Germany 58%)\*”**



(Source: \* Primary Research 2015, Millward Brown, Strategic Marketing)

## A new unifying Proposition for Cork

A number of successful tourism destinations brands were reviewed with similar geographical and cultural components to Cork. This review identified the importance of being single-minded, the need for a stand-out focus for the proposition, yet realising the need to have layers. See Appendix 4 for further detail.

To understand what people felt Cork was best at and what would compel visitors to come to Cork, a number of engagement workshops were held with key trade stakeholders. Crucially the proposition would need to unify the diverse range of experiences (including both Ireland's Ancient East and Wild Atlantic Way) available across the city and county so that Cork could put its best foot forward as a single-minded proposition. It would also have to become an important organising principle to galvanise the wide range of stakeholders from the Beara Peninsula to East Cork. The three strands that were core were the coastline, the rich heritage, inspired mainly by the sea and the local artisanal produce and creative vibe.



### THE PROPOSITION FOR CORK

Cork is a lush coastal playground backed by rolling hills with an endless succession of ports, coves and bays that are a magnet for sailors and those who just love to be by the sea. It has a maritime history spanning over a thousand years, including the most influential periods of European exploration. Meet Cork's free-thinking people who will share their stories and their passion for what's real in life. Here you will discover an immersive and quirky way to experience history and heritage that will stimulate all your senses.

### IN SHORT

'Cork is Ireland's Maritime Paradise with a significant maritime history spanning over a thousand years, set in a beautiful soft coastal environment where the land, the people and their culture will allow you to discover a quirky way to stimulate all of your senses.'

### REASONS TO BELIEVE

In this context 'Maritime' means any aspect that is shaped by water. It refers to the vibrant energy and brightness brought to the people, place and activities that are influenced by water. Cork has the longest shoreline of any county in Ireland, the last sunset in Europe and one of the deepest natural harbours in the world.

'Paradise' means abundance. A Maritime Paradise is the wild and rugged yet serene coastline that can be experienced through land or sea. See the colourful towns and villages; taste the abundance of local artisanal produce, savour the many stories and traditions from the locals. Hear the quirky and quick-witted Cork personality with its uplifting tone, with lyrics around every corner, and experience a local creative vibe that stimulates all five senses. It is the layering of these things together that creates a true maritime paradise. This is truly ownable by Cork as is evidenced by a recent post on the Lonely Planet\*:



**‘Cork is a curious and compelling place. Millions of Irish migrants passed through here in the nineteenth century on their way to North America, leaving evocative traces of their passage.’**

**The city, county and nearby ports of Cobh and Kinsale, are looking elsewhere these days, with a reputation for fine food, numerous cultural gems and an infectious love of a good time.**

**The city’s understated confidence is grounded in its plethora of food markets and ever-evolving cast of creative eateries, and its selection of pubs, entertainment and cultural pursuits.**

**Further afield, you’ll pass inlets along eroded coastlines and a multitude of perfectly charming old fishing towns and villages. The scenery is every bit as enchanting as the best bits of Ireland.’**

(\*Source: Lonely Planet)

### The proposition can be flexed across the three key international segments.

- For the Culturally Curious it means exploring something new and unexpected. For example: the storytelling festival on Cape Clear, the story of Cork harbour, the Butter Museum and importantly it will still include Blarney Castle. The stories for each of these experiences will complement each other with the multi-sensory and local elements.
- For the Social Energisers it means enjoying lots of new, quirky activities such as kayaking at night, Triskel Arts Centre, live music events, and water sports. The sense of adventure needs to be dialled up together with a sense of 'cool.'
- For the Great Escapers it means escaping and indulging in the local artisanal produce found in all the many colourful towns and villages.

The proposition has been tested across our key international markets and has been well received. Once people see the proposition their intention to visit Cork increases.

Taking into account the images and text you have seen and read, how likely are you to visit Cork in the foreseeable future?

| Market  | Very/Fairly likely |
|---------|--------------------|
| GB      | 64%                |
| Germany | 55%                |
| France  | 60%                |

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Cork seems like my kind of place?

| Market  | Strongly/slightly agree |
|---------|-------------------------|
| GB      | 82%                     |
| Germany | 77%                     |
| France  | 88%                     |

Source: Millward Brown, 2015



## The Proposition Framework

The proposition is supported by a key hero theme which is Maritime Stories and Connections. This will be realised by Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way. The hero themes will be supported by experiences that the visitor will enjoy. There are two types of supporting experiences:

1. Maritime and Outdoor leisure
2. Local Creative Vibe (artisanal produce, music & craft).



### THE PROPOSITION

Cork tourism proposition  
Ireland's Maritime Paradise

### HERO THEME

The Maritime stories and connections

The maritime stories and connections bring to life the stories of Cork's unique and globally influential history. This theme will be delivered through IAE and WAW.

### SUPPORTING EXPERIENCE THEMES

Maritime and Outdoor Leisure Activities

The port and the coastal lands of Cork has created a wealth of maritime and outdoor activities, set in a scenic and unique lifestyle setting that allows you to explore the beautiful coastline in a number of different ways.

Local Creative Vibe

The fresh vibe is inspired by the maritime energy that exudes from the people of Cork. It includes fresh food and drink from the Atlantic Sea, music and also craft and design.

### KEY INGREDIENT

Multi sensory (sight, see, sound, touch, taste)

### PERSONALITY

Quirky (tone)

### Developing a joined-up tourism experience with a single point of view and clear priorities

All stakeholders and key visitor touchpoints must work closely together to ensure a cohesive, cross-promoted experience is presented to the visitor. There is a need for the strategic priorities to be aligned and a clear roadmap for success to be outlined to ensure all stakeholders are working to present one unified offering to the visitor. This will be realised through the implementation framework. The single point of view is the proposition.

Underpinning the implementation framework will be strategic priorities that will adhere to the standards of the VICE model that is best practice within tourism. This identifies sustainable tourism as the interaction between visitors, the industry that serves them, the community and culture that hosts them and their collective impact on and response to the environment where it all takes place.

### Implementation Framework Plan Goals:

#### THE GOALS OF THIS PLAN ARE TO:

1. Increase visitor numbers and duration of stay, and extend seasonal patterns where possible
2. Increase the revenue value of visits to Cork
3. Increase visitor traffic throughout Cork
4. Encourage repeat visits by leveraging Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way.

#### THESE GOALS WILL BE ACHIEVED BY DELIVERING EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ENABLERS:

1. Develop a compelling, ownable proposition for Cork to position it as an irresistible tourism destination that encompasses existing offerings. This will position it as a compelling and 'must see' element of the Ireland offering.
2. Develop a visitor-centric tourism offering that is sustainable in and beneficial to the local economy and deliver visitor-led experiences that support and deliver on the 'Maritime Paradise' proposition.
3. Generate awareness and motivate tourists to consider Cork.
4. Facilitate and enrich the consumer journey with integrated experience enablers.

# Critical measurements of success

## Measuring success and milestones

Measuring the success of this project will be done in two ways, through hard performance metrics and also through the measurement of consideration metrics. These are based on Fáilte Ireland market predictions for Ireland’s Ancient East and Wild Atlantic Way for overseas visitors, based on Fáilte Ireland Overseas Visitor Data, Oxford Economics, CSO.

### THE HARD PERFORMANCE METRICS

- Visitor numbers – an increase of + 21.3% for the period 2015–2020
- Revenue (spend-per-capita) – an increase in 27% for the period 2015–2020

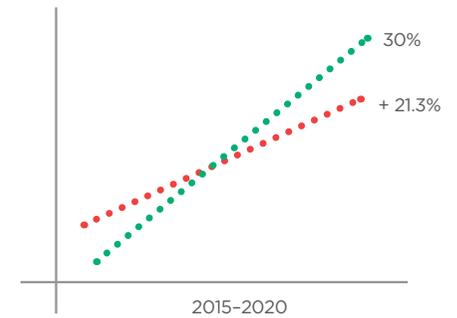
### IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION METRICS

We have proposed a number of key metrics that will be used to measure implementation and consideration:

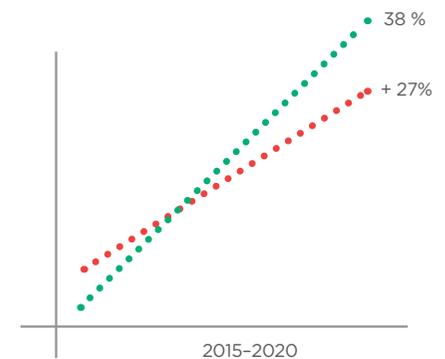
- Awareness and consideration of Cork amongst key overseas markets
- Intent of travel to Cork and inclusion on their itinerary (e.g. I intend to travel to Cork as part of my visit to Ireland)
- Brand proposition awareness of Cork (knowledge) (I associate Cork as the place that is ...)

We propose that these are to be tracked as part of U&A study

### VISITORS NUMBERS



### REVENUE



● Projected growth ● Stretch growth

## Critical measurements of success

Measuring success and milestones will be done in 4 key ways. There are key overarching strategic metrics for the project, KPIs and measurable objectives for 2016 and brand consideration metrics.

### METRIC SET 1:

2016-2020 overall strategic metrics for success:

- Projected visitor numbers- an increase of + 21.3% (stretch target is 30%) for the period 2015-2020
- Projected revenue (spend-per-capita) – an increase in 27% (stretch target is 38%) for the period 2015-2020

### METRIC SET 2:

Priority KPIs for 2016:

- Increase occupancy levels in Cork by 3%
- Increase average daily rate of spend by €5
- Increase length of stay
- Increase % of leisure travellers to Cork

Increase average rates for hotels and guesthouses

### METRIC SET 3:

Additional measurements of success.

Measuring awareness of Cork:

- Establish benchmarks for awareness of Cork
- Build positive awareness of Cork's proposition, within Ireland's Ancient East and Wild Atlantic Way
- Increase local, domestic and international awareness of and warmth / positive sentiment towards Cork's brand proposition
- Increased aspiration to visit
- Increase international engagement with proposition

### METRIC SET 4:

2016 measurable objectives:

- Development of business tourism, March-May & Sept-Nov
- Increase in visitors from key markets – new access routes
- Increase in domestic leisure visitors – more short stays from 1 to 2 nights
- Increase number of overnight stays
- Extend visitor shoulder season/ reduce peak seasonality
- Increase visitor spend
- Increase paid bednights
- Increase employment
- Central ticketing sales (ticketing, events, key visitor attractions)
- Number of times Cork represented a key exhibitions/workshops as Brand Cork
- Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way-number of domestic promotions
- Joint marketing activity to promote Cork as a region
- Number of familiarisation trips with key agents

## 09 The Implementation Framework

There are four plans to support each of the enablers. These plans will build upon existing plans for Cork that have been implemented by industry bodies, so as to complement the work already being undertaken.

### Definitions:

- ‘Lead Player’ is responsible for progressing the action in partnership with the other stakeholders. However they may not necessarily hold sole accountability for its implementation.
- “Partners” are those that must work together with the lead to achieve the action
- “Dependencies” represent those that should be consulted and whose activities might affect or be affected by the outcomes

### The overarching priorities are twofold:

1. To create strong awareness and engagement with the new single-minded proposition across the industry and in the target markets: Cork is Ireland’s Maritime Paradise with a significant maritime history spanning over a thousand years, set in a beautiful soft coastal environment where the land, the people and their culture will allow you to discover a quirky way to stimulate all of your senses.’
2. To deliver a tangible and coherent set of visitor experiences that are easy to find and navigate for the visitor.

The following are the macro plans that will ensure these are delivered.



## Plan 1

Realising an ownable proposition for Cork to position itself as a compelling tourism destination within Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way

What success will look like:

- A. Cork will have a clear proposition in the mind of the visitor
- B. All stakeholders will be aligned around the delivery of the proposition within Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way Experience Brands
- C. All existing activities in Cork will be aligned to bringing the new proposition to life within Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way Experience Brands
- D. Cork will be perceived by visitors, stakeholders and locals as a key destination within Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way



## Action 1

Develop and define the new Maritime Paradise proposition with supporting sample itineraries, experiences and narrative which maximise the opportunity from Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way.

Develop and define what makes the Cork proposition, with supporting sample itineraries and experiences which can be brought to market through Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way.

### Lead Player and Key Partners

Visit Cork  
Fáilte Ireland  
Local Authorities

**Dependencies** All industry – service/hospitality, activity, visitor attractions and facility providers.

Cork Airport  
Port of Cork  
Tourism Industry Representative Organisations  
Regional Tourism Organisations  
Local Action Groups (LAGs)

**Short Term (2016)** Define proposition and articulate the itineraries

**Long Term (2017-2020)** Implement

## Action 2

Communicate the new proposition and how it sits within Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way brands to internal audiences – the trade, local stakeholders – across the region. Develop a proposition toolkit.

Communicate the new proposition and how it sits within Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way brands to internal audiences – the trade and local stakeholders – across the region. Develop a proposition toolkit.

### Lead Player and Key Partners

Visit Cork  
Tourism Industry  
Representative Organisations  
Regional Tourism Organisations

**Dependencies** Fáilte Ireland

**Short Term (2016)** Create toolkit and communicate in 2016

**Long Term (2017-2020)**

Continue to embed

## Action 3

Create a brand management system for the proposition so that all activities (actions, communications etc.) operate to deliver on the Maritime Paradise Proposition and strategy and to ensure adherence to the brand architecture of Ireland's Ancient East, the Wild Atlantic Way and Tourism Brand Ireland.

Create a brand management system to ensure that all activities are aligned with the Maritime Paradise proposition. Any activities which fall outside of this should be deprioritised. The brand management system should sit within the brand architecture of Tourism Brand Ireland and the experience brands: Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way

### Lead Player and Key Partners

Visit Cork, Tourism Industry  
Representative Organisations  
Regional Tourism Organisations

**Dependencies** All industry – service/hospitality, activity, visitor attractions and facility providers.  
Cork Airport, Port of Cork,  
Local Action Groups (LAGs)  
Chambers and Business Organisations

**Short Term (2016)**

Define and implement in 2016

**Long Term (2017-2020)**

Monitor and refine

## Action 4

Promote and support the development of relationships amongst entities to allow a collective response to the demand of segments.

Support needs to be given to make sure that those people and organisations developing tourism products are meeting the needs of the target segments.

### Lead Player and Key Partners

Visit Cork  
Tourism Industry  
Representative Organisations  
Regional Tourism Organisations

**Dependencies** All industry – service/hospitality, activity, visitor attractions and facility providers.

Local Action Groups (LAGs)  
Cork Airport  
Port of Cork  
IHF

**Short Term (2016)** Regular tourism review meeting of all key stakeholders to share learnings and review progress

**Long Term (2017-2020)**

Deepen relationships to ensure cohesion and aligned thinking and execution

## Plan 2

Delivery of visitor-centric experiences that are sustainable, beneficial to the local economy and support the 'Maritime Paradise' proposition

What success will look like:

- A. Maximised revenue and length of stay of visitors to Cork
- B. Increased accommodation revenue
- C. Expanded tourist season to shoulder periods benefitting the local economy
- D. Activities within Cork that will be segment-led and consistent with the Maritime Paradise proposition
- E. A compelling set of on-the-ground signature experiences that will motivate the visitor to come and stay and will deliver against the Maritime Paradise proposition through Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way experience brands in an integrated way
- F. Cork will be fully leveraged within Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way



---

## Action 1

Using Fáilte Ireland's National Experience Development Framework, compile Signature & Supporting Experience Development Plans that leverage the Cork proposition and make it tangible for the visitor, giving Cork stand-out appeal in Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way. This framework incorporates experience auditing.

Signature Experiences need to be developed which support the Cork Maritime Paradise proposition and which can sit within either Ireland's Ancient East or the Wild Atlantic Way. The bundling of a number of activities together and the creation of trails should be considered. This will also help to disperse visitors across Cork. To be considered as a Signature Experience an attraction must be a strong motivator for overseas visitors to visit Cork.

### Lead Player and Key Partners

Fáilte Ireland  
Local Authorities

**Dependencies** All industry – service/hospitality, activity, visitor attractions and facility providers  
Cork Airport  
Port of Cork  
Regional Tourism Organisations  
Local Action Groups (LAGs)

**Short Term (2016)** Audit existing experiences that deliver on the proposition

**Long Term (2017-2020)** Launch and implement new experiences. Submit for capital investment and implement

---

## Action 2

Implement the Experience Development Plans to deliver a portfolio of new motivating and visitor-centric experiences for market.

Implement the Experience Development Plans to deliver a portfolio of new motivating and visitor-centric experiences for market

### Lead Player and Key Partners

Visit Cork  
Local Authorities  
OPW  
Industry  
Visitor attractions

**Dependencies** Fáilte Ireland

**Short Term (2016)**  
Develop an implementation plan

**Long Term (2017-2020)**  
Submit for capital investment and implement

---

## Action 3

Prioritise the Cork Harbour Experience Development Plan and extend relevant Maritime themes/stories across the region.

Develop and implement a plan for Cork City and Harbour to make it a key destination that can leverage its position as a gateway to Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way. The story that connects Cork City with both experience brands needs to be considered.

### Lead Player and Key Partners

Local Authorities  
**Dependencies** Industry  
Visitor attractions  
Port of Cork

**Short Term (2016)** Develop a plan to make the proposition tangible

**Long Term (2017-2020)** Submit for Fáilte Ireland capital investment and implement

---

## Action 4

Develop Cork City into the primary destination gateway for the Wild Atlantic Way.

Develop Cork City as the primary destination gateway for the Wild Atlantic Way.

### Lead Player and Key Partners

Local Authorities  
Cork Airport  
Port of Cork

**Dependencies** Industry  
Visitor attractions  
Fáilte Ireland

**Short Term (2016)** Leverage Cork's unique position and work with key partners to highlight this

**Long Term (2017-2020)** Submit for Fáilte Ireland capital investment and implement a plan to make the proposition tangible

**Long Term (2017-2020)**  
Launch and implement new experiences. Submit for capital investment and implement

## Action 5

Create and deliver new events and activities that will appeal to the key segments and reframe existing activities accordingly. This will include food, music, festivals and creative vibe. Develop a calendar of festival events that will help to extend the traditional peak visitor season. All new events & activities will link into Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way.

A number of supporting experiences need to be developed to deliver a best-in-class holiday experience. These must be visitor-led at their core. They should include activities such as festivals, music events, food and crafts. The first step is to take stock of what existing activities there are and reframe them to fit within the Cork Maritime Paradise proposition. Gaps can then be identified and filled as required. While both local authorities will be key to driving this workstream, industry participation will be crucial for success in leading the implementation of the activities. The development of a calendar of festivals that support the proposition is required. This will involve reviewing and scaling current festivals to support the proposition and developing new festivals where necessary.

### Lead Player and Key Partners

Tourism Industry Representative Organisations  
Regional Tourism Organisations,  
Local Authorities

**Dependencies** All industry - service/hospitality, activity, visitor attractions and facility providers  
Festival organisers  
Fáilte Ireland

**Short Term (2016)** Develop and reframe experiences and activities  
Review gaps in existing calendar of experiences and activities  
Develop a wider calendar of events and activities to ensure there is a good space to extend season

**Long Term (2017-2020)** Launch and communicate the new/reframed activities and measure their impact on visitor number

## Action 6

Support the industry to deliver best-in-class storytelling experiences at all Ireland's Ancient East 'Maritime Paradise' visitor touchpoints.

Storytelling is a key part of the visitor experience allowing visitors to connect with the place and its people in a truly authentic 'local' way. Storytelling is a key element of the Ireland's Ancient East brand and important in telling the story of Ireland's Atlantic Culture along the Wild Atlantic Way. All who engage with visitors need to be trained on how to deliver a best-in-class storytelling experience.

**Lead Player and Key Partners**  
Fáilte Ireland  
Industry

**Dependencies**  
Visit Cork  
Local Authorities  
Industry  
Regional tourism organisations

**Short Term (2016)** Develop a training plan to deliver best-in-class story telling for all key attractions in Cork

**Long Term (2017-2020)**  
Launch and implement the training plan

## Action 7

Network building - enable small/emerging businesses to leverage off larger and complementary businesses

Key to delivering a more seamless visitor experience and encourage increased spend and economic dispersal is the ability for visitor attractions, and activities, etc. to cross-sell to each other. Activities should be able to recommend to visitors other things they that visitors might like to see, as well as promoting other businesses across the region. Networking events should be created to allow business owners to connect with each other and learn how their businesses can support each other. These events should be led by Industry, using Industry Ambassadors and facilitated by the Local Authorities with the support of local partners Chambers of Commerce and Industry bodies.

**Lead Player and Key Partners**  
Industry Local Enterprise Offices

**Dependencies** Chambers Network

**Short Term (2016)** Create a series of ongoing networking events centered around cross-selling and delivering on the Cork proposition

**Long Term (2017-2020)** Review and refine

## Action 8

Identify and develop an experience portfolio to cater for Cruise tourism

Cruise tourism is a key driver of visitors to the region, alongside leisure tourism. A plan to leverage cruise visitors needs to be drafted. Experiences and activities that appeal to these visitors need to be identified and communicated. This will require local authorities to work with Cork Airport, the Port of Cork, ground handlers and local industry to package the right activities.

### Lead Player and Key Partners

Local Authorities,  
Cruise Ireland

### Dependencies

Visit Cork  
Industry  
Port of Cork

**Short Term (2016)** Work with Port of Cork and local Cruise Tourism industry to understand what experiences are most suited to cruise tourism.

Create a comprehensive plan that leverages the synergy already created from the good work being undertaken, to create experiences that will be tailored for cruise tourism

**Long Term (2017-2020)** Launch and implement the plan and measure the uplift in cruise tourism



## Plan 3

Generate awareness and consideration of Cork amongst visitors as a tourism destination and support business development

What success will look like:

- A. Increased numbers of overseas visitors
- B. Cork will be perceived as a key destination amongst domestic visitors and sit firmly in their consideration set
- C. Significant increased awareness of Cork within Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way experience brands
- D. Increased visitor traffic through Cork entry points (port, airport, bus stations and train stations)



## Action 1

Integrate the Cork proposition into national and overseas tourism marketing, sales and publicity plans for Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way so as to increase awareness of the Cork proposition and consideration among priority overseas markets and domestic visitors.

The Cork Proposition needs to be integrated into the overall 'Brand Ireland' proposition. Work needs to be done on pushing awareness of Cork as part of the Ireland experience so it becomes a chosen destination on visitors' itinerary when they come to Ireland. This is a piece of work that needs to be completed by the local authorities in collaboration with Tourism Ireland and, locally, with Fáilte Ireland. An overseas, highly targeted sales plan needs to be developed for overseas markets which includes targeting specific trade events that will draw visitors to Cork. Partner marketing activities with food and transport players will also be developed so that Cork is front and centre for destinations that offer direct access.

### Lead Player and Key Partners

Tourism Ireland  
Fáilte Ireland  
Local Authorities Industry

**Dependencies** Cork Airport  
Port of Cork Industry groups

**Short Term (2016)** Develop a plan that

will ensure the Cork proposition is integrated into tourism agency overseas and domestic sales and marketing activity

**Long Term (2017-2020)** Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland to ensure Cork is a feature where relevant and appropriate in, primarily overseas, sales and marketing of Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way

## Action 2

Develop and implement a sales and marketing plan to maximise overseas and domestic marketing and business development outcomes in addition to agreed agency activity. Align to existing access routes.

Develop and implement a sales and marketing plan to maximise overseas and domestic marketing and business development outcomes in addition to agreed agency activity. Align to existing access routes.

**Lead Player and Key Partners**  
Visit Cork

**Dependencies**  
Cork Airport  
Local Authorities  
Fáilte Ireland  
Tourism Ireland  
Port of Cork  
Industry

**Short Term (2016)** Develop a plan that will ensure the Cork proposition is integrated into industry, partners and stakeholders' overseas sales and marketing activity.

**Long Term (2017-2020)** Integrated into part of the Ireland offering

## Action 3

Communicate the Maritime Paradise proposition as it relates to Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way, to domestic, international and external stakeholders across the region.

Communicate the new proposition to external audiences – visitors (domestic and international), and external stakeholders across the region.

**Lead Player and Key Partners**  
Visit Cork, Fáilte Ireland

**Dependencies** Industry

**Short Term (2016)** Maximise visibility through Fáilte Ireland tourism offices with Irelands Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way. Visit Cork to work with industry and Fáilte Ireland to develop material to optimise communications channels and visibility in-destination

**Long Term (2017-2020)** Ongoing – ensure communications channels are being optimised to deliver on the 'Maritime Paradise' proposition

## Action 4

Develop an engagement plan to bring all relevant stakeholders, community and industry on board with the new proposition and ensure that their role in the delivery of the proposition is clear. Produce supporting proposition content and toolkit for industry and stakeholders.

An engagement plan is required to educate all stakeholders on the new proposition and ensure everyone is aligned and has identified ways that they can develop their visitor experience in line with the proposition. A specific engagement plan, with a supporting proposition toolkit, needs to be created for artisanal craft producers as they will have a key role in developing and delivering experiences.

**Lead Player and Key Partners**  
Visit Cork Fáilte Ireland Local Authorities

**Dependencies** Industry

**Short Term (2016)** Develop a plan that will engage with all relevant stakeholders and communities in Cork that can be aligned to the Wild Atlantic Way engagement plans

**Long Term (2017-2020)**  
Ongoing – review the levels of engagement with the proposition

---

## Action 5

Create a socialisation plan of the proposition to build awareness and engagement amongst all stakeholders across key touchpoints of the visitor journey (including taxi, retail and hospitality).

The Cork proposition needs to be embedded into local communities if it is to be successful. This is crucial for the creation of an authentic visitor experience. Key influencers within communities need to be identified and brought on board with the new proposition. It then needs to be clearly communicated to all so that everyone is aware of what Cork is offering and how they can contribute to its success. This includes key touchpoints such as taxi drivers, the retail sector and the hospitality trade.

### Lead Player and Key Partners

Visit Cork  
Local Authorities

### Dependencies

Industry  
Fáilte Ireland  
Port of Cork  
Cork Airport  
Regional tourism organisations

**Short Term (2016)** Develop and implement a plan that will ensure the proposition is lived and breathed at key touchpoints of the visitor journey. Ensure alignment with Ireland's Ancient

East and the Wild Atlantic Way socialisation activity

**Long Term (2017-2020)** Review the key visitor touchpoints for their effectiveness of delivering the proposition

---

## Action 6

Develop a plan to create a number of 'ambassadors' for the Cork tourism proposition. This is to include celebrity ambassadors for overseas leverage as well as destination ambassadors.

A plan to create a number of designated 'ambassadors' for the tourism proposition must be considered - this will include diaspora celebrities as well as local ambassadors. These ambassadors will embody the proposition and act as key touchpoints for visitors to Cork. They must be aware of the segments and their different needs and be able to tell the story of the Cork proposition as well as cross-promote Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way experiences and other experiences across the county.

### Lead Player and Key Partners

Visit Cork

**Dependencies** Local Authorities Fáilte Ireland Tourism Ireland Regional tourism organisations

**Short Term (2016)** Create a plan that will enable the training of individuals for the ambassador programme at a local

level. Create a list of and recruit desirable celebrity and community ambassadors

### Long Term (2017-2020)

Launch a plan that introduces the ambassadors and clearly defines their role for the visitor

---

## Action 7

Create an improved system of dynamic communication around visitor-led itineraries with offers which can be pushed through communications channels in a timely manner.

Communicate offers and itineraries as they are available and push them out via the most relevant channels. This needs to be a flexible system to match supply with demand.

### Lead Player and Key Partners

Visit Cork  
Industry

### Dependencies

Cork Airport  
Port of Cork  
Fáilte Ireland  
Tourism Ireland

**Short Term (2016)** Review current communication channels, identify areas for improvement and make recommendations

### Long Term (2017-2020)

Implement recommendations for improved communication system

---

## Action 8

Ensure Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way attractions are cross promoting the Cork Maritime Paradise proposition across the region.

Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way attractions will need to be familiar with the overall Cork tourism proposition and what tourist activities will support it. They will need to be given the required information and encouraged to cross-promote activities across the region to ensure that everyone is benefiting.

### Lead Player and Key Partners

Visit Cork, Industry

**Dependencies** Fáilte Ireland Tourism Ireland Regional tourism organisations

### Short Term (2016)

Develop and implement the portal

### Long Term (2017-2020)

Ongoing review of how effectively the portal is performing

---

## Action 9

Create a Visit Cork portal to channel all content and activities into a single destination.

Create a Visit Cork portal to channel all content and activities into a single destination

**Lead Player and Key Partners**  
Visit Cork, Industry

**Dependencies** Fáilte Ireland Tourism Ireland Regional tourism organisations

**Short Term (2016)**  
Develop and implement the portal

**Long Term (2017-2020)**  
Ongoing review of how effectively the portal is performing



## Plan 4

Facilitate and enrich the visitor journey with integrated tourism infrastructure and destination/experience enablers

What success will look like:

- A. tourism offering where all touchpoints will be customer centric
- B. A seamless visitor experience across Cork
- C. Cork will be perceived as a visitor friendly, easily navigable and consumable destination
- D. A tourism offering that will be aligned with both cruise and business tourism activities



## Action 1

Upskill staff in the industry to cross-promote key destinations within Cork, Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way.

Secure the long term supply of relevant skills to deliver on the Cork Maritime Paradise proposition. Key area of focus should be within the service industry.

A plan needs to be created to upskill staff so that they are able to cross-promote key destinations within Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way. The role of storytelling, local producers and food has been identified as a key part of the overall visitor experience. However, there is a gap in some relevant skills that are required to deliver on the Cork Maritime Paradise proposition. This gap is particularly prevalent in the hospitality sector. Local Authorities will work with stakeholders, such as the industry and CIT, to ensure the necessary skills are being developed and to create a plan to secure the future supply of the required skill set.

**Lead Player and Key Partners**  
SOLAS

**Dependencies** Fáilte Ireland Industry

### Short Term (2016)

Plan for upskilling staff to cross-promote  
Review and assess skills available and projected gaps

## Long Term (2017-2020)

Implement the plan to secure long term supply of skills that will support the industry delivering on the proposition

Review annually projected skill gaps

## Action 2

Support innovation and the creation of new tourism businesses and new jobs.

Revise investment plan and support local development of industry to facilitate job creation.

**Lead Player and Key Partners**  
Industry

### Dependencies

Industry  
Fáilte Ireland  
Tourism Ireland  
Port of Cork  
Cork Airport  
Regional tourism organisations LEOs

**Short Term (2016)** Align investment plan to support local development

**Long Term (2017-2020)** Implement

## Action 3

Develop visitor infrastructure required to promote the Maritime Paradise proposition within Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way and to visitors in Cork. This will include digital (maps, signage) to support the flow of visitors throughout Cork and to copper fasten Cork as a Smart City and County

Infrastructure needs to be created to facilitate the flow of visitors throughout Cork. This will make it easier for visitors to navigate Cork and allow key attractions and messages to be promoted.

**Lead Player and Key Partners**  
Local Authorities

**Dependencies**  
Fáilte Ireland Industry

**Short Term (2016)** Review current infrastructure and design a plan for the most effective infrastructure that will support the flow of visitors.

**Long Term (2017-2020)**  
Implement the new infrastructure plans and review their effectiveness

## Action 4

Develop an integrated transport system that leverages local transport networks, where possible, to seamlessly disperse visitors throughout Cork.

Transport throughout the region has been identified as an area where the visitor experience may suffer. A plan needs to be developed to overcome this. All current potential transport options need to be considered and leveraged for visitors where possible. This will require a coordinated effort between local authorities and private transport operators.

**Lead Player and Key Partners**  
Local Authorities

**Dependencies**  
Industry Public and private transport providers

**Short Term (2016)** Review current transport system and identify where there are gaps in the service for visitors. Create solutions where feasible to fill these gaps.

**Long Term (2017-2020)** Implement the recommended approaches to fill the gaps in transport service

## Action 5

Work progressively with Cork Airport to develop new routes and increase visitor numbers.

Work progressively with Cork Airport to develop a comprehensive plan with Cork Airport to grow visitor numbers by increasing capacity on existing routes and through the delivery of sustainable new routes. Leverage the synergy already created from the current work being undertaken on route development.

### Lead Player and Key Partners

Visit Cork

### Dependencies

Cork Airport  
Industry  
Fáilte Ireland  
Tourism Ireland  
Regional tourism organisations

### Short Term (2016)

Work with Cork Airport to understand what experiences are best suited to leisure tourism. Create a comprehensive plan to grow visitor numbers through the delivery of sustainable new routes and increased capacity on existing routes. Leverage the synergy already created from the current work being undertaken.

### Long Term (2017-2020)

Launch and implement the plan and measure the uplift in visitor numbers

## Action 6

Educate the industry on who the key segments are, what they want and how to engage with them, through Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way, to show the value of the Cork 'Maritime Paradise' proposition to their businesses and the local economy and for everyone involved in the tourism sector to live the proposition on a day-to-day basis.

This initiative relates to educating everyone involved in the industry on the benefit of tourism to them, ensuring that those dealing with visitors understand who they are, how to recognise the different segments and how to best engage with them. This action will require regular review and retraining where necessary.

### Lead Player and Key Partners

Fáilte Ireland

### Dependencies

Key public stakeholders Industry

### Short Term (2016)

Training workshops to educate the industry across the county that are effective and measurable

### Long Term (2017-2020)

Review and retrain where necessary

## Action 7

Create a responsive plan to ensure adequate availability of good value accommodation. Consider alternative options, such as sharing economy accommodation facilitated hosting and campus accommodation.

Hotel capacity has been identified as a serious issue within Cork City. Capacity needs to be assessed and plans for additional or alternative sources of accommodation need to be considered to enable the projected increase in visitor numbers.

### Lead Player and Key Partners

Industry

### Dependencies

Local Authorities  
Fáilte Ireland

### Short Term (2016)

Review capacity versus projection and determine the size and scale of the accommodation need.

Identify means of dealing with seasonal variations and event-specific demand

### Long Term (2017-2020)

Develop an implementation plan to address the gaps identified



### Lead Partner Definition

The Lead Partner is Responsible for progressing the action in partnership with the other stakeholders. However, they may not necessarily hold sole accountability for its implementation.

### Tourism Industry Organisations Definition

The term Tourism Industry Organisations covers local representation of a broad range of key stakeholders, including national sectoral organisations such as the ITOA, accommodation associations, culinary and beverage associations, heritage & cultural bodies, transport associations, activity associations and community based Regional Tourism Groups and Local areas Development Groups across Cork City and County.

### Stakeholders Definition

The term Stakeholders covers a wide range of businesses and organisations which are relevant and key to the delivery of a given action, including non-tourism business groups, special interest groups, educational establishments, media and relevant contributors to delivery both regionally and nationally.

## The implementation framework

We intend to establish Visit Cork Ltd, which will be charged with responsibility for the implementation of the Strategy. A series of service level agreements (SLAs) will be developed between Visit Cork Ltd and the key funding/resourcing agencies to recognise the significant commitments that will, in conjunction with the State Tourism Bodies, through an appropriate supportive funding and resourcing model to be developed, support Visit Cork Ltd in its work.

Visit Cork Ltd will have a governance structure which will ensure that its Board of Directors will have the necessary capacity and skillset to deliver on the implementation of the strategy. The Board will be made up of membership from the key agencies involved in the tourism industry and representatives from local industry.

Visit Cork Ltd will employ a Tourism Destination Manager as a programme manager with the requisite skills to lead the implementation of the Strategy. The Company will also employ a Tourism Marketing Manager and supporting administration staff as required.

In delivering on this Collective Strategy, Visit Cork Ltd. will require the active support and engagement of a significant range and number of agencies and industry partners. The Implementation Framework in the Strategy sets out a flavour of what inter dependencies will be required in this regard. The Implementation Framework sets out a range of Actions which list Lead

Players, Partners and Dependencies. The Lead Player in progressing the delivery of the Action in conjunction with Visit Cork Ltd. will be the first agency listed for each Action. The role of that Lead Agency will be to take responsibility for the development of a business/activity plan which will secure the implementation of the Action. In taking on this responsibility the Lead Agency will scope and define the requirements for delivery of the Action including timeframes, agency and dependencies required inputs, any necessary financing required and a programme for implementation. In undertaking this work the Lead Agency will be supported by the direct involvement of the Tourism Destination Manager.

**The Steering Committee** will act as the gatekeeper of the overall strategy and offer guidance whilst overseeing the development and delivery of the Cork Tourism Strategy. A SLA will be put in place to lay out key deliverables.

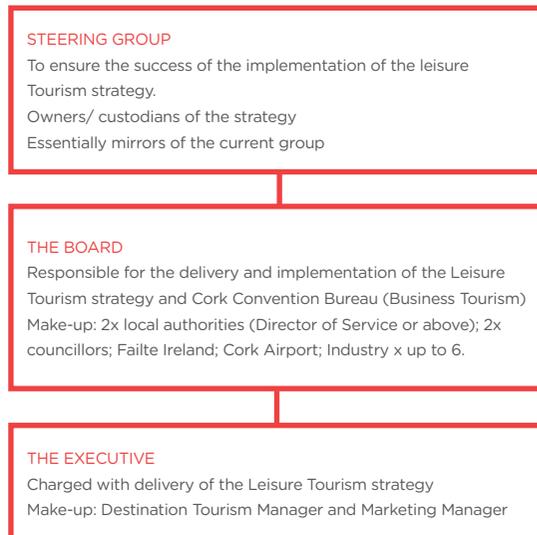
**The Board**, comprised of representatives from local authorities, the DAA, local industry, Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland, will ensure the strategic plans are implemented in conjunction with the relevant agencies. The board will be responsible for ensuring that action is taken and achieved by leveraging the synergy between leisure and business tourism. The proposed structure will follow the successful model of the Cork Convention Bureau.

**The Executive:** The structure will include two key roles:

- **Tourism Destination Manager:** this role is focussed on programme management and leading on the

successful implementation of the Tourism Strategy. This senior, experienced individual will and develop programmes which deliver on the proposition and fulfil the key KPIs. Crucial to this will be the creation of integrated visitor-centric experience programmes that make the proposition real for the visitor and support sales and revenue targets and building industry and stakeholder wide engagement and collaboration.

- **Tourism Marketing Manager:** this role will be focussed on marketing the destination as one proposition, as defined by the brand and supported by relevant and targeted programmes. The Marketing Manager will be responsible for the creation of effective and tailored consumer and trade sales and marketing programmes which deliver the defined sales and revenue KPIs, working closely with relevant state agencies, industry and key local stakeholders.



# 10 Appendices

We would like to thank all who contributed

## Cork Strategic Tourism Task Force: Advisory Group

George Barter  
(Travelnet.ie)

David Bennet  
(Cork County Council)

David Bennett  
(Cork County Council)

Maria Benson  
(C.I.T.)

Darragh Brady  
(Clarion Hotel, Cork)

Jean Brennan  
(Cork City Council)

Fiona Browne  
(Cork City Council)

Enda Buckley  
(Sustainable Solutions)

Louise Burke  
(IRB Duhollow)

Joe Burke  
(Cork County Council)

Siobhan Burke  
(Sheep's Head Way)

Rose Carroll  
(Cork County Council)

Pat Casey  
(Casey Communications)

Paula Cogan  
(River Lee Hotel)

Deirdre Cole  
(Fáilte Ireland)

Peter Conway  
(Discovering Cork)

Tracey Coughlan  
(Fáilte Ireland)

Steve Cox  
(Cork Convention Bureau)

Hilary Creedan  
(Fáilte Ireland)

Derry Cronin  
(Cronin Travel Group)

John Cullinan  
(BAM Ireland)

Kevin Cullinane  
(Cork Airport)

Declan Daly  
(Cork County Council)

Jackie Dawson  
(Kinsale Chamber of Commerce)

Janice Dawson  
(Kinsale Chamber of Tourism)

Jenny De Saulles  
(Fáilte Ireland)

Ian Dempsey  
(West Cork Development

Partnership)

Maeve Dineen  
(Cork City Council)

Ann Doherty  
(Cork City Council)

Liz Donavon  
(Cork County Council)

Louis Duffy  
(Cork County Council)

Sinéad Dunphy  
(Cork International Coral Festival)

Ruth Farrell  
(C.I.T.)

James Fogarty  
(Cork County Council)

John Forde  
(Cork County Council)

Seamus Fox  
(Ballyhoura)

Bernadette Freyne  
(Ardfield Farmhouse)

Shirley Gallagher  
(SYSPRO)

John Gately  
(Montenotte Hotel)

Adrian Gregan  
(C.I.T.)

William Hammond  
(Cork Folk Festival)

Conor Healy  
(Cork Chamber of Commerce)

Cora Healy  
(Cork Chamber of Tourism)

Madeline Healy  
(Cork County Council)

Seamus Heaney  
(Cork Convention Bureau)

Clodagh Henahan  
(Cork County Council)

Kela Hodgins  
(Dunowen House)

Ryan Howard  
(SECAD)

Kate Howey  
(Kinsale Tourism)

Gillen Joyce  
(The Titanic Experience)

Suzanne Kearney  
(SECAD)

Ray Kelleher  
(Clarion Hotel, Cork)

Mary Kelly  
(Cork Racecourse)

Justine Kelly  
(Cork County Council)

Paul Kenneally  
(BAM Property)

Jim Kennedy  
(Atlantic Sea Kayaking)

Ailish Lee  
(Cork County Council)

Sara MacKeown  
(Port of Cork)

Michael Magner  
(Vienna Woods Hotel)

Deborah Maguire  
(Blarney Chamber of  
Commerce)

Aaron Mansworth  
(Cork International Hotel)

Michael Martin  
(Fota House)

Cllr Mary Shields,  
Lord Mayor Cork City

Lorraine May  
(Cork Midsummer Festival)

Joe McCarthy  
(Cork County Council)

Jennifer McCarthy  
(Cork County Council)

Mary McCarthy  
(National Sculpture Factory)

Ian McDonagh  
(Cork County Council)

Hal McElroy  
(Trident Hotel)

Jack McGouran  
(Cork Jazz Festival)

Claire McSweeney  
(Blackrock Castle)

Paul Montgomery  
(Cork Vintners)

Pauline Moriarty  
(Cork County Council)

Paul Moynihan  
(Cork City Council)

John Mulcahy  
(Fáilte Ireland)

Niamh Murphy  
(Hopkins Communications)

Irene Murray  
(Cork County Council)

Peter Murray  
(Crawford Art Gallery)

Claire Nash  
(CBA)

Conor Nelligan  
(Cork County Council)

Barrie O'Connell  
(Cork Chamber of Commerce)

Sinead O'Crowley  
(Clonakilty Chamber of Commerce)

Peter O'Donoghue  
(Cork County Council)

Josephine O'Driscoll  
(Cork County Council)

Macdara O'Hici  
(Cork County Council)

Damien O'Mahony  
(Cork City Council)

Michael O'Neill  
(Fernhill House Hotel)

John Paul O'Shea, Mayor  
(Cork County Council)

Eileen O'Shea  
(Bantry Development & Tourism)

Eileen O'Shea  
(Cork Film Festival)

Michelle O'Sullivan  
(Cork Chamber of Commerce)

Valerie O'Sullivan  
(Cork City Council)

Jean O'Sullivan  
(West Cork Development  
Partnership)

Lawrence Owens  
(Cork Business Association)

David Precious  
(West Cork Development  
Partnership)

Con Quill  
(Blarney Caravan Park)

Roisin Liston  
(Tourism Ireland)

Stephen Ryan  
(Fota Wildlife Park)

Sarah Sinnott  
(Cork County Council)

Ann Slattery  
(Ballyhoura Development)

Amanda Slattery  
(Ballyhoura)

Mary Sleeman  
(Caravan and Camping)

Deirdre Smith  
(Cork Jazz Festival)

Geoffrey Spratt  
(Cork School of Music)

Miriam Tobin  
(Skibbereen Chamber  
of Commerce)

Jean Van Sinderen-Law  
(UCC)

Gillian Vaughan  
(Cork County Council)

Hendrick Verwey  
(Cobh Tourism)

John Walsh  
(West Cork Islands)

Aisling Ward  
(C.I.T.)

Frankie Whelehan  
(Choice Hotels)

Paola Zambelli  
(Cork County Council)

### 1.2 The approach: A two phase process

#### PHASE 1:

The first phase of the process was focused on understanding what Cork is 'best at' in order to create a unique, visitor-led proposition that Cork can truly own. This involved a series of OpenMinds™ workshops with the Cork Strategic Tourism Group and subsequent Challenge and Build workshops with wider stakeholders, including the trade. From these workshops a number of propositional territories were created and subsequently tested among the key segments (both domestic and international). The output of this was a refined, single-minded proposition. This proposition was then tested internationally among the key markets of GB, France and Germany.

#### PHASE 2:

The second phase was focused on the creation of an implementation framework that will guide the delivery of the proposition and ensure it is tangible for visitors. This involved a full-day workshop with the local authorities and the heads

of Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way experience brands, Jenny De Saullés and Fiona Monaghan, where key actions were outlined that would enable the delivery of the proposition. The implementation framework was then further developed and refined by the Cork Strategic Tourism Group.

#### INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

##### Workshops:

**May 18th** - Workshop with wider stakeholders including industry

**Sept 16th** - Workshop with wider stakeholders including industry

**October 16th** - Workshop with wider stakeholders including industry

**November 5th** - Workshop with local authorities and the heads of the experience brands, Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way.



## 2. Role of tourism for local authorities and communities

### People and Place A Central Role in Tourism for Local Authorities and Communities

#### LOCAL AUTHORITIES – SUPPORT COMMUNITY TOURISM INITIATIVE

The success of the Gathering in 2013 has provided a foundation on which to develop a more structured role for Local Authorities in support of community initiative in tourism. Government’s Action Plan for Effective Local Government – Putting People First envisages the local government system performing a strategic role in relation to economic development in partnership with the relevant government departments and agencies. Tourism is a key area in which Local Authorities can promote economic development in conjunction with community effort.

#### IT IS ENVISAGED THAT LOCAL AUTHORITIES WILL:

- Continue to act as primary developer of public tourism infrastructure
- Continue to progress tourism product development with the support of Fáilte Ireland funding from the Government Public capital programme
- Act as a link between Fáilte Ireland and communities by supporting community and industry effort with regard to major national tourism initiatives, such as the Gathering
- Support community and industry effort in destination development
- Contribute to capacity building in tourism nationally by co-ordinating exchange of knowledge between established and developing tourism destinations
- Provide a range of advice and support through the Local Enterprise Offices

#### ALIGNMENT OF LOCAL AUTHORITY ACTION WITH NATIONAL POLICIES

- Local Authorities to act in co-operation with one another
- Tourism Ireland to continue to lead overseas tourism destination marketing

- Expenditure on marketing an individual county to consumers in overseas markets is unlikely to provide an adequate return on investment as the level of awareness of Ireland’s internal administrative boundaries is low among overseas consumers and should be borne in mind by Local Authorities. Direct participation in marketing by Local Authorities should therefore be targeted at regional destination brand propositions which align with national brand propositions and to strategic international direct points of access to a region.

#### LOCAL SUPPORTS FOR TOURISM

- Referred to the roll out of Local Enterprise Offices based in Local Authorities, the establishment of Local Community Development Committees and the development of Local Economic and Community Plans highlighting the potential for a more integrated approach to the delivery of supports at Local Authority level.
- LEOs will fully engage with Fáilte Ireland to maximise state support to the micro and small business sector.

#### TOURISM AS A DRIVER OF RURAL ECONOMIES

- Refers to **2014 Report of the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas – Energising Ireland’s Rural Economy** which focuses on a range of measures including tourism which are intended to support the economic regeneration of rural communities. The Dept of Transport, Tourism and Sport is participating in the Inter Departmental Group tasked with implementing the actions.
- Local Authorities’ support of community tourism effort provides a foundation on which the tourism potential of rural areas can be realised.
- **The brand architecture and consumer segmentation model developed by the tourism agencies** shall provide the framework under which rural tourism can be supported.

#### SUPPORTING VOLUNTEER EFFORT IN TOURISM

Volunteer effort has proven to be a key asset in hosting major events such as the Special Olympics in 2003 and the Gathering in 2013. There may be potential for volunteer programmes to be encouraged. The department will engage with other relevant bodies to examine the potential of this where it is of benefit to overseas visitors.

### 3. Who the visitor is

#### \*What visitors say they want from a holiday:

1. People want to find new places and tell new stories about their trip – they don't want Cork to be just another place in Ireland; they want a new experience
2. People are now, more than ever, drawn to places that give them the opportunity to connect on a more human level
3. People are looking for multisensory experiences – they want to be stimulated in new ways through places, people, food and music
4. They want to instantly see the vibe and picture it as a 'place for people like me'. People want inspiration and guidance on how to enjoy Cork e.g. maps and trails

(Source: Primary Research, 2015)

#### THE INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC SEGMENTS

The international and domestic market will be crucial for Cork tourism around key Irish holiday periods such as mid-term breaks. They will be key in helping extend the visitor season among the shoulder months.

### The Culturally Curious segment

#### WHO ARE THEY?

The Culturally Curious desire authentic and real experiences. They want to get under the skin of the locals and experience their home as they do themselves. Often this cohort will travel as a couple or on their own, as opposed to going in large groups. They are out to broaden their minds and expand their experiences by exploring new landscapes, history and culture. They are curious about everything and are delighted to discover the world for themselves.

#### WHAT THEY WANT FROM A HOLIDAY:

They're interested in all that a place has to offer and they want it to be a true representation of local culture. They won't choose a brand or visit a place just to follow the herd. This is their own exploration and they really want to cover everything and to 'do' a place. The Culturally Curious love to discover history and to find ways of getting the real local insight. Independent, 'active' sightseers, they are looking to encounter new places and experiences that are out of the ordinary. The Culturally Curious like to feel that they have not only learnt something, but also

immersed themselves in a place, giving their senses a holiday too – the sights, the sounds, the smells, the tastes. They enjoy connecting with nature and getting off the beaten track. They like people to show an interest and educate them – to feel they've connected. They really appreciate personal guides. They are motivated by real stories that can give them a real insight that they would not get otherwise.

#### WHAT THEY DON'T WANT:

To party all night long, to see things they've seen before, to do packaged or 'laid on' activities

#### MOST LIKELY TO BE SEEN:

- Looking for interaction with locals and hearing their stories in beautiful locations
- Soaking up new information in castles, gardens, museums, country houses and art galleries
- Enjoying good food and wine, particularly local specialties, including local pubs
- Attending unique local festivals and cultural events

#### HOLIDAY BEHAVIOUR - HOW LONG AND WHERE?

The Culturally Curious choose accommodation so that they can see and do as much as possible: hotel, self-catering, B&B or touring caravan.

They will usually choose somewhere with access to scenery and good walks. The Culturally Curious take a higher number of short breaks than average. For holidays other than their short breaks, they are three times more likely to stay longer. However, they need to feel that a destination is truly diverse otherwise they are unlikely to return for a while once they've been, preferring to move on to new discoveries.

## The Social Energisers Segment

### WHO ARE THEY?

Social Energisers like to holiday in groups or as couples. Think of a group of friends taking a long weekend in Dublin or Belfast. They're looking for a cool, exciting trip somewhere new and vibrant. They want exciting and intense, action-packed holidays. They want to be doing things 24/7.

### WHAT THEY WANT FROM A HOLIDAY:

Social Energisers really like having a laugh and sharing the adventure with their friends. They love new experiences and exploring new places; the more out-of-the-ordinary, the more exciting, the better. It's great if there is a wide range of activities to do in a relatively small area, so they don't have to plan too far ahead. They're up for being spontaneous, as this often leads to even more fun and laughter and a really great break. Social Energisers want to be at the heart of it all – wherever's social, wherever it's happening. But their definition of a good time is wider than just partying. They're also looking for interesting events, fun activities and gigs. Always ready to try new things – exploring

the city by day for its vibrancy and unique atmosphere, as well as enjoying the nightlife – Social Energisers will go for something unusual as long as it has the 'wow' factor they're looking for. They're hungry for experience so they're likely to be packing everything in.

### WHAT THEY DON'T WANT:

Peace and quiet is off the agenda. Social Energisers want to get back home revitalised not rested. They want to be active for their whole trip.

### MOST LIKELY TO BE SEEN:

- Doing the latest energetic, popular activities
- Soaking up the lively atmosphere in a pub, particularly old pubs with good food, music sessions and conversation with the locals
- Checking out festivals and enjoying entertainment with a great vibe – whether on the street or in a club
- Live music, comedy tours, street art – the local scene is where they want to be
- Discovering the 'in' places to shop, cool places to eat, and the best sightseeing opportunities
- Visiting attractions where fun is part of the deal and there are great things to see

- Creative adventures during the day time
- New, different activities that offer advantage, fun and adventure
- Exploring a city vibe as well as coastal activities

### HOLIDAY BEHAVIOUR – HOW LONG AND WHERE?

Social Energisers will most likely stay in a hotel close to the action. Some of them stay in B&Bs, guesthouses and hostels, as long as there's lots going on around them that's new and different; they are looking for what's new and in the now. This is the most likely group to go to European cities and even further afield, in search of these kinds of experiences. They are also more likely to take a shorter break of two or three nights than the average holiday-taker in the UK and Ireland.

### The Great Escapers Segment

#### WHO ARE THEY?

Great Escapers are usually couples, often with babies or quite young children. The most important aspect of any break for them is the chance to spend quality time together. Most are in serious need of time out from busy family lives and careers.

#### WHAT THEY WANT FROM A HOLIDAY:

Great Escapers are on holiday for a break from the everyday, but above all to reconnect with their partner. What they want from a holiday is: to connect with the landscape, to feel the earth beneath their feet, to soak up the beauty of it all. A sense of history, of their place in the vastness of nature – they want to feel part of it. Against this kind of backdrop Great Escapers can spend real quality time bonding with those closest to them. They can rebalance themselves and take stock of their lives, concentrating on what's important in life. They appreciate peace and quiet between activities, the point is the trip itself.

It's 'down time', it's being off the beaten track, and it's a Great Escape. But it's

important that getting away from it all is easy enough – they want to get the 'wow' moment without too much effort. Most importantly, Great Escapers want to come home refreshed and revitalised, their batteries recharged.

#### WHAT THEY DON'T WANT:

To make connections with others on the holiday be it locals or other tourists. They don't need to, they're there to be with each other. However they do look for an authentic local experience during their holiday in the service they get in bars, restaurants etc.

#### MOST LIKELY TO BE SEEN:

- Escaping to breath-taking landscapes and feeling connected with themselves and the land around them
- Actively exploring more remote and exciting places, on foot or by bicycle; such as scenic coastal landscapes, islands and headlands
- Standing enveloped in each other's company on the top of a mountain or cliff, visiting a castle or a landmark
- Enjoying a relaxed meal of fresh local produce at a restaurant, or a fun evening in an authentic pub

#### HOLIDAY BEHAVIOUR - HOW LONG AND WHERE?

Great Escapers are more likely to stay in self-catering accommodation. Some of them go camping, tour in a caravan or stay in a hostel to get access to beautiful scenery. Great Escapers are more likely to take short breaks than the average traveller. They are more likely to stay to favour domestic tourism than go to Europe or further afield on holiday.



## 4. The tourism proposition

### 4.1 Developing a tourism proposition for Cork

In order to understand how best to position Cork as a destination primary research was conducted among the key segments, both domestic and international, in 2015.

- In Cork, a number of international visitors were spoken to via in-depth interviews. These stretched across the Culturally Curious and Social Energiser segments from key markets such as Great Britain, U.S.A, France, Germany, Spain, Italy and Canada.
- Focus groups were conducted amongst their domestic equivalents.

#### INTERNATIONAL VISITORS TO CORK

Currently have no real knowledge of Cork beyond the Blarney Stone. Cork is not on their radar. They don't have an understanding of what there is to do in Cork. They are often on a set time limit and stick to the quintessentially Irish locations of Dublin, the Ring of Kerry, the Cliffs of Moher and the Giants Causeway. Cork

doesn't stand out among these locations; there is currently no compelling reason to add Cork to their travel agenda, it is currently lacking in iconic experiences, other than the Blarney Stone. This is a blank canvas for us to create something unique and motivating.

(Source: Primary research, 2015)

The visitors reported that visiting Cork wasn't part of their chosen itinerary; it wasn't on their agenda as a must see when they came to Ireland. The ended up in Cork by chance or as a result of travel connections. Had they known what there was to see and do in Cork, they would have dedicated time in their journey to explore it.

#### FOR DOMESTIC VISITORS

Cork is West Cork, as this holds nostalgic memories of their own childhood-family holidays. There is a lack of distinction around Cork city and what it offers. Fota Island is also seen as a destination in its own right and almost separate from Cork as a holiday offering.

(Source: Primary research, 2015)

However, Cork carries some positive and surprising experiences.

#### WHAT THEY REALLY LIKED ABOUT CORK:

1. Soft, beautiful, more peaceful coastline making escaping more serene and easy
2. Artisanal and foodie culture enabling discovery and multisensory experiences
3. Authentic, compact city, making it easy to connect and feel at home
4. Quirky place giving way to unexpected experiences

#### WHAT THEY REALLY LIKED ABOUT THE PROPOSITIONS:

- Landscape and coast, local fresh food, doing something different and unique, heritage and culture
- Doing things differently, home of the free spirit, quirky
- Connecting with a place, the local people and their way of life
- Local fresh food, creativity and diversity

(Source: Primary Research, 2015)



## 4.2 Arriving at the tourism proposition

How can all the things visitors like about Cork be tied up under one compelling idea? What is it that makes Cork different? It must be remembered that a proposition must be credible, motivating and differentiating.

There are 3 key attributes that make Cork different:

1. The coastal history and culture, and creativity in a beautiful, soft, coastal environment
2. Multi-sensory experience, immersive, fresh
3. The personality: vibrant energy

The blend of these three attributes creates a richer, deeper and more unique experience but needs a bigger, all encapsulating idea that all three can sit within. There is a need for a unifying single-minded idea for Cork that allows it to stand out as somewhere interesting and different to visit within Ireland, while also allowing Cork to coherently sit as part of the two signature experience

brands Ireland's Ancient East and Wild Atlantic Way. This is the role of the Tourism Proposition. All the elements that visitors love about Cork will sit within and support this proposition for Cork.

Learnings from other destinations which have developed successful tourism propositions were examined.

This included locations such as:

- Bristol
- Manchester
- Yorkshire
- Cornwall
- Hamburg
- Austin/San Antonio
- Portland
- Lisbon Coastline
- Santiago

### KEY LEARNINGS:

1. Being single-minded is key
  - a. The trap is to be a little of everything without one overarching theme that can be delivered and communicated
2. There is a real opportunity for Cork to stand out within its peer set but with a more developed, integrated offering

3. Local engagement is key to delivering a coherent story; connecting all the parts is vital

### What these learnings mean for the Cork proposition:

#### BE INSIDE OUT:

To create a true identity for a destination proposition, it needs to be lived and breathed by the local people across all the touch points. Manchester has been successful in this regard. People had to qualify to use the tourism brand for their business by passing strict measures which made the brand aspirational and prevented a weakening of the image.

#### HAVE A STRONG CONNECTING NARRATIVE:

If there is to be a true fusion between the urban and rural areas, there needs to be a credible and compelling link and story that can be told that shows a connection between the two as one destination. Yorkshire does this very well as they position themselves as the 'county of York', not just referencing the key historic city, but promoting York as being one the most historic cities in England.

#### BE SINGLE-MINDED IN FOCUS TO TELL A STORY:

A strong single-minded idea is key to getting any defined tourism proposition across. This doesn't mean elements cannot sit within this. Portland is an extremely strong performer in terms of fostering an irreverent and natural food and drink culture. This is due to a consistent, clear proposition that is communicated across all touchpoints.

### 4.3 The Experience Development Framework

The experience development framework defines the role of signature, supporting and ancillary experiences for delivering the 'Maritime Paradise' proposition.

#### WHAT IS AN EXPERIENCE?

A tourism experience is multi-faceted and hard to define. But in all cases, experiences have compelling ideas, themes and stories at their heart. They are unique to an area, or made unique to that place through differentiation. Experiences are always personal, they engage the senses, and create a lasting memory. An experience is what a visitor gains from the combination of the place, its attractions and activities, the people they encounter there and the stories they share. As such, an experience often requires collaboration between many providers and stakeholders to create something that is truly immersive and integrated. Experiences can be classified as:

#### SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES

Truly iconic experiences within an overall proposition (such as Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way), that deliver on

the proposition promise. Such experiences can be a combination of products, activities, attractions and interactions that combine to enable visitors to forge a deep connection with the area. Signature Experiences may be story-based, thematic or geographical in nature, or a combination of all three, but they are of sufficient scale and appeal to serve as motivators for visitors to come to a particular area within the wider proposition. For example: Fota Island.

#### SUPPORTING EXPERIENCES

Add value to signature experiences and really bring them to life for visitors. Supporting experiences (primarily at the business level) may not have the sufficient individual power to attract international visitors to an area in their own right, but they offer the necessary variety within a certain radius of the Signature Experience and are key to engaging visitors in a seamless and immersive experience.

#### ANCILLARY EXPERIENCES

The wider tourism offering that must also deliver a memorable and pleasurable experience. For example interaction with local people and the experiencing of the quirky Cork personality.



VISITCORK

Strategy development and facilitation  
led by **MCCP The Planning Agency**

Design:  
**Hurrah Hurrah**