

Fáilte Ireland Support for NATIONAL SCHEMES

OUTDOOR RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE FUND 2018

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

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

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

Fáilte Ireland Support for FESTIVALS

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

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

New Festival IDEAS

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



Your local Fáilte Ireland representatives in Offaly are:
Derek Dolan (Ireland's Ancient East), derek.dolan@failteireland.ie
Mark McGovern (Ireland's Hidden Heartlands), mark.mcgovern@failteireland.ie

Fáilte Ireland is the National Tourism Development Authority and is funded by the Government of Ireland through the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.

Upcoming Fáilte Ireland Initiatives FOR WESTMEATH

VISITOR EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR WESTMEATH



Fáilte Ireland has initiated a number of Visitor Experience Development Plans across the country. These are 3-5 year commercial development plans for a region, which bring the public and private sector together to drive visitors and revenue to lesser known areas and attractions, especially in the off-peak season. The themes of the Visitor Experience Development Plans have been designed to enhance each area's strongest tourism assets and appeal to core overseas markets.

Vitally, these plans will be delivered in a way that encourages visitors to spend more time in an area, without compromising the environment or culture of the region.

The 'Tales of Two Worlds' Visitor Experience Development Plan brings together Ireland's historic houses and gardens, and the period in Ireland's history of famine and emigration. A number of Westmeath businesses are now taking part in a bespoke 15-month

Great Houses & Gardens Experience Development Programme as part of this, which focuses on the county's rich historic houses and gardens. The programme includes working with visitor attractions to improve storytelling and audience engagement, improving sales skills and revenue, and working with industry through Fáilte Ireland's Service Excellence Programme to train front-line staff to maximise their potential in customer service and relationships.

The 'Ancient' Visitor Experience Development Plan is also bringing together businesses in Westmeath to develop world-class experiences centred around the area's rich ancient history including the Hill of Uisneach.

Christian and sacred sites such as Fore Abbey, along with food and drink experiences like Kilbeggan Distillery, will also play a key role in each of the Visitor Experience Development Plans.

SHANNON MASTERPLAN



The River Shannon, its lakes and inland waterways are an integral part of the tourism offering in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. Fáilte Ireland has provided funding to Waterways Ireland to lead on the preparation of a Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon River, including the Shannon-erne Waterway. The Tourism Masterplan will assess the strengths and weaknesses of this key tourism asset in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, and

will bring forward proposals on how to grow a sustainable international tourism destination in the Shannon Corridor which respects the nature and diversity of the environment and its people. Westmeath County Council is part of the steering group to help guide the process. This Tourism Masterplan is expected to be completed by the end of June 2019 and will include product development and investment recommendations.

WEB IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME



Fáilte Ireland is launching a pilot Web Improvement Programme this summer for Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. This new programme will help successful applicants improve the quality of their website, the user experience and drive additional traffic to their website with the objective of increasing visitor

numbers from domestic and overseas markets. Funding will be available to successful applicants to implement the required improvements to their websites. Further information will be available on www.failteireland.ie

DESTINATION TOWNS – OPEN FOR APPLICATIONS

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

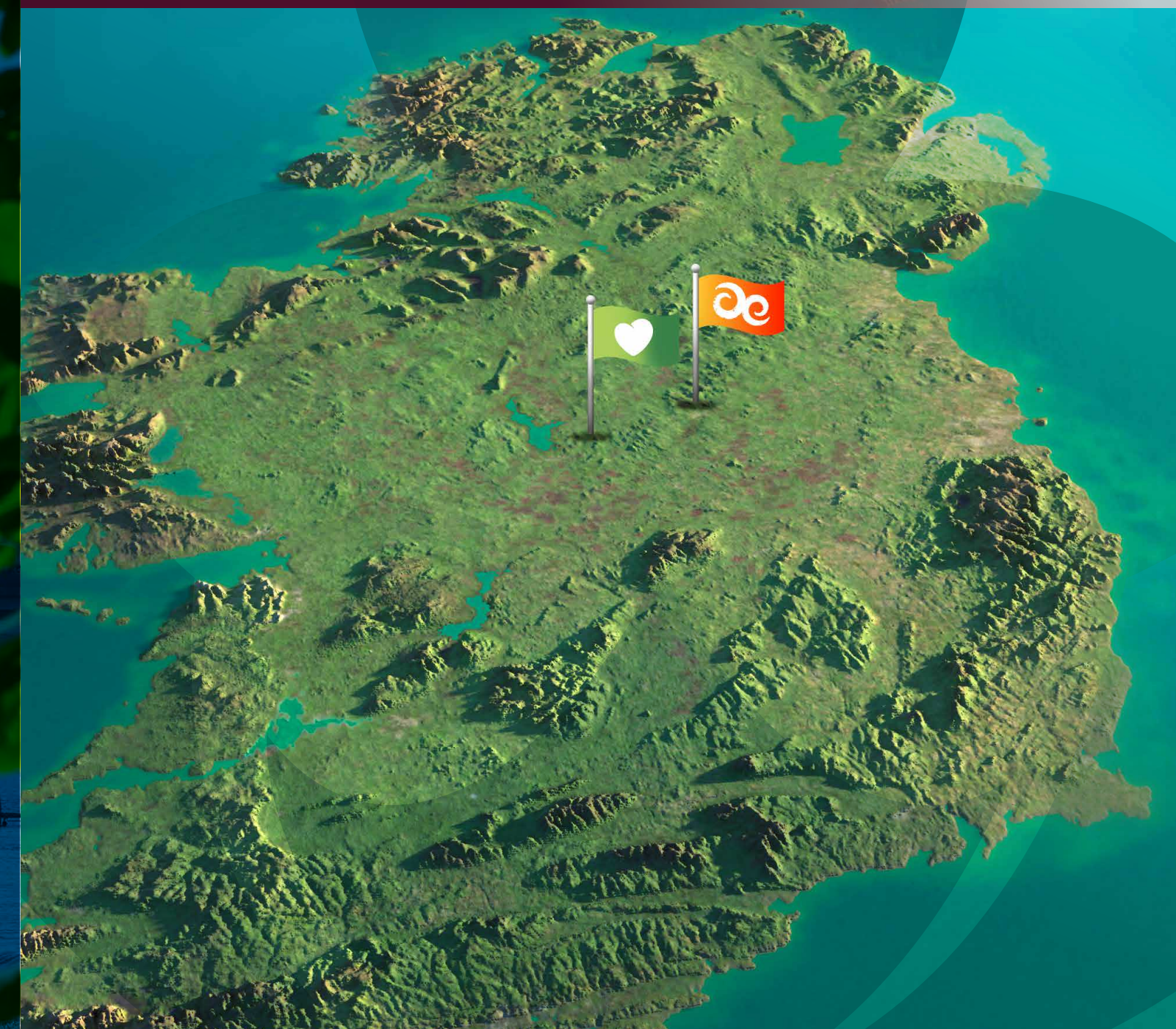
The new scheme, which is now open for applications, will provide funding for the Local Authority to enhance public spaces and attract more overseas visitors. The Ireland's Ancient East and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands teams are working closely with the council on its funding submission. The closing date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

PLATFORMS FOR GROWTH INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

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

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

Developing Tourism in WESTMEATH



Fáilte Ireland wants Westmeath to benefit as much as possible from tourism across the county and has looked at the natural assets and the distinctive experiences they might offer in each area.

The eastern side of Westmeath is particularly rich in heritage and cultural experiences and, with key assets including Belvedere House, Hill of Uisneach and Tullnally Castle, the Ireland's Ancient East brand offers this area the best opportunity to grow its economic return from tourism. The western part of Westmeath, with its proximity to the Shannon, fits the new Ireland's Hidden Heartlands brand very well and Fáilte Ireland is using this regional experience brand to leverage further tourism growth in the area.

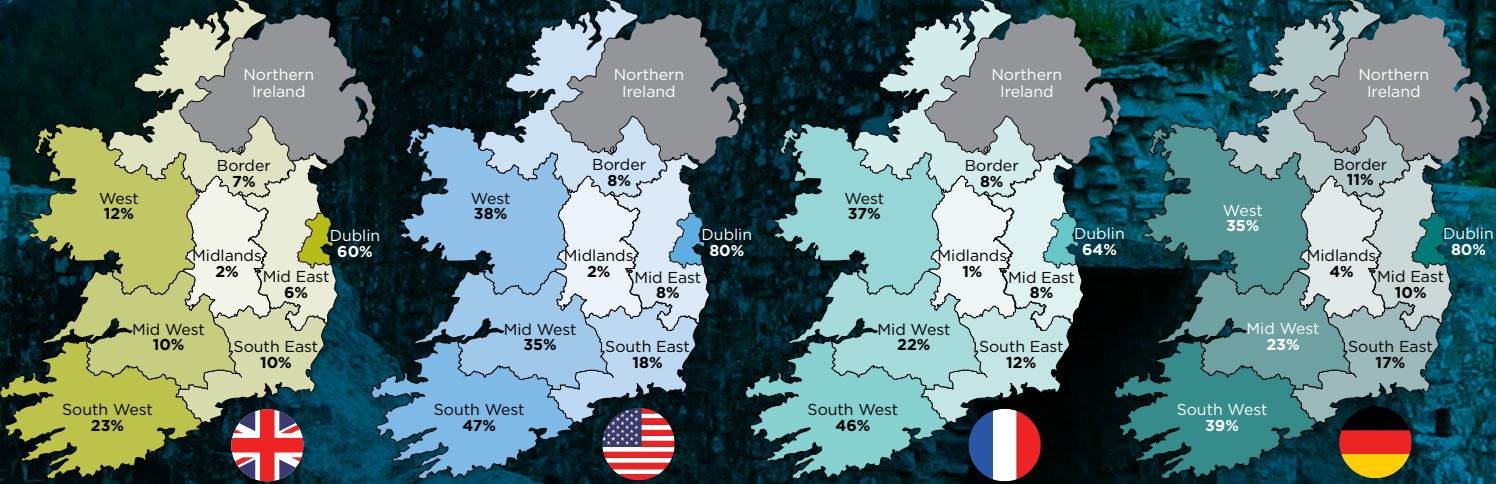
Tourism
JOBS & REVENUE

Every
€1 million
of tourist expenditure
helps to support
27 tourism jobs

Tourism
generates
€1.8bn
in exchequer revenue –
the equivalent of
€1,000
per household

Tourism
supports
260,000
jobs
nationwide

Regions Visited By
KEY OVERSEAS MARKETS



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

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

2018 Accommodation Supply
IN WESTMEATH

- 17 Hotels with 2,733 beds
- 19 Bed & Breakfasts with 180 beds
- 4 Irish Welcome Standard with 349 beds
- 1 Guesthouse with 64 beds
- 10 Self-Catering units with 61 beds

*Fáilte Ireland registered/approved accommodation. Source: Capita

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

Projects funded through Fáilte Ireland
CAPITAL INVESTMENT IN WESTMEATH
(2015-2019)*

Attractions



Belvedere House, Gardens and Park-Storytelling Interpretation Project



Athlone Castle - enhancing the visitor experience



Uisneach Interpretative Centre

Fáilte Ireland funding to date

€197,800

€76,500

€65,000

Total project amount

€263,670

€93,780

€85,000

Total project costs may change.

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