DRAFT ANNUAL TOURISM REPORTING TEMPLATE

1. INTRODUCTION

Council Decision 86/664/EEC of 22 December 1986[1] establishing a consultation and cooperation procedure in the field of tourism foresees that "each Member State shall send the Commission, once a year, a report on the most significant measures it has taken and, as far as possible, on measures it is considering taking in the provision of services for tourists which could have consequences for travellers from the other Member States".

With the publication of the "Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism", the Commission announced that "in order to strengthen the collaboration with and among Member States, their current annual reporting through the Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) will be used to facilitate the exchange and the dissemination of information about how their policies and actions safeguard the sustainability of tourism".

This Communication was welcomed by the Competitiveness Council conclusions (22nd-23rd November 2007) and by the Presidency Conclusions of the Brussels European Council of 14th December 2007.

The main aims for the reporting process are:

- to be able to monitor the level of implementation of the "Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism" by Member States;

- to facilitate the exchange of experiences among member States with regard to how they tackle issues which are important for the competitiveness and sustainability of European tourism.

MS reports referring to year *n* shall be sent to the European Commission by the end of February of year *n*+1.

If the reports are sent in English, the deadline is shifted to the end of April.

2. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

This section should provide an overview of the main organisational structure to illustrate how tourism is organised and managed, to identify linkages and to identify the engagement of other organisations/stakeholders.

The information required will only need to be prepared fully in year 1 as it will subsequently only be necessary to provide details of any changes.

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[1] Official Journal L 384, 31/12/1986 P. 0052 – 0053.

2.1 Please identify the National Bodies responsible for tourism (Ministry and also any separate/related National Tourism Organisation), including key areas of responsibility, and their relationship to other national bodies. (maximum of 1.000 characters)

The Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism is responsible for the formulation, development and evaluation of policy for the tourism sector as regards training, HR policy, tourism marketing, tourism product development and North/South co-operation in tourism matters. Implementation of these policies is undertaken by the tourism agencies - Tourism Ireland Ltd and Fáilte Ireland.

Tourism Ireland Ltd is responsible for marketing the island of Ireland overseas as a tourism destination and delivery abroad of regional and product marketing and promotion activity on behalf of Fáilte Ireland and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority, provides strategic and practical support to develop and sustain Ireland as a high-quality and competitive tourist destination. It works in strategic partnership with tourism interests to support the industry in its efforts to be more competitive and profitable and to help individual enterprises to enhance their performance.

Five **Regional Tourism Boards** operate under the aegis of Fáilte Ireland to provide a regional framework for tourism development. (Dublin Tourism and Shannon Development manage attractions).

Dublin Tourism is the official tourism board for Dublin with responsibility for marketing and promoting the Dublin region.
Shannon Development is responsible for the development and promotion of Tourism in Ireland's Mid-West region.

2.2 Please, describe what organisations/agencies are used to deliver services at the national and regional level and the services that they deliver. (maximum 800 characters)

Fáilte Ireland is responsible for the network of Tourism Information Offices around the country. In addition, it provides a broad range of supports to tourism enterprises to help improve competitiveness in the industry. It has shifted its focus somewhat from training for individuals to training and capability for businesses (mainly SME's) to ensure that businesses become more profitable, more efficient and more competitive. Fáilte Ireland provides businesses with interactive e-based facilities with which to assess their own enterprises' strengths and benchmark their performance against industry norms in key business areas such as energy management performance, guidance and self-audit tests on key environmental topics.
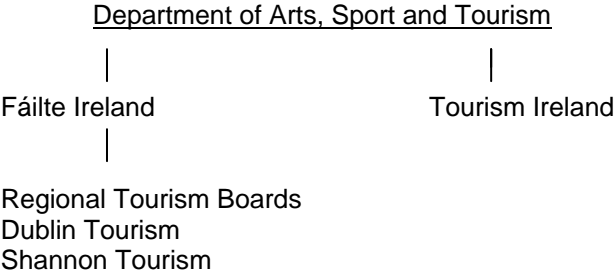
Tourism Ireland promotes the island of Ireland as a holiday destination in 23 markets overseas - through Tourism Ireland offices in 13 markets. It also maintains a suite of 41 websites in 19 different languages, which showcases the island of Ireland as a holiday destination. Tourism Ireland also help to influence product development on the island of Ireland, by sharing their insight on global tourism trends and the changing need of overseas consumers with other tourism agencies, particularly with Fáilte Ireland and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and with industry partners.

2.3 Please, describe which other bodies and organisations are involved at the national level and the process for involving them. (maximum 800 characters)

The Irish Tourist Industry Confederation (ITIC) is the national representative organisation for the tourism sector encompassing membership from both the public and private sectors. The purpose of the Confederation is to act as a single voice for tourism, to address strategic issues essential to the success of the sector, to influence the regulatory/legislative environment and to influence Government and EU Tourism policies. The Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism engages closely with ITIC and other relevant industry groups in relation to the development of tourism policy. Industry groups have been represented on the various groups established to implement Ireland's tourism policy.

2.4 Please provide a diagram/organogram of the organisational structure for tourism identifying the relationship between national, regional and local bodies. Provide also a short description of the core responsibilities and competencies of each of the organisations. Include also information regarding the direct and indirect links between other departments, stakeholder organisations and unions. Information about mechanisms of decision-making process participation from outsider organisations, e.g. forums, advisory committees is also requested. (maximum of 2.000 characters)

Organisational Structure:

<u>Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism</u>

Fáilte Ireland   Tourism Ireland

Regional Tourism Boards
Dublin Tourism
Shannon Tourism

See 2.1 above for responsibilities of Department and Tourism Agencies.
The Regional Tourism Boards operate under the aegis of Fáilte Ireland to provide a regional framework for tourism development. Certain functions have been delegated to the Boards, including directing the formulation and regular review of a comprehensive tourism development strategy for each region, and drafting and overseeing the implementation of work plans for each region to support the implementation of the region's development strategy for tourism.
Dublin Tourism is the official tourism board for Dublin with responsibility for marketing and promoting the Dublin region
Shannon Development is responsible for the development and promotion of Tourism in Ireland's Mid-West region.

In relation to links, the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism engages with other Government Departments in relation to issues which have an impact on tourism and is represented on relevant interdepartmental committees. A number of forums have been organised by the Department in recent years to share information and hear the views of stakeholders on various tourism related topics. Most recently, the Tourism Renewal Group consulted with tourism industry groups and other relevant stakeholders to present their views on the key strategic issues facing Irish tourism in the medium term, and on what appropriate responses might be.

Minimum rates of pay, and other conditions of work, for workers in the hotel and catering sectors are determined by Joint Labour Committees (JLCs). Each JLC is composed of representatives of workers and employers in the sector concerned. JLCs are independent bodies established by means of a statutory order made by the Labour Court in Ireland. The pay and conditions agreed by the JLCs are given the force of law in Employment Regulation Orders made by the Labour Court on foot of proposals made to the Court by the JLCs.

Local Tourism Bodies outside of the main State Organisation (e.g. West Cork Tourism, Wicklow Tourism) also play an important role in tourism promotion. Local Authorities and "LEADER" groups have involvement in Tourism promotion at a local level.

2.5 Please provide information about financial data, including spend/budget on tourism as a percentage of overall government spend/budget, the level of national funding support for tourism

marketing, the amount of EU funding support made available for tourism and data concerning the support to SME's and Destinations. (500 characters)

The overall budget for tourism in 2009 is over €153 million. €47.25m has been allocated to the Marketing Fund. €16m has been allocated to fund the training of in the region of 12,400 people by Fáilte Ireland in 2009, with a continuing emphasis on improving skill levels and industry capability. These interventions will continue to support the industry in areas such as cost competitiveness, website development, financial management, human resource development, marketing and finance. In 2009 particular emphasis is being placed on support services for SME's given the economic conditions that currently prevail. Over €7m is spent on Tourism Product Development, while over €78m is spent on Fáilte Ireland (grant-in-aid). The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) launched a call for suitable projects under INTERREG IVA during 2008. It is expected that about €30m (including match funding) will be available for tourism projects during the period to 2013 under INTERREG IVA.

3. POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

3.1 Is there a current National Strategy for tourism?   Yes ☑   No ☐

If yes, please, provide information in bullet point format about the key aims, objectives and priorities of the strategy highlighting those that are designed to address sustainability issues in economic, environmental and social terms in particular those related in the six aims included in the Agenda. In preparing the tourism strategy, explain how consideration has been given to the 9 principles set out in the Agenda (para2.3 p5) and given in the appendix. (maximum 1.000 characters)

"New Horizons for Irish Tourism" sets out the policy framework for the development of Irish tourism for the period up to 2012.The aim of the strategy is to identify key elements for the further development of tourism in Ireland. It recommends a number of actions across nine key drivers including;

1. Business Environment
2. Competitiveness & Value for Money
3. Access Transport (External)
4. Information and Communication Technologies
5. Product Development and Innovation
6. Marketing and Promotion
7. The People in Tourism
8. The Government Sector
9. Information, Intelligence and Research

3.2 Who was the initiator and who is responsible for its implementation? (maximum 200 characters)

In September 2003, the Tourism Policy Review Group's final report "New Horizons for Irish Tourism: An Agenda for Action" was published. This Group included Agencies, Industry and the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism. A wide range of bodies were responsible for the implementation of the strategy. In January 2004, the Tourism Action Plan Implementation Group (TAPIG) was appointed to monitor implementation of the recommendations contained in the New Horizons report and to assess and report on progress. In May 2006, the Tourism Strategy Implementation Group (TSIG) was appointed for a two-year period and its remit was to advise the Minister on implementation of the outstanding recommendations of the New Horizons report and to work with the tourism industry and other Government Departments and Agencies to address a number of key areas.

3.3 How is the strategy monitored and how often? (maximum 500 characters)

The Strategy is monitored on an ongoing basis by the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism. In addition, a Tourism Strategy Implementation Group was in place until 2008 to oversee the implementation of outstanding recommendations. A Tourism Renewal Group was established in 2008 to review and, where appropriate, renew Ireland's tourism policy. This Group will report in 2009 with a

recommended Framework for Action.

3.4 What tourism specific legislation exists? (maximum 500 characters)

The Tourism Acts 1939 – 2003 provide for the establishment and corporate governance of the National Tourism Development Authority (Fáilte Ireland) as well as setting out the statutory framework for the promotion of tourism and the development of tourism facilities and services.

4. MEASURES AND INITIATIVES

This section provides Member States with an opportunity to outline specific initiatives and policies that are or are going to be adopted to manage and develop tourism activity in ways which respond to the key challenges of the Agenda and which fall within the six main aims of the Agenda itself.

1 Economic prosperity
   a. To ensure the long-term competitiveness, viability and prosperity of tourism enterprises and destinations.
   b. To provide quality employment opportunities, offering fair pay and conditions for all employees and avoiding all forms of discrimination.

2 Social equity and cohesion
   a. To enhance the quality of life of local communities through tourism, and engage them in its planning and management
   b. To provide a safe, satisfying and fulfilling experience for visitors, available to all without discrimination by gender, race, religion, disability or in other ways.

3 Environmental and cultural protection
   a. To minimise pollution and degradation of the global and local environment and the use of scarce resources by tourism activities.
   b. To maintain and strengthen cultural richness and biodiversity and contribute to their appreciation and conservation.

4.1 Please set out, briefly, the steps which have been or will be taken, if any, to address the 7 key challenges for the delivery of sustainable and competitive tourism, covered in the TSG report and referred to in the 'Agenda'.

4.1.1 Reducing the seasonality of demand. (maximum 200 characters)

The tourism agencies have been working with industry for a number of years to encourage tourism in the non-peak season, in particular by offering good value packages at these times. A National Conference Centre is due to open in 2010. A number of conferences have already been secured in the off-peak season and strategies are being implemented to grow this business. A new Cultural Tourism Initiative should encourage visitors outside of the peak season.

4.1.2 Addressing the impact of tourism transport. (maximum 200 characters)

The Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism provided key inputs to the Implementation Group for

'Smarter Travel - A sustainable Transport Future', Ireland's Sustainable Travel and Transport Policy for 2009 – 2020.

4.1.3 Improving the quality of tourism jobs. (maximum 200 characters)

Fáilte Ireland provides on-site training to tourism employees as well as accreditation for prior learning (APL) thus improving the service these tourism workers provide in tandem with the quality of their jobs.

4.1.4 Maintaining and enhancing community prosperity and the quality of life, in the face of change. (maximum 200 characters)

Tourism is a key industry for Ireland, not just in terms of employment, output or exports, but also in terms of supporting and complementing our economic, social and regional development generally, particularly rural areas. Fáilte Ireland and the EPA are joint funding a three year project which was initiated in March 2009, to be implemented in Killarney, Co. Kerry and Carlingford, Co. Louth, which will test a set of sustainable tourism indicators across the following headings: Administration; Community; Heritage; Infrastructure; Visitor and Economics.

4.1.5 Minimising resource use and the production of waste. (maximum 200 characters)

Fáilte Ireland is actively supporting the Green Hospitality Award and the EU Flower eco-label to Irish tourism businesses. Fáilte Ireland has also integrated environmental measures (relating to the minimisation of energy and water consumption and waste production) into the Tourism Learning Networks and the Business Coaching Programme

4.1.6 Conserving and giving value to natural and cultural heritage. (maximum 200 characters)

Ireland's landscape and environment are key attractors of overseas visitors and visitors from the domestic market. Fáilte Ireland, in association with the Greenbox Ecotourism Destination, published in March 2009, a Handbook on Ecotourism for tourism businesses. Fáilte Ireland is currently completing a project to identify the most important water bodies for tourism in Ireland, which will be inputted to the River Basin District Management Plans under the Water Framework Directive.

4.1.7 Making holidays available to all. (maximum 200 characters)

Ireland is developing its knowledge in this area through Ireland's participation in the EU Calypso Social Tourism Research Project.

4.2 As key challenges may change over time, please identify any other areas that are becoming a new challenge. (maximum 600 characters)

Climate change - Fáilte Ireland has published its Strategy on Climate Change which outlines seven key actions that will be taken in an attempt to minimise (a) the impact on climate change on the

tourism industry in Ireland, and (b) the impact of the tourism sector on the factors influencing climate change.

4.3 Please identify and describe a specific initiative, which is related to the 7 key challenges, that is innovative/ successful and which would be of interest to or of help to other Member States. (maximum 2.000 characters)

A review of all tourism and hospitality education and training courses delivered throughout the State has just been completed by Fáilte Ireland to ascertain the current level of sustainability content in these courses. This has resulted in the publication of a comprehensive guideline document, which recommends improved sustainability content in each of these courses. In addition, Fáilte Ireland has been working on a number of guidance documents for industry. These include:- Environmental Good Practice Guidelines agreed with the Irish Boat Rental Association for their members and Environmental guidelines produced in association with the Golf Union of Ireland for the management of golf courses. ALSO, during 2008, Fáilte Ireland funded the preparation and publication of an "Ecotourism Handbook" which is a practical guide to both existing tourism businesses and those who wish to start new businesses. This handbook was published jointly by the Greenbox and Fáilte Ireland in January 2009.

5. MECHANISMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Three mechanisms for implementing the Agenda were identified in the "Agenda": sustainable destinations, sustainable businesses and responsible tourists.

5.1 *Sustainable destinations*: What support is given to strengthen destination management at the regional/ destination level (supportive policy environment, knowledge networks, training programmes, establishment of measures/indicators for benchmarking, etc.)? (maximum 600 characters)

Regional Tourism Development Plans (2008-2010), drawn up by the Regional Tourism Boards set out plans to provide the necessary tourism infrastructure and service in each region to sustain tourism revenue into the local economy; help businesses and employment in the hospitality sector to grow; project a better appeal and deliver a better visitor experience.

The Tourism Infrastructure Fund, from which local authorities and other public bodies were eligible for support within Fáilte Ireland's Product Development Programme, emphasises the provision of environmentally sustainable and enhancing infrastructure, so that an ecologically friendly offering is developed.

During 2009, Fáilte Ireland plans to liaise with the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in undertaking a review of its grant aid procedures insofar as they affect Natura 2000 sites to ensure that any grant applications which may involve a Natura 2000 are adequately and appropriately assessed.

Ecotourism is one of the themes for the new Tourism Learning Networks, which are being run on behalf of Fáilte Ireland in 2009.

5.2 *Sustainable businesses*: What support is given to strengthen the sustainability and competitiveness of businesses (supportive policy environment, orientation of business support services to sustainability, training, financial incentives, etc.)? (maximum 600 characters)

The Fáilte Ireland portfolio of enterprise and people development, including Optimus, Performance Plus, Continuing Professional Development and Tourism Learning Networks is promoted and supported locally. The key strategic objectives will be to build the concept of quality and excellence into all business and people development activities; identify and develop industry training and business development programmes to support regional tourism product development strategies; encourage industry support for skills enhancement programmes in line with regional and national objectives; liaise with third level colleges in terms of innovation and networking initiatives; provide an expert enterprise support service in co-operation with LEADER companies and others as appropriate.

During 2008, Fáilte Ireland funded the preparation and publication of an "Ecotourism Handbook" which is a practical guide to both existing tourism businesses and those who wish to start new businesses. This handbook was published jointly by the Greenbox and Fáilte Ireland in January 2009.

- Fáilte Ireland is committed to the promotion of the EU "Flower" eco-label for tourism accommodation, which it launched on a pilot basis within the Greenbox area.

- At present, 23 tourism businesses in the piloted Greenbox area (18 in the Republic of Ireland and five in Northern Ireland) have received the EU Flower.

5.3 *Responsible tourists*: What support is given to promote responsible choices by tourists (e.g. sustainability in education, national marketing and media campaigns, promotion of certification schemes)? (maximum 600 characters)

Fáilte Ireland is currently preparing a 'Green Tourism' section for the Discover Ireland website, which will provide visitors with green options in their holiday choices in Ireland. Fáilte Ireland promotes the EU Flower eco-label and the Green Hospitality Award to tourism businesses. Fáilte Ireland is a funder and supporter of the Leave No Trace code of outdoor ethics in I**reland.**

6. DATA AND INDICATORS

Eurostat will provide, as an annex, the key statistical data required to support the reporting process covering around 20 indicators[2]. These are mainly related to the aim of 'economic prosperity'.

Please, identify indicators that are being used or developed which could add to the range of information being provided by Eurostat, particularly in relation to social and environmental issues (other indicators from the TSG report, visitors/ residents satisfaction, etc.). (maximum 500 characters)

Fáilte Ireland and the EPA are joint funding a three year project which was initiated in March 2009, to be implemented in Killarney, Co. Kerry and Carlingford, Co. Louth, which will test a set of sustainable tourism indicators across the following headings: Administration; Community; Heritage; Infrastructure; Visitor and Economics.

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[2] These indicators have been selected from the 50 TSG indicators on the basis of the possibility to calculate them at the European level.

7. COMPLEMENTARY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If necessary use the following box to provide additional complementary information that has not already been covered.

APPENDIX

Principles of sustainable tourism:

- **Taking a holistic and integrated approach**

  All the various impacts of tourism should be taken into account in its planning and development. Furthermore, tourism should be well balanced and integrated with a whole range of activities that affect society and the environment.

- **Planning for the long term**

  Sustainable development is about taking care of the needs of future generations as well as our own. Long term planning requires the ability to sustain actions over time.

- **Achieving an appropriate pace and rhythm of development**

  The level, pace and shape of development should reflect and respect the character, resources and needs of host communities and destinations.

- **Involving all stakeholders**

  A sustainable approach requires widespread and committed participation in decision making and practical implementation by all those implicated in the outcome.

- **Using best available knowledge**

  Policies and actions should be informed by the latest and best knowledge available. Information on tourism trends and impacts, and skills and experience, should be shared across Europe.

- **Minimising and managing risk – the precautionary principle**

  Where there is uncertainty about outcomes, there should be full evaluation and preventative action should be taken to avoid damage to the environment or society.

- **Reflecting impacts in costs – user and polluter pays**

Prices should reflect the real costs to society of consumption and production activities. This has implications not simply for pollution but for charging for the use of facilities that have significant management costs attached to them.

- **Setting and respecting limits, where appropriate**

  The carrying capacity of individual sites and wider areas should be recognised, with a readiness and ability to limit, where and when appropriate, the amount of tourism development and volume of tourist flows.

- **Undertaking continuous monitoring**

  Sustainability is all about understanding impacts and being alert to them all the time, so that the necessary changes and improvements can be made.