Tourism Recovery Plan - Progress Report February 2021

Immediate Priority Recommendations for Survival

Supporting Business Survival

Modify existing or introduce new measures to help those tourism businesses significantly impacted by public health measures to survive the current crisis and be in a position to fast-track and contribute to a sustainable recovery, as follows:

Action	Status	Lead	Progress to date	Comments
Adjust the Employee Wage Support Scheme so that businesses struggling to retain employees can avail of the subsidy rates which applied for the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme based on a scale of income reduction.	Achieved	D/Finance	Budget 2021: EWSS to continue in some form for all of 2021. October 2020: Broadly, as a result of Level 5 restrictions, the EWSS rates will be aligned with the rates of payment under PUP, up to €350 per week until 31 March 2021 (previously 31st January).	
Deliver business continuity grants of €120 million to enable key strategic tourism businesses survive the crisis with a focus on those with the greatest reduction in turnover in 2020.	Partially Achieved	D/TCAGSM Fáilte Ireland	Budget 2021: Business Continuity Grants of €55m for tourism enterprises. Details published on 1 Feb 2021. In addition, the Covid Restrictions Support Scheme (CRSS) introduced on a horizontal basis, providing for turnover-based payments of up to €5,000 pw where businesses are significantly impacted or closed due to public health restrictions (Level 3 and above). CRSS payments doubled for 3 weeks over Christmas. As at 28 January 2021, €244m was paid out under CRSS, of which approximately 64% (€155m) related to Tourism/Hospitality. Extension of Rates Waiver until end-2021. November 2020: €10million Ireland Based Inbound Agents Business Continuity Scheme opens for applications (via Fáilte Ireland).	
Extend and modify the Covid-19 Adaptation Fund by €30 million to facilitate flexibility, such as increased outdoor dining capacity, in the context of the Living With Covid Plan.	In Progress	D/TCAGSM Fáilte Ireland	Feb 2020 – Fáilte Ireland announce the enhancement of urban areas through 31 Destination Town2 projects across the country and two new funding schemes - the Outdoor Dining Grant Scheme which will improve the quality of outdoor dining spaces and offer reassurance around safety and comfort, and the Urban Animation Grant Scheme to animate our cities and towns with innovative lighting and art installations.	The Original Adaptation Fund took applications up to December 2020.

Invest €50m Exchequer funding in 2021 to be combined with a €100m credit facility from ISIF to create a €150m Tourism specific loan scheme to be jointly administered by Fáilte Ireland and ISIF to allow long term viable but short term vulnerable tourism businesses to survive until demand returns.	Not Started	D/Finance		Budget 2021: In addition to existing liquidity schemes, an extension of the tax warehousing scheme to include repayments of Temporary Wage Subsidy. 12 Credit Unions join the €2 Billion Covid 19 Credit Guarantee Scheme.
Enhancing Sustainable Employment				
Action	**Status**	**Lead**	**Progress to date**	**Comments**
Introduce a €10 million programme of professional development supports with strong digital content to keep those laid off or on reduced working hours engaged in the tourism sector to ensure that skilled workers are available to drive the recovery in the sector.	Partially Achieved	Fáilte Ireland D/TCAGSM	Budget 2021: Funding of €5 million provided for focused upskilling training to support business survival and recovery in the sector, and for the improvement of the digital presence and e-commerce capability of tourism businesses.	
Re-Establishing International Access				
Action	**Status**	**Lead**	**Progress to date**	**Comments**
Facilitate the resumption of overseas tourism into Ireland as soon as is practicable and in line with public health guidance by identifying and communicating a targeted reopening date	Not Started	D/Health D/Taoiseach		Third wave of Covid in Ireland has been a negative factor.

The removal of the period of quarantine for arrivals and its replacement by a comprehensive, rapid test, track and isolate (TTI) system or a system more facilitative for inbound tourism.	Not Started	D/Health D/ Taoiseach		Third wave of Covid in Ireland has been a negative factor. Current public health restrictions will remain in place until 5 March 2021. A range of mandatory quarantine measures introduced, applying to all international arrivals.
Government should actively develop and fully commit to the forthcoming EU 'traffic light' system that aims to open up international travel across Europe.	Partially Achieved	D/FA D/Taoiseach	November 2020: Ireland adopts the agreed coordinated EU approach to travel measures with common criteria for mapping risk ('Traffic-Light system'). January 2021: From 9 January onwards, travellers from GB or SA required to have a negative / not detected result from a pre-departure COVID-19 PCR test taken within 72 hours before their arrival in Ireland. These people will also be advised to self-isolate for 14 days upon arrival in Ireland. Current public health restrictions will remain in place until 5 March 2021.	A range of mandatory quarantine measures will be introduced, applying to all international arrivals.
Strengthening Marketing Investment				
Action	**Status**	**Lead**	**Progress to date**	**Comments**
Increase domestic marketing spend from €10m to €30m in 2021 to drive demand for home holidays throughout the year.	In Progress	Fáilte Ireland D/TCAGSM	Feb 2020 - Fáilte Ireland announced significant investment in domestic marketing to drive domestic tourism.	Domestic marketing budget maintained in Budget 2021.
Double the overseas tourism marketing fund from €47m to €94m to help protect Ireland's existing brand position internationally and kick-start the recovery in inbound tourism. Evidence shows that early and	In Progress	Tourism Ireland D/TCAGSM	"Below the line" activity ongoing prior to relaunch of campaigns – social media, trade liaison and consumer research.	Overseas marketing budget maintained in Budget 2021. In addition, over €7m savings carried over into 2021 meaning an effective 16% increase.

increased investment following previous downturns yielded significant market share gains for Ireland.				
Promoting Competitiveness				
Action	**Status**	**Lead**	**Progress to date**	**Comments**
Reduce VAT rate for tourism and hospitality sector from 13.5% to 9% with immediate effect.	Achieved	D/Finance	Budget 2021: VAT for hospitality and tourism sector reduced to 9% wef 1st November 2020 (until December 2021).	
Introduce legislation and regulatory measures to increase supply and reduce the costs of insurance. These should inter-alia include protecting businesses from unwarranted and excessive claims through re-defining 'occupiers' duty of care, revising guidelines on levels of claims, and acting quickly on any CCPC recommendations to enhance competition in the sector.	In Progress	D/Finance	8 Dec: The government published the first Action Plan for Insurance Reform, with actions across Government to make Ireland's insurance sector more competitive and consumer-friendly, supporting enterprise and job creation. Budget 2021: Cabinet Sub-committee on Insurance Reform referenced – chaired by the Tánaiste. Sub group on Insurance reform established within the Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Investment (CCERI).	This issue likely to be addressed further in the National Economic Plan.

TRT Recommendations for Stabilisation and Recovery

ROG Recovery Oversight Group

Supporting Business Survival				
Action	**Status**	**Lead**	**Progress to date**	**Comments**
Increase and spread domestic demand for holidays by varying the timing of school holidays in different areas of the country to take advantage of capacity	Not Started	D/Education		
Consider the merits of introducing an additional bank holiday in the off-peak season.	Not Started	D/Enterprise Trade Employment		

Enhancing Sustainable Employment				
Action	**Status**	**Lead**	**Progress to date**	**Comments**
Strengthen Fáilte Ireland's Careers Oversight Group and formalise a relationship with the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science to ensure programme development and coordination of tourism education and training.	In Progress	Fáilte Ireland D/TCAGSM	12 Feb 2021: Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris TD and Minister of State for Skills, Niall Collins, T.D. announced two new skills programmes to assist hospitality and tourism sectors with Covid challenges and ensure they are ready for reopening of the sectors. The programmes have been developed by SOLAS and the Education and Training Boards in consultation with the Irish Hotels Federation and Fáilte Ireland.	
Develop National Tourism Education Gateway as a one stop shop access to education for all tourism employees.	Not Started	D/Education		
Ensure consistency in terms of quality and content of education and training provided by education providers engaged in the tourism sector in consultation with industry to	Not Started	D/Education		

meet adapting needs and trends.				
Re-Establishing International Access				
Action	**Status**	**Lead**	**Progress to date**	**Comments**
Implement an assurance domestic guarantee for inbound leisure and business, with industry committing to return deposits / allow flexibility for people to change their date of travel, and Government providing backstop in case of business failure.	Not Started	D/TCAGSM		
A Temporary Incentive Scheme to be immediately introduced by all airports and ports in Ireland to incentivise additional traffic.	Partially Achieved	D/ Transport	Nov 2020: Government agreed a revised €80m funding package for Aviation, an extra €48m in supports for 2021 in addition to those announced in Budget 2021. · €22m for Cork and Shannon Airport, which is in addition of the €10m in Budget 2021 · For smaller regional airports (Knock, Kerry and Donegal), €21m in funding is available in 2021 under the new Regional Airports Programme 2021-2025 which was published in Feb 2021. • A further €26m was earmarked for other schemes to be taken forward in 2021. These Schemes require the approval of the European Commission and the Dept. of Transport is continuing its engagement with the European Commission with a view to having these Schemes approved and in place as soon as possible.	
Strengthening Marketing Investment				
Action	**Status**	**Lead**	**Progress to date**	**Comments**
Implement a €92m over three years for extensive overseas sales and marketing activities by the industry, to replace lost spend by industry stakeholders and protect inbound operators 'strategic assets' in vital supply and distribution channels.	Not Started	D/TCAGSM Tourism Ireland		November 2020: €10million Ireland Based Inbound Agents Business Continuity Scheme opens for applications (via Fáilte Ireland).

Increasing Investment in Tourism Product				
Action	**Status**	**Lead**	**Progress to date**	**Comments**
Undertake a comprehensive review of Ireland's tourism product to identify strengths, gaps, opportunities and impediments to inform future investment in the development of the visitor offering.	Not Started	D/TCAGSM Fáilte Ireland		
Focus Government investment in tourism capital projects on improving product quality and innovation, and the development and enhancement of cultural and heritage experiences to attract a wide range of visitors to Ireland.	Not Started	Fáilte Ireland		
Establish a co-ordination body to oversee a consistent approach to the investment in and operation, management and marketing of Ireland's state owned natural, cultural and heritage assets.	Not Started	D/TCAGSM		
As part of the development of the proposed National Outdoor Recreation Strategy Government should introduce new measures to facilitate access to public and private lands.	Not Started	D/ RCD		
Invest in a small number of major international festivals and events which will act as a demand driver for both domestic and overseas tourism.	Not Started	Fáilte Ireland/ D/TCAGSM		St. Patrick's Festival 2021 being held virtually, supported by the tourism agencies and d/TCAGMS and featuring content which can be used as a demand driver in overseas markets.

Establish a Department led steering group to oversee the development of a Global Invitation Programme (the Year of the Invitation) to stimulate additional international demand. The programme should ideally incorporate six to ten large scale events capable of attracting significant international audiences.	In Progress	D/TCAGSM Tourism Agencies	Initial discussions between Dept. and Agencies have started.	
Promoting Competitiveness				
Action	**Status**	**Lead**	**Progress to date**	**Comments**
Fund and implement the development of a Tourism Satellite Account as a matter of urgency	In Progress	CSO D/TCAGSM	Initial discussions held between Department and CSO.	
Develop schemes to enable the tourism sector to invest in digital technology, with a particular focus on sectors with low digital presence such as visitor attractions and activities.	Partially Achieved	Fáilte Ireland	Feb 2020: Fáilte Ireland working with industry to build improved websites and online booking capability through a new digital transformation programme and continuing to keep Ireland front of mind for overseas buyers through a range of virtual sales events, including Meitheal, one of Ireland's largest travel trade shows. Budget 2021: Funding of €5 million provided for focused upskilling training to support business survival and recovery in the sector, and for the improvement of the digital presence and e-commerce capability of tourism businesses.	
Strengthen Ireland's international competitiveness in Asia and developing markets by offering a free 90-day visa waiver programme for short term holiday visits and a once off/one year promotion of a free	Not Started	D/Justice		

5 year visa application to encourage repeat visits.				
Develop a Competitive Balanced Scorecard to enable the setting of wide-ranging targets to support policy objective delivery and competitive benchmarking.	Not Started	D/TCAGSM Tourism Agencies		
Building a Sustainable Tourism Industry				
Action	**Status**	**Lead**	**Progress to date**	**Comments**
Ireland should have the ambition to be amongst the world-leaders in sustainable tourism practices. The Sustainable Tourism Working Group should develop a suite of actions to promote the sustainable development of tourism by the end of 2020, which should underpin the development of a sustainable tourism policy to be adopted by the Government.	In Progress	D/TCAGSM	Work has recommenced on interim action plan which will identify actions which promote sustainable tourism and can be taken in the short term.	Development of the Sustainable Tourism Policy will commence when the sector has stabilized following the pandemic.
Schemes and supports which promote the concept of and business case for sustainable tourism both at the enterprise level and the consumer level should be identified for implementation during the sustainability and recovery phase, e.g. Origin Green.	Not Started	D/TCAGSM		Will be considered as part of the Interim Action Plan.

Overseeing Implementation of the Plan				
Action	**Status**	**Lead**	**Progress to date**	**Comments**
Establish an independently chaired Recovery Oversight Group to monitor the implementation of the recommendations in this report and monitor the sector's recovery.	Achieved	D/TCAGSM	Recovery Oversight Group appointed by the Minister in December 2020.	