Recovery Oversight Group

Minutes of Meeting	Video Conference	13th January, 2021 10.00am

Attendees:	
Nóirín Hegarty - Chair	
Ruth Andrews	
Paul Kelly	
Niall Gibbons	
Paul Gallagher	
Aisling Reynolds-Feighan	
Rob Rankin	
Helena Healy	
Maria Melia	
Secretariat:	
Colm O'Connor	Lisa Herlihy
Kenneth McMahon	

Agenda

1. Opening Remarks
2. Minutes
3. Survival Phase – Latest Developments
4. Focus for Report to Minister
5. Next Meeting
6. AOB

Item	Details	Action
1.	Nóirín Hegarty, Chairperson, opened the meeting and welcomed the group. She advised that we are not where we had hoped we would be at the last meeting as current infection rates don't give any comfort however she still strongly believes that there will be a great rebound and reawakening once it is safe to travel again. The chair reminded the group the task is to monitor the implementation of the Tourism Recovery Plan and seek evidence for that. We are still very much in the survival phase and need to focus on what the immediate priorities are, what's working and what's not.	Record
2.	The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.	Agreed

3.	The Chair invited Paul Kelly, Fáilte Ireland to give the latest feedback from the industry, an overview of the measures being adopted and what is in the pipeline. Paul Kelly advised that the industry is currently almost entirely closed and with current infection rates is likely to be closed for some months to come, the pace of developments on the vaccine rollouts will obviously affect this. He provided an overview of the various tourism business support schemes being administered by Fáilte Ireland, as follows: • B&B restart scheme, concluded approx. 1600 businesses have received funding. • Covid-19 adaptation scheme – 5,300 businesses applied – approx. 75% have received funding, working with the remaining applications to resolve issues. • Coach continuity scheme – 140 applications covering just over 300 buses, payments going out within the next two weeks, some will be longer than that as the quality of information on applications wasn't at required levels. • Irish based inbound agents scheme – 97 applications received – payments to start going out for that in the next two weeks. • €55 million allocated this year for sectors excluded from CRSS and other schemes, work is ongoing in the design of the scheme and hope to announce details in the next 2 – 3 weeks, the criteria for businesses will be along the same lines as the CRSS e.g. 80% revenue decline. A discussion ensued on the main asks by industry given the most recent developments. These include: • Doubling of the CRSS with the removal of the cap. • EWSS to remain in place for the rest of the year. • Clarity around the roll out of the vaccine. • Doubling of the Tourism budget. • Relaunch and redesign of the stay and spend scheme. • Extend local authority waiver. • Antigen testing • Vat rate cut extended to 2025	Record

	• 6 month moratorium on bank loans extended. Aisling Reynolds-Feighan shared a brief presentation of airline data with the group. Looking forward, Ireland 2021 (from April onwards) has 80% of capacity on offer compared to 2019. There was group consensus that loss of connectivity continues to be a major concern. All members were invited to give their thoughts on the current tourism situation, the following themes emerged during a tour de table; • Talent loss and drain of skilled people leaving the sector to move to opportunities in other sectors e.g. retail and IT. Suggested solution look at possibility of moratorium on bank loans and mortgages being extended to tourism industry employees for the duration of the crises – this would be help retain key people in the industry. • Communications plan required for international markets along with proposed timelines in order to plan effectively. • Vaccination certificates/passports – would be good to have a co-ordinated approach at EU level. • Antigen testing discussed as a possible additional measure when it is safe to travel again. • Some additional research from Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland in relation to current requirements for travel and consumer views in relation to International travel will help to inform the groups thinking. • The Government's policy objective is to restrict the import of Covid-19 into the country and the group is cognisant of this in their role. • General consensus that it is likely to be Q3 before a meaningful return to business. Need to focus on how to restart industry in Q3. • Concern raised that the test, trace and isolate system has not been fully implemented.	Presentation from ARF to be circulated NG to share TI background paper on vaccine passports
4.	Focus for Report to Minister During the tour de table the following themes emerged.	Record

	• Need to take a twin track approach – need to focus on what the industry needs now to get ready and on what will make a difference when we get to recovery. • Need to feed back to the Minister on the prioritisation of the recommendations in the Recovery Plan. • Some information needed as a group around vaccination roll out and what the indicators are that we are ready as an industry, need to ensure there are no barriers to recovery. • Need a communications plan to the rest of the world regarding international travel and possibly timelines. • When recovery comes it could come very quickly. • Need to support the industry now in order for them to be there in Q3. • Some good news also in terms of when we get to recovery, a lot done by Government, particularly in terms of supporting further education, BREXIT deal completed is positive news for the tourism industry and also a lot done by the tourism industry itself to be as ready as possible for when recovery comes.	
5.	A workshop has been proposed for February 11th at 11.30am Next Meeting of the ROG is 24th February at 10am	Secretariat to send to all members