Tourism Recovery Plan - Progress Report April 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	March 2021 - EWSS has been extended until the end of June 2021. 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 31st 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. • Phase 1 of the Tourism Business Continuity Scheme (TBCS) closed on the 8th of March, good demand and positive feedback on process, payments to applicants have commenced. • Business Continuity Scheme for Strategic Tourism Transport Businesses was announced on the 30th of March, It will open for applications on the 8th of April. • The next scheme being developed by Fi in collaboration with Revenue will focus on those Tourism Businesses where their eligible Tourism for CRSS is substantially less than their Tourism revenue, resulting in them being unable to draw down the maximum €5k per week under CRSS. The €10million FI Ireland Based Inbound Agents Business Continuity Scheme has been completed with all payments made and extremely positive feedback from industry. The €10m FI Tourism Coach Operators Scheme has been completed with all payments made and extremely positive feedback from industry. As at 25 March 2021, €406.7m was paid out under CRSS, of which approximately 59% (€240m) related to	On 25 March, Minister for Finance outlined that CRSS Payments of over €406.7m have been made. The breakdown of the claim amounts are : Bars serving food – 16.2% Bar (wet pub) – 11.2% Café/ Restaurant – 14.8% Hotels and Accommodation – 16.7% Personal Services – 23.2% Retail – 15.1% Other – 19.6%

			Tourism/Hospitality. CRSS has been extended to the end of June 2021. Extension of Rates Waiver until end June 2021	
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	On the 31st March Fáilte Ireland launched a €17 million Outdoor Dining Enhancement Investment Scheme. The Scheme comprises two parts, the 'Outdoor Seating & Accessories for Tourism & Hospitality Businesses' and the 'Weatherproofing and Outdoor Dining Infrastructure Enhancement Scheme'. The first part of the scheme, to be administered by the individual local authorities, is Outdoor Seating & Accessories for Tourism & Hospitality Businesses. The focus of this scheme is to provide a level of financial support to tourism and hospitality businesses, in our town centres, to purchase or upgrade equipment to provide additional outdoor seating and, therefore, increase their outdoor dining capacity for the summer of 2021. The second part of this scheme, the Weatherproofing and Outdoor Dining Infrastructure Enhancement Scheme, will provide capital funding to local authorities for direct investment in weatherproofing and enhancement of public outdoor dining infrastructure. On the 7th April Fáilte Ireland will launch The Urban Animation Capital Investment Scheme which is a new pilot Capital Grants Scheme for Local Authorities. The scheme will support the sustainable development of public realm and urban animation projects that have the potential to transform and re-imagine urban centres for visitors and transform the destination. Both the Weatherproofing and Outdoor Dining Infrastructure Enhancement Scheme and The Urban Animation scheme will work in a complimentary and balanced way to the DTCASGM Outdoor Public Space Scheme and the Fáilte Ireland Destination Town Scheme already in progress.	The initial Covid Adaptation Scheme closed for applications on 24/12/20 and will complete in early March will all payments issued.

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 €2 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. The detailed plan for this is being completed and will be forwarded to ROG in March.	Q1 2021 delivered a total of 1,485 Training days **Main areas of Business Supports** • Finance Planning • Mentoring 1:1 • Strategic Leadership Programme • HR – retention and Legal compliance • Demand Creation (Sales and Marketing) • Digital • Domestic Market repivoting • Sales – Saleable Experiences • F&B Lean Operations Over **65,000 Business** accesses of the Supports Webinar, expert advice & FAQ'S. With the top viewed experts webinars on Finance and HR
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. Government policy is to minimise the import of the virus. March 2021: EU proposal for digital green certificate published with stated aim of adoption for this summer season.

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		Mandatory hotel quarantine introduced for certain high-risk countries and under regular review. March 2021: EU proposal for digital green certificate published with stated aim of adoption for this summer season.
Government should actively develop and fully commit to the forthcoming EU 'traffic light' system that aims to open up international travel across Europe.	In Progress	D/FA D/Taoiseach	March 2021: EU proposal for digital green certificate published with stated aim of adoption for this summer season. 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. November 2020: Ireland adopts the agreed coordinated EU approach to travel measures with common criteria for mapping risk ('Traffic-Light system').	Mandatory hotel quarantine introduced for certain high-risk countries and under regular review.
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 2021 – Fáilte Ireland announced a significant domestic marketing campaign ready to launch from when the sector re-opens.	Overall budget allocated by Department to Fáilte Ireland 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 increased investment following previous downturns yielded significant market share gains for Ireland.	In Progress	Tourism Ireland D/TCAGSM	"Below the line" activity ongoing prior to relaunch of campaigns – social media, trade liaison and consumer research, including St. Patrick's Day Campaign, FYHWI social media campaign and ongoing research.	Overseas marketing budget maintained in Budget 2021. In addition, over €7m savings carried over into 2021 meaning an effective 16% increase.

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). Additionally, Fáilte Ireland has worked with IAAT to help them establish a **group scheme for activity providers** which will be a significant enabler of this sector that has struggled with insurance availability and cost to secure long term competitive insurance cover. This scheme goes live from Q2 2021.	Substantial progress made in first three months of Action Plan, including: • new personal injuries guidelines adopted and published • new office to promote competition established • public consultation on enhancing role of the Personal Injuries Assessment Board (PIAB) commenced • new regulations on solicitors advertising introduced

TRT Recommendations for Stabilisation and Recovery

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. The Tourism & Hospitality Careers Oversight Group is finalising a new plan which includes input from members, a review of its collaborative framework and takes into account recommendations from the Tourism Recovery Taskforce. One of the key labour supply objectives will be how best members can support recruitment ahead of reopening.	The Tourism & Hospitality Careers Oversight Group is finalising a new plan which includes input from members, a review of its collaborative framework and takes into account recommendations from the Tourism Recovery Taskforce. One of the key labour supply objectives will be how best members can support recruitment ahead of reopening.
Develop National Tourism Education Gateway as a one stop shop access to education for all tourism employees.	In Progress	D/Education	Fáilte Ireland have appointed a vendor for the provision of a feasibility study based on the proposal "Building capability for a new Tourism World – an Irish Perspective" June 2020. The research, requisitioned on behalf of the Tourism and Hospitality Careers Oversight Group will review the suitability of the proposal, recommend options to initiate and implement a Tourism Education Gateway (including	

			resources/relevant agencies/budget, timelines etc.), and proposed governance structure.	
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 meet adapting needs and trends.	Not Started	D/Education		
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 ITIC		
A Temporary Incentive Scheme to be immediately introduced by all airports and ports in Ireland to incentivise additional traffic.	Partially Achieved	D/ Transport	In late 2020, Government agreed an €80m funding package for Aviation to be disbursed in 2021. This includes €32.1m in capital and operational supports for Cork and Shannon Airports under a new Covid-19 Regional State Airports Programme and €21.3m in funding for a new Regional Airports Programme 2021-2025 (published 4 Feb 2021), which will support the airports Knock, Kerry and Donegal. Capital funding applications under both of these programmes have been assessed and allocations are expected to be announced by the Minister shortly. Airports will also be invited to apply for operational supports, under these programmes, later this year. As part of the package, Government also provided €26m to help address liquidity issues at Irish airports as a result of Covid-19. Associated aid measures, which were approved	

			by the Commission on 24 February, will provide compensation to State airports (approx. €20m) for damage caused by Covid in 2020. This funding will provide State airports with flexibility to roll out route incentives/charge rebates, in consultation with airlines, with a view to supporting recovery and growth of connectivity at the appropriate time. Up to €6m is also being made available to regional airports that provide connectivity (Knock, Kerry and Donegal) under the EU's Temporary Framework on State aid measures. Eligible airports have recently been invited to apply for funding under these Commission approved measures.	
Strengthening Marketing Investment				
Action	**Status**	**Lead**	**Progress to date**	**Comments**
Implement a €92m fund 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.	In Progress	D/TCAGSM Fáilte Ireland	Failte Ireland is in the process of initiating 4 Regional Development Plans covering the full country with all relevant stakeholders engaged which will identify and align all stakeholders on the strengths, gaps, opportunities and impediments to inform future investment in the development of the visitor offering.	
Focus Government investment in tourism capital projects on improving product quality and innovation, and the development and enhancement of cultural and	In Progress	Fáilte Ireland	Failte Ireland have a pipeline of over 50 projects in varying stages of development. Over 20 new projects with investment of over €50m in both Outdoor Activity Development and Iconic Immersive Heritage Experiences are on track to be announced in Q2 2021.	

heritage experiences to attract a wide range of visitors to 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		Review of the NPWS underway.
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.	In Progress	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. Fáilte Ireland and Dublin Destination Recovery Taskforce working on new Winter Festival Proposition for Dublin.	
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	Following Initial discussions between Dept. and Agencies officials are considering options.	
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. The CSO has written to the Chair of the ROG on this.	
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 €2 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.	Audited Digital maturity ongoing with 13,050 attractions and activity providers. Findings due end April and this will guide prioritisation of subsequent supports.
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 5 year visa application to encourage repeat visits.	Not Started	D/Justice		Evolution of COVID a factor.
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 stabilised 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.	First report sent to Minister on 15 Feb 2021.