

Ireland's Business Events Strategy 2030

For Tourism and Beyond



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán
Department of Tourism, Culture,
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

Ministerial Foreword

I welcome the finalisation of this business events strategy for Ireland and the collaborative effort that has gone into its development by my Department, Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland and industry leaders.

For many years, the business events industry has been recognised as a key driver of economic growth. It is estimated that the contribution of business events to Ireland's tourism revenues is approaching €0.8 billion and supporting 20,000 jobs. Business events also provide a platform to deliver positive societal, economic and environmental impacts. This strategy sets the direction out to 2030 for a joined up approach by all stakeholders to deliver value for tourism, and beyond.

Ireland has a reputation as a clean and green tourism destination. In line with our new National Tourism Policy Framework, we must seek to strengthen that reputation as a responsible and attractive destination for business events. More and more international event corporates are seeking destinations for events that meet sustainability criteria. In step with this demand, this strategy aims to further develop Ireland as a sustainable business events proposition and to enhance its international standing and profile by targeting more events related to energy, sustainability, the environment and climate change.

As a country, we have a good track record in terms of attracting global companies to locate, build and grow their businesses. In recent years, we have seen a rise in high-growth businesses coming to Ireland, across a broad range of industries including pharmaceuticals, biotechnology,

ICT, and renewable energy. One of the main reasons that these companies choose Ireland is because of its skilled workforce. This can be complemented further through the attraction of business events that provide access to the latest industry trends, research and expert insights.

Business events can be used as a tool to optimise synergies between priority sectors identified within this strategy and wider government priorities and strategies. This strategy provides an opportunity for the tourism sector to be transformative in its approach to business events and deliver better outcomes through improved coordination and cooperation between the industry and other areas within government.

The overarching aim of this strategy is to deliver on the value of business events, for tourism and beyond, achieving benefits for Ireland as a community and also ensuring positive impacts on our local communities and long-term legacy benefits for the participating sectoral collectives.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine Martin". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Catherine Martin
Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

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Executive Summary

This strategy has been created by way of collaboration between the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland and industry leaders.

This is an ambitious strategy, recognising the excellent business events offering in Ireland and the strong reputation earned by all to date. It provides an opportunity to bolster the shape and value of the business events industry in the medium to long term. This strategy aims to support wider government policies and objectives that drive robust economic, social and environmental outcomes.

Business events provide a unique opportunity to make a positive impact under each strategic pillar and deliver on governmental goals. In setting the direction for a more collaborative approach to the development of the Irish business events industry, implementation can deliver increased value for tourism and beyond.

To bring this strategy to life, and implement the actions required to achieve the success factors outlined therein, a number of key imperatives are required:

Ecosystem

Demonstration to wider government stakeholder of the far-reaching benefits of business events.

Oversight and Monitoring

Establishment of a Department led oversight group to oversee the implementation of the strategy.

Steering Groups

Establishment of agency led steering groups, focused on association conferences, and meetings and incentives, with representation from industry to oversee the development of implementation plans and realise success factors.

Implementation

Development of industry led and agency enabled implementation plans that flow from this strategic direction.

Establishment of baselines and future growth targets.

Identify resource requirements to deliver on implementation plans.



Stephen Kavanagh
Chairperson of the Business Tourism Strategy Group



Purpose and Core Values

The overarching purpose of this strategy is to set the direction for a collaborative approach to the development of the Irish business events industry for the delivery of increased value for tourism and beyond.

This strategy aims to:

- Support wider government policies and objectives that drive robust economic, social, and environmental outcomes.
- Develop Ireland's international reputation as a responsible and attractive business events destination and a sustainability champion in the hosting of international business events.
- Serve as a catalyst for delivering significant social and environmental benefits through integration with other government policies and strategies.

Many conference organisers now require robust sustainability credentials to compete more effectively. Organisations and corporations have higher demands in relation to sustainability compared to leisure visitors, which means that the business events industry has the ability to drive positive change at greater speed, ultimately benefitting all. By meeting the needs or demands of the business events sector, the Irish business events industry will accelerate improvement of practices, leading not only to a positive impact for business delegates, but also for leisure visitors.

To achieve its role to support the long-term sustainable growth in the economic, social, and environmental contribution of tourism to Ireland, the tourism agencies, Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland, have adopted the Visitor, Industry, Community and Environment (VICE) model as its guiding principle to sustainable tourism development. The VICE model is internationally recognised and acknowledges that tourism in a destination is the interaction between visitors, the industry that serves them and the community that hosts them, and their impact on the environment.

Core Values

The core values embedded in the Strategy are **Transformation, Sustainability and Community.**



A transformative approach has been taken in the development, and will be evidenced in the execution of this strategy with government and industry working together in partnership to deliver on the value of business events, for tourism and beyond.

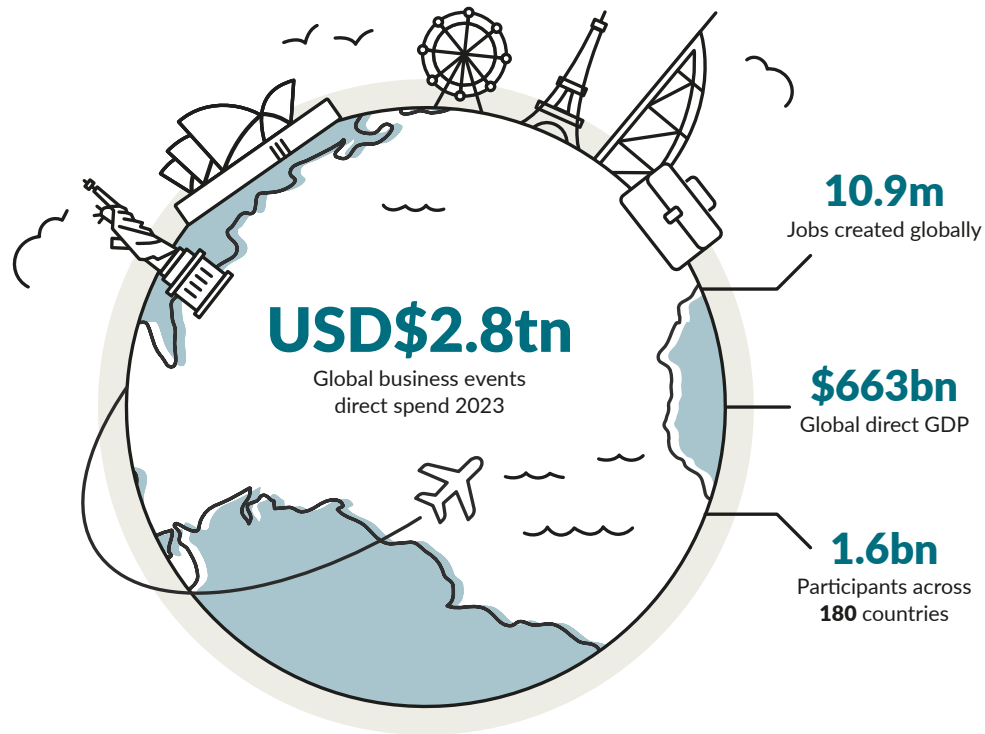


This strategy is rooted in the value of sustainable development to minimise environmental impacts and contribute to national climate action, and to ensure the sector is positioned to meet increasing corporate requirements on sustainability.



This strategy focuses not only on the benefits for Ireland as a community, but also ensures positive impacts on our local communities and long-term legacy benefits for sectoral communities.

Why Business Events Matter



The business events industry, valued at USD 2.8 trillion*, plays a pivotal role in the global economy, intertwining with industry, supply chains, and value creation. For many years, business events have been acknowledged as a key driver of economic growth. It is estimated that the economic contribution of this sector to Ireland is approaching €0.8bn with delegates worth on average, three times that of a leisure visitor.

As one of the highest yielding tourism segments, business events are aligned with the ambition to drive revenue growth ahead of volume, while supporting 20,000 jobs in the economy.

Business events are typically held mid-week and outside of the busy summer months, therefore supporting business sustainability and complementing the typical leisure patterns. Business events delegates also utilise the full services of venues, from room hire, food and beverage, audio visual, accommodation etc.

Business events delegates visit restaurants, cafes, and bars, while also utilising transport and entertainment services. This contributes to the vibrancy of the city, which has become increasingly important with hybrid working patterns.

Business events delegates can often extend their stay, either before or after the event, to experience the host destination or return to the destination at a later date as a leisure visitor. The Ipsos MRBI Business Events Delegate Expenditure survey indicates that 65% of all delegates attending a conference in Ireland would like to return for a holiday and 75% would recommend Ireland for a short break.

*Source: Events Industry Council/Oxford Economics 2023 - economic significance of business events.

Why Business Events Matter.....continued

Economic Advancement and International Collaboration

The business events industry functions as an export sector, fuelling job creation, fostering innovation, and attracting investment. Business events also serves as platforms for knowledge transfer and trade promotion, enhancing a destination's competitiveness on the global stage. Ireland, by actively engaging in international business events, positions itself as a hub for international collaboration and investment, amplifying its appeal to global stakeholders.

Societal Impact and Long-term Outcomes

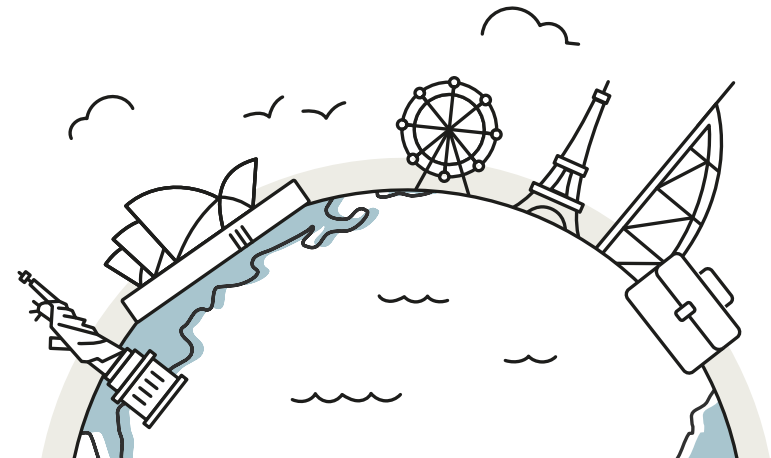
Business events yield lasting societal benefits by influencing government policy, engaging stakeholders, and propelling research and education. They facilitate networking opportunities for Irish businesses, profile the country as an attractive destination for investment and knowledge acquisition and foster a culture of innovation and creativity. Moreover, business events establish vital links between government and industry, driving dialogues and identifying investment opportunities for future growth.

Accelerating Change

By connecting businesses, government entities, academia, and citizens, business events accelerate change across priority sectors. They reinforce Ireland's identity as a hub for innovation, and transform indigenous industries with access to global knowledge platforms. In navigating these challenges and opportunities, strategic foresight, innovation, and collaboration are paramount within the business events industry and across government sectors.

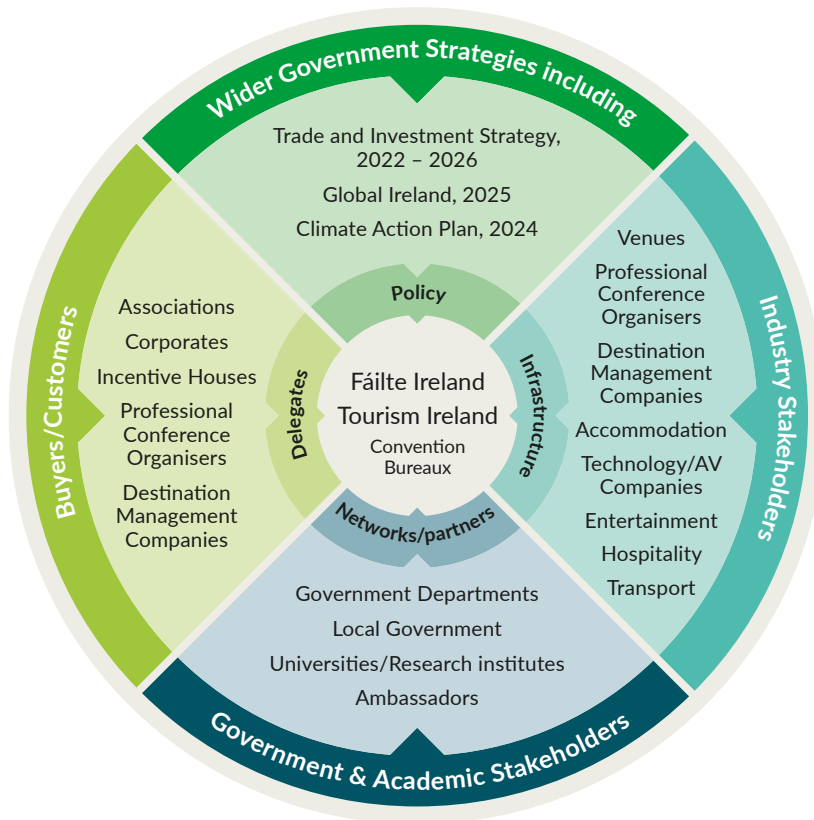
Navigating a Competitive Landscape

In a rapidly evolving landscape, countries vie for prominence in business events, facing challenges and opportunities, spanning geopolitical uncertainties, digital transformation, and environmental imperatives. Ireland must contend with these complexities to secure its position as an attractive destination for business events, balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability and social inclusivity. Strategic adaptation and innovation are essential to thrive in this competitive environment.



Ireland Inc. Business Events Ecosystem

An Ireland Inc. approach embodies a collaborative and synergetic strategy that unites various stakeholders, sectors, and organisations to work together effectively. It is about fostering collaboration, creating a cohesive ecosystem and leveraging collective intelligence to address challenges and seize opportunities.



Ireland Inc. Business Events Ecosystem

Complementing Leisure Tourism

Business events are pivotal to Ireland's economy, generating substantial revenues and supporting thousands of jobs. The country's agencies, Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland, actively pursue and secure events, contributing to both the business events industry and the broader tourism ecosystem. With business event attendees injecting significant revenue into local economies, these events complement leisure tourism, often occurring during off-peak seasons and midweek.

Beneficiaries in Focus

The business events ecosystem thrives on indigenous SMEs and major multinational entities, amplifying the sector's reach and influence. Every event secured by Ireland represents new business opportunities, injecting fresh revenue streams into the economy and providing stability for the supply chain.

Foundational Assets Driving Economic Development

Renowned for its open economy and supportive business climate, Ireland attracts global businesses across various sectors, bolstered by its skilled workforce and innovation-driven environment. The country's esteemed universities and research capabilities further enhance its appeal as a business events destination. Through initiatives like the conference ambassador programme and robust Research, Development and Innovation (RD&I) ecosystem, Ireland showcases its strengths in innovation and collaboration, contributing to global progress and sustainable development.

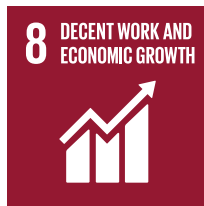
Conclusion

Business events stand at the nexus of economic prosperity, societal advancement, and international collaboration. Ireland's proactive engagement in this industry not only drives economic growth but also fosters innovation, knowledge exchange, and global connectivity. By navigating the challenges and opportunities of a competitive landscape and leveraging its essential assets, Ireland can continue to position itself as a premier destination for business events, shaping its future trajectory on the global stage.



United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Alignment

The Business Events Strategy has been designed to be cognisant of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs). This strategy aims to contribute meaningfully to several key UNSDGs, including but not limited to:



Foster business events that promote entrepreneurship, innovation, and economic development, to create opportunities for decent work and sustainable economic growth in Ireland.



Focus on hosting business events that encourage collaboration, knowledge sharing, and technological advancements that will contribute to building resilient infrastructure and promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation.



Promote inclusive participation, knowledge exchange, diversity, economic empowerment, and policy advocacy. Business events provide platforms for individuals from diverse backgrounds to engage, learn, and collaborate, empowering marginalised groups and advocating for policies that promote social equity and justice.



Strive to showcase sustainable practices in urban planning, transport, and resource management, through business events, thereby supporting the development of sustainable cities and communities in Ireland.



Support business events in Ireland through various initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable practices in event planning, execution, and management. These events often emphasise reducing waste, conserving resources, and adopting eco-friendly alternatives.



Commit to reducing the environmental footprint of business events by implementing measures to encourage low carbon solutions, such as waste reduction, and promoting sustainable practices amongst industry, attendees and stakeholders.



Collaboration is key to achieving the UNSDGs. By fostering partnerships between businesses, government agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders, business events can amplify impact and drive collective action towards sustainable development.

By aligning business events with the UNSDGs, they not only contribute to global efforts to address pressing social, economic, and environmental challenges, but there is also a commitment to demonstrate responsible and sustainable business practices.

Together, through strategic alignment and collaborative action, a more prosperous and sustainable future for Ireland can be achieved where business events serve as crucial platforms for advancing diplomatic, economic, and cultural objectives globally. By aligning these events with governmental priorities, their impact can be amplified and a legacy can be left to benefit local and global communities.

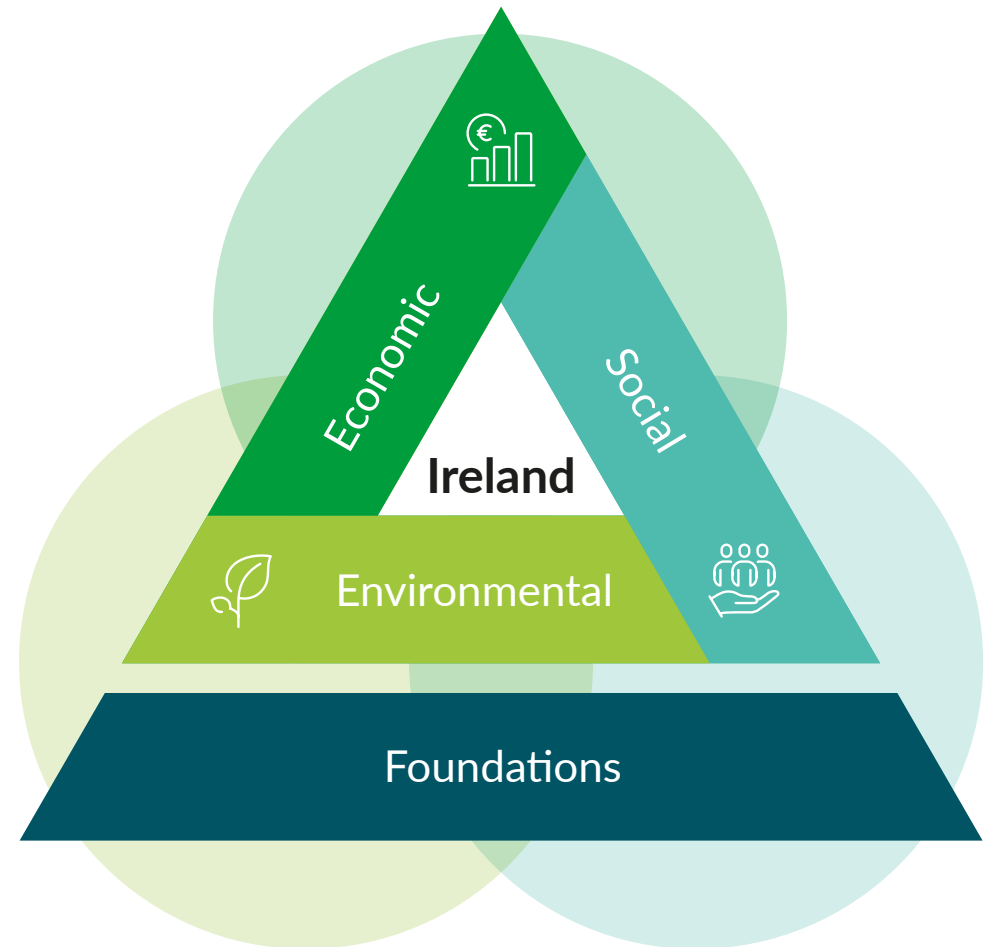
Strategic Pillars

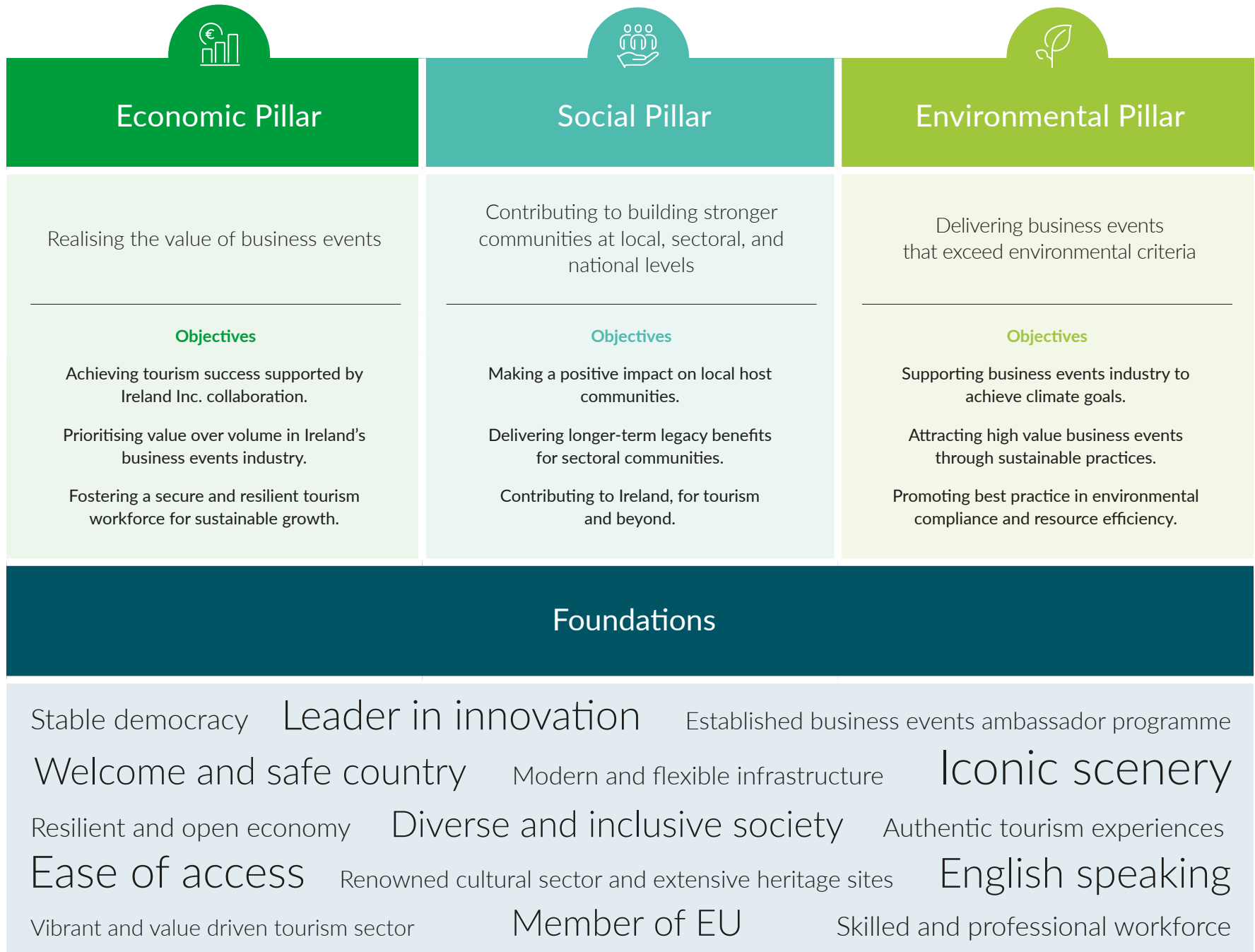
Overview

To maximise outcomes and support government to build an Ireland aligned with prosperity, sustainability, and societal impacts, the business events sector requires a symbiotic relationship across government departments. By focusing on the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainability, Ireland can strategically position itself as a leader in hosting business events. Such a strategy not only enhances Ireland's reputation as a responsible and attractive destination for business events but also aligns with global expectations for sustainable practices, thereby increasing Ireland's competitiveness in the market.

Supporting these strategic pillars are the foundations which complement and underpin the economic, social and environmental pillars by leveraging Ireland's societal and institutional framework for the benefit of business events.

Strong foundations such as a stable democracy, resilient economy, highly skilled workforce and robust tourism industry can ensure a welcoming and professional business events environment.







Economic Pillar

Economic Pillar

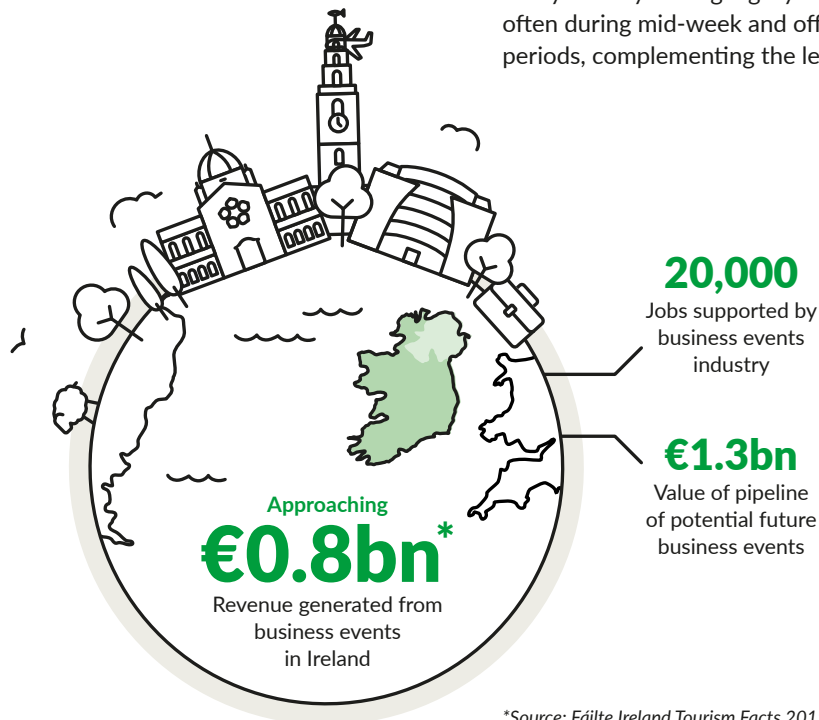
Energising the Ireland Inc. Ecosystem



Insights

Realising the Value of Business Events

The business events industry is considered an export industry, and contributes significantly to Ireland's economy, generating revenues approaching €0.8 billion in 2019 and supporting 20,000 jobs. It is estimated that business events delegates inject three times more revenue into local economies than leisure travellers. They also benefit the wider tourism ecosystem by driving high-yield business often during mid-week and off-season periods, complementing the leisure sector.



*Source: Fáilte Ireland Tourism Facts 2019

Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland, together with industry partners actively identify and secure events, with a pipeline of potential future events valued at €1.3 billion (June 2024). This pipeline has the potential to deliver €585m to industry partners (venues, AV companies, furniture hire etc) with €325m going to the accommodation sector, €208m to our night-time economy - restaurants and bars, €65m to transport providers and approximately €117m to retail.

Key strategies for maximising the impact of business events include focusing on regionality, seasonality and attracting high yield visitors with the means to stay longer and with high repeat potential. Essential metrics include monitoring business opportunities, partnerships, and investment deals, as well as calculating the return on investment for stakeholders by comparing hosting costs against benefits like increased tourism revenue, foreign direct investment, job creation, tax revenue, and business growth.

Long Term Benefits

Beyond immediate economic gains, business events have long-term benefits such as attracting foreign direct investment, innovative businesses, and new talent in high-growth sectors. These events help position Ireland as a premier destination for thought leadership and industry advancement, which catalyses economic growth, inspires job creation, and secures a prosperous future.

Enhancing Ireland's Global Reputation

Business events elevate Ireland's global reputation by attracting new business opportunities and investment. They showcase Ireland's cultural heritage, innovation, research and development, and collaboration prospects with universities. Measuring the impact of business events on knowledge transfer, innovation, and skill development within key industries and sectors is essential. This includes tracking the adoption of new technologies, best practices, and ideas shared during events, as well as the development of new products, services, and research collaborations.



ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES

Achieving tourism success supported by Ireland Inc. collaboration

Strategic Imperatives

Fostering Cross-Sector Collaboration

Facilitate collaboration between businesses, academia, and government agencies through the newly established agency led steering groups to oversee the development of implementation plans and realise success factors.

Success: *A cohesive business events ecosystem that collectively realises success factors.*

Leveraging Sectoral Clusters

Leverage sectoral clusters and platforms to facilitate knowledge sharing and innovation, and provide access to opinion leaders, speakers, and other engagement opportunities.

Success: *Thriving hubs that promote knowledge sharing and innovation, driving enhanced networking, competitiveness, and productivity.*

Supporting Research, Development, and Innovation Initiatives

Showcase research, development, and innovation initiatives for the benefit for Ireland Inc.

Success: *Accelerated Research, Development and Innovation, (RDI) progress and technological advancements through collaborative efforts, attracting top talent and funding support.*

Driving Competitiveness

Support competitiveness through supports in line with the Business Events Strategy.

Success: *Creation of a business events subvention framework.*

Prioritising value over volume in Ireland's business events industry

Strategic Imperatives

Promoting Regional and Seasonal Growth

Encourage the growth of regional business events outside of peak tourism seasons and promote extended delegate stays in Ireland.

Success: *Leveraging business events to achieve regionality and seasonality objectives.*

Growing Event Value

Focus on increasing the value beyond tourism derived from business events.

Success: *Growth in the overall economic value generated by business events, surpassing tourism-derived benefits.*

Enhancing Investment Potential

Focus on attracting key decision-makers for business events to showcase the ease of doing business in Ireland.

Success: *Greater opportunity to pitch Ireland for future investment.*

Leveraging Benefits of Business Events for Dublin

Support the drive for urban regeneration and development in Dublin through business events.

Success: *Encourage delegates to use local cafes, bars and restaurants to support a vibrant and sustainable city centre.*

Securing a Strong Conference Ambassador Pool

Identify and recruit conference ambassadors through lead generation activities.

Success: *Motivate conference ambassadors to bid to host future business events.*

Fostering a secure and resilient tourism workforce for sustainable growth

Strategic Imperatives

Leveraging Tourism Talent Attraction Strategies for Business Events

Supporting the business events industry to drive employee engagement and build on consistently rewarding and appealing workplaces to attract and retain top talent.

Success: *Increased influx and retention of highly skilled professionals to the business events industry.*

Educating the Next Generation

Participate in targeted programmes of engagement and communications with students and their career influencers, to drive awareness of courses and careers in business events.

Success: *Increased awareness and interest among students in pursuing careers in the business events industry.*

Fostering Partnerships with Educational Institutions

Collaborate with universities and training centres to leverage specialised programmes and internships.

Success: *Steady pipeline of qualified graduates entering the business events industry.*

Enhancing Career Development Opportunities

Identify clear career pathways through professional development programmes to highlight the unique benefits and opportunities within the business events industry.

Success: *Life-long career pathway leading to a more stable and skilled workforce.*

CASE STUDY

Driving Economic Impact



SaaStock, Dublin, 2023

SaaStock is the world's leading community and media platform for the global B2B SaaS (Software as a Service) ecosystem.

Each year their annual event brings together the highest concentration of SaaS decision makers from around the world, to build relationships and accelerate opportunities.

SaaStock 2023 took place at the Royal Dublin Society (RDS) in Dublin and attracted 4,500 attendees, including software founders, executives, and investors for 3 days of impactful sessions and invaluable networking.

Economic Impact

SaaStock 2023 delivered revenues of €6.6million for Ireland. Meetings such as this help ensure the tech sector in Ireland continues to thrive. Some of the world's largest technology companies have been coming to Ireland for decades, investing tens of billions of euros and in the process creating perhaps the most dynamic and successful tech sector in Europe.

Ireland is now home to 16 of the 20 largest global tech companies, along with three of the largest enterprise software providers in the world in IBM, SAP and Oracle. Bringing these 4,500 SaaStock delegates to Ireland has given these indigenous companies the opportunity to network on home ground and enhance Ireland's already strong reputation for tech.



€6.6m

revenue delivered



4,500

delegates attended

SaaStock



Social Pillar

Social Pillar

Contributing to building stronger communities at local, sectoral, and national levels



Insights

The value of business events extends far beyond tourism. The iceberg analogy aptly illustrates this: the tip represents the immediate tourism revenue generated, while substantial impact lies beneath the surface. This deeper influence includes enhanced knowledge transfer, groundbreaking research, and the establishment of local and global networks. Business events are recognised as key influencers on inbound trade and investment decisions, as well as in advancing expertise in critical areas such as healthcare and education.

There is a growing trend among business event delegates and organisers to seek opportunities for positive social contributions when traveling for business events. These contributions span from immediate, tangible Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives to longer-term benefits for the communities involved. Incentive delegates are increasingly requesting that CSR activities are featured on trip itineraries.

Communities

Local Communities

Local communities benefit from the immediate impacts of business events, which include increased visibility and inclusivity for minority groups, post-event participation in sports and cultural activities,

and improvements in community health and well-being. These events engage diverse stakeholders, fostering community-driven initiatives to tackle social challenges and enhance overall well-being.

Sectoral Collectives

Business events serve as powerful platforms for sectoral collectives, such as those defined by professions (medical, scientific, financial) or thematic connections (AI, accessibility). They facilitate knowledge sharing, capacity building, driving innovation, and professional development. Associations play a pivotal role in advocating for their members, driving advancements within their fields, and fostering positive change through networking opportunities and collaborative initiatives.

Long-term Initiatives and Policy Impact

The benefits of business events extend beyond immediate professional development. These events drive long-term initiatives that can influence policy and impact local communities. As sectoral collectives advance, they shape policies that foster innovation, improve industry standards, and address critical issues within their fields. This creates robust specialist hubs and sustainable business practices, leading to sustained economic growth and enhanced quality of life.

Promoting Ireland as a Premier Destination

Many association conference ambassadors promote Ireland as a premier destination for European and International business events. This positioning allows local professionals to participate in conferences, expand their networks, share knowledge, and attract investment in research and development. Hosting these events helps Ireland position itself at the forefront of global innovation and policymaking, as emphasised by research from the World Economic Forum* on the role of business events in facilitating cross-sector collaboration.

Local and Government Impact

The dual benefits of sectoral advancement and societal improvement enable Ireland to position itself as a world leader in hosting impactful business events. These events enhance the nation's reputation, attract international attention, and drive continued economic and social progress. On a local level, business events stimulate economic activity, create jobs, and support local businesses. From a governmental perspective, they can help shape policies that promote innovation and sustainable development. Government support and investment in business events can transform economies and enhance competitiveness on the world stage. By promoting Ireland as a hub for business events, the nation reaps the rewards of a thriving professional environment and a prosperous society.

*World Economic Forum: Why cross-sector collaboration is key to building more resilient communities.



SOCIAL OBJECTIVES

Making a positive impact on local host communities

Strategic Imperatives

Contributing to the Prosperity of Local Communities

Encourage delegates to experience and invest in the wider local ecosystem to contribute towards the vibrancy and sustainability of businesses and local host communities.

Success: *Local businesses thriving from the impact of business events delegates.*

Enhancing the Well-being of Local Communities

Embedding social purposes in the implementation of this strategy to enhance the well-being of local communities.

Success: *Improved quality of life of host communities as a result of business events.*

Implementing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives

Encourage event organisers to engage attendees in community focused activities.

Success: *Enhanced attendee satisfaction from meaningful CSR activities and tangible benefits for local communities.*

Championing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

Champion the creation of a safe and inclusive environment where EDI is embraced, for delegates attending business events in Ireland.

Success: *Strengthened reputation as an equitable, diverse, and inclusive destination.*

Delivering longer-term legacy benefits for sectoral communities

Strategic Imperatives

Facilitating Knowledge Sharing and Legacy Building

Create a framework and roadmap to deliver legacy for sectoral collectives.

Success: *Adoption of the business events legacy framework.*

Establishing Measurement Tools

Establish a comprehensive system to identify, assess and report on economic, social and environmental impacts.

Success: *Measurement tool in place to support evaluation.*

Case Studies

Capture appropriate cases studies for future inspiration on legacy outcomes derived from business events.

Success: *Suite of case studies captured and made available to prospective event organisers.*

Contributing to Ireland, for tourism and beyond

Strategic Imperatives

Contributing at a National Level

Align business events with government priorities and objectives to amplify their impact and legacy for local communities.

Success: *Business events serve as a powerful platform to deliver greater impact on local communities.*

Contributing at a International Level

Align business events with the UNSDGs to amplify their impact and legacy for global communities.

Success: *Enhanced reputation and international attention derived from delivering greater impact from business events at a international level.*

Enhancing Job Security

Support development strategies to enhance job security and create pathways for career advancement.

Success: *Improved job security and increased opportunities for career advancement.*

CASE STUDY

Driving Social Impact



World Rural Health Conference (WONCA), Limerick, 2022

Improving Health, Empowering Communities

The World Organisation of Family Doctors (WONCA) is a not-for-profit organisation with a membership of 500,000 family doctors. The mission of WONCA is to improve the quality of life of the peoples of the world.

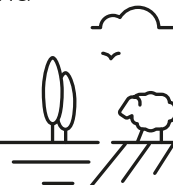
In 2022, WONCA's World Rural Health Conference took place in the University of Limerick bringing together 750 delegates, including rural and community healthcare professionals from across the globe to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing rural healthcare.

Social impact was a key organising principle from the outset. The conference organisers demonstrated a commitment to inclusivity, diversity and inclusion, community engagement and sustainability and innovation.

Social Impact

The conference created significant impact, sparking initiatives that will shape the future of rural healthcare in Ireland and beyond including;

- Establishment of Ireland's first National Standing Committee for Rural General Practice within the Irish College of General Practitioners
- Appointment of the first-ever Professor of Rural General Practice at the University of Limerick
- Development of a new Rural teaching hub for medical students at the School of Medicine, University of Limerick to spend 25% of their clinical training working in rural communities.
- Creation of General Practice Rural Training fellowships, supported by a €760,000 investment from the HSE, started in November 2023.
- Publication of the "Limerick Declaration on Rural Healthcare", a blueprint designed to inform rural communities, academics and policymakers about how to achieve the goal of delivering high quality healthcare in rural and remote areas most effectively, with a particular focus on the Irish healthcare system.





Environmental Pillar



Environmental Pillar

Delivering business events that exceed environmental criteria



Insights

Climate Action and Environmental Commitments

Ireland's commitment to reduce carbon emissions is underscored by the National Climate Policy Position, aiming for a transition to a competitive low-carbon, climate-resilient economy by 2050. This vision guides investment decisions aligned with the National Mitigation Plan and the National Adaptation Framework. The imperative for sustainability has become a foundational principle in global tourism strategies. In addition, the National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) sets the national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2030 and aims to deliver the transformative changes required to the ways in which we value and protect nature.

Protection of Natural Systems

Preserving Ireland's waters, air, soil, ecosystems, and biodiversity is paramount for national prosperity and well-being. To this end, Ireland pledges robust protection measures to prevent undue harm from economic activities. Sectoral targets enforce action across various domains like air quality, land-use planning, and waste management.

Climate Mitigation in Business Events

Acknowledging Ireland's island status and dependence on inbound access, the business events sector recognises the urgency for impactful climate mitigation measures. Organisers and clients alike are committed to minimising negative

climate impacts, understanding that failing to do so could compromise Ireland's competitiveness in attracting lucrative business events.

Sustainability Standards in Corporate Events

Corporate events increasingly align with company's environmental commitments, driving higher sustainability standards in venue selection and destination choice. Event planners are similarly elevating sustainability expectations, influenced by risk assessments and ethical considerations.

Regulatory and Reporting Landscape

Multinationals in Ireland are subject to EU sustainability reporting rules, with smaller companies expected to comply by 2030. The upcoming EU green claims directive will standardise sustainability claims verification, impacting event marketing and destination strategies. National accreditation bodies like the Irish National Accreditation Board (INAB) will play a pivotal role in certifying sustainability efforts.

Collaborative Carbon Impact Management

While a significant portion of an event's carbon footprint lies beyond destination managers' control, collaborative efforts and systemic changes in infrastructure and transport within destinations are crucial. This highlights the importance of providing agency led support programmes for the Irish business events industry. Public

sector involvement can support sustainability measures in event planning and management.

Environmental Sustainability as a Legacy Outcome

Recognising environmental sustainability as a primary legacy outcome for events underscores its importance as a core value. Despite challenges, the business events sector faces increasing demand for effective carbon impact management, with benefits extending to the broader tourism industry.

Transition to Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency

In tandem with climate action, there is a growing emphasis on reducing resource consumption and embracing circular economy principles. Efforts span from efficient water use to the elimination of single use plastics and promoting product reuse, refurbishment, and recycling. Addressing biodiversity loss requires venues to respect and enhance nature, while procurement practices should avoid products linked to habitat destruction.



ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES

Supporting business events industry to achieve climate goals

Strategic Imperatives

Supporting the Business Events Industry to Deliver Sustainable Events

Encourage the business events industry to participate in agency-led support programmes to aid carbon reduction.

Success: *Industry partners that are equipped and enabled to deliver sustainable business events.*

Training and Support

Offer comprehensive training and support programmes for the business events industry to integrate sustainability practices.

Success: *Widespread adoption of sustainable practices in the supply chain, due to increased supplier knowledge and capacity.*

Toolkits

Develop toolkits to enable and assist the business events industry to deliver events in a more sustainable manner.

Success: *Adoption of toolkit guidelines during event delivery by the business events industry.*

Supporting Sustainability Focused Industry Partners

Prioritise industry partners that have integrated environmental sustainability practices into their business operations.

Success: *All business events industry partners adopt sustainable practices.*

Attracting high value business events through sustainable practices

Strategic Imperatives

Targeting Sustainable Events

Focus on attracting sustainability focused sectors and events, that draw key opinion leaders and environmentally focused attendees.

Success: *Raised awareness of Ireland as a sustainability champion for business events.*

Accessing Sustainability Supports

Support the business events industry to access sustainability grants to improve infrastructure to deliver sustainable events.

Success: *Improved value proposition through enhanced infrastructure and practices*

Promoting Sustainability Leadership

Partner with sustainability focused organisations to position Ireland as a leading destination for sustainable business events.

Success: *Enhanced reputation as a leading sustainable destination.*

Linger Longer (Bleisure)

Promote extended stays in Ireland alongside business event attendance to align with the sustainable tourism principle of travelling less frequently but staying for a longer period.

Success: *Enhanced revenue for tourism businesses, from those attending business events.*

Promoting best practice in environmental compliance and resource efficiency

Strategic Imperatives

Guidelines for Implementation

Encourage the integration of sustainable practices into business event planning, including waste prevention, and provide practical guidance for execution.

Success: *Adoption of sustainable practices and reduced environmental impact.*

Education Initiatives

Raise awareness of climate action and sustainability among the business events industry through workshops and programmes.

Success: *Integrated sustainability principles into the event planning processes.*

Collaborative Knowledge Sharing

Foster exchange of best practices to reduce the carbon footprint of business events.

Success: *Reduced carbon footprint across the business events industry through collaborative knowledge sharing.*

Certification

Encourage the business events industry to secure sustainability certification that aligns with the all-island sustainability assurance programme. This programme will provide an evidence-based mark, ensuring transparency and third-party verification.

Success: *A committed business events industry that demonstrates best-in-class sustainability practices.*

CASE STUDY

Driving Environmental Impact



Association of Geographical Societies in Europe, EUGEO Congress, Galway, 2019

Re-imagining Europe's Future Society and Landscapes

EUGEO is the Association of Geographical Societies in Europe. Its aim is to advance research and education on the Geography of Europe.

The 7th EUGEO Congress took place at the University of Galway in May 2019. It was attended by 500 international delegates and delivered an estimated economic impact of €800,000 for Ireland. The theme for the 2019 event, 'Re-imagining Europe's Future Society and Landscapes', focused on a variety of geographic themes reflecting the broad depth of the discipline.

The conference organisers demonstrated thought leadership by engaging in responsible consumption and there was strong collaboration with the venue, the conference organiser and other relevant suppliers to achieve an ethical supply chain.

Environmental Impact

The 7th EUGEO Congress demonstrated outstanding sustainability and showcased dedication to environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

Key features of the conference included;

- Involvement of local suppliers, and implementation of a thorough conference environmental policy.
- Introduction of a Sustainable Event Policy Checklist which is now a standard for all university events.
- Conference sessions addressed various United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) focusing on poverty, affordable housing, and climate action.
- Sustainability initiatives were incorporated such as biodiversity walks, local music, field trips, and environmental film screenings.
- Implementation of initiatives including a 'PaperSmart' policy, vegetarian catering, and reduced paper usage.



Supporting Government Priorities

Supporting Government Priorities

The strategic pillar approach in this strategy has been carefully curated to synchronise with several key government initiatives ensuring a coordinated effort to sustainably grow Ireland's economic, social, and environmental objectives. This Business Events Strategy will align with, but is not limited to the following national strategies:

TRADE AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY	GLOBAL IRELAND 2025	CLIMATE ACTION PLAN
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supporting Ireland's Economic and Trade 'Ecosystem' International association conferences and corporate meetings attract international delegates, showcasing Ireland's strengths across sectors and facilitating trade expansion. 2. Reviewing and Refreshing Local Market Teams Sector-specific conferences enable local teams to engage with international stakeholders and explore new markets. 3. Positioning Ireland within Global Value Chains Participation in conferences helps position Ireland within global value chains, attracting partnerships and investments. 4. Communicating Ireland's Interests as a Trading Nation International association conferences provide a platform for advocating Ireland's trade interests and priorities globally. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expanding Diplomatic and Enterprise Presence Across Europe Hosting international conferences attracts key stakeholders and thought leaders to Ireland enhancing Ireland's reputation. 2. Promoting Irish Arts, Heritage, and Culture Cultural events within conferences promote Irish heritage to diverse audiences worldwide. 3. Supporting Economic Growth and Export Diversification Major international association conferences and corporate meetings support Ireland's economic growth, fostering knowledge exchange and encouraging foreign investment. 4. Promoting Sustainable Tourism Incorporating sustainability into event planning supports Ireland's tourism strategy. 5. Showcasing Ireland's Leadership on Global Issues Conferences on sustainability, human rights, and innovation showcase Ireland's leadership on global issues 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rapid Emission Reductions Business events can showcase innovative technologies and practices to reduce carbon emissions. Workshops and discussions offer practical insights for replication, accelerating emission reductions. 2. Net-Zero by 2050 Business events can highlight long-term planning and investment in sustainable practices. Help to drive energy efficiency targets and circular economy principles, while transitioning to renewable energy solutions. 3. 2030 Emission Reduction Acceleration Business events can set ambitious targets and commitments for accelerating emission reductions. Foster collective responsibility through high-level discussions and commitments. 4. Low-Carbon Economy Business events can highlight economic benefits and opportunities of transitioning to a low-carbon economy. Explore job creation, innovation, and growth in renewable energy, clean technology, and sustainable agriculture sectors.

Impact and Legacy



Impact and Legacy

Overview: *Unleashing the potential and elevating the impact and legacy of business events in Ireland.*

This Strategy will support the delivery of immediate impact and long-term legacy through hosting international business events in Ireland. The vision is to revolutionise the impact of business events by ensuring a tangible and positive legacy. By adopting this approach and employing structured methodologies, Ireland can enhance its value proposition and contribute significantly to societal advancement and sustainable development through business events.

To achieve this, the following focus areas are outlined below;

Strategic alignment: creating a framework to align business events outcomes with positive impacts on Ireland's economy, community and environment.

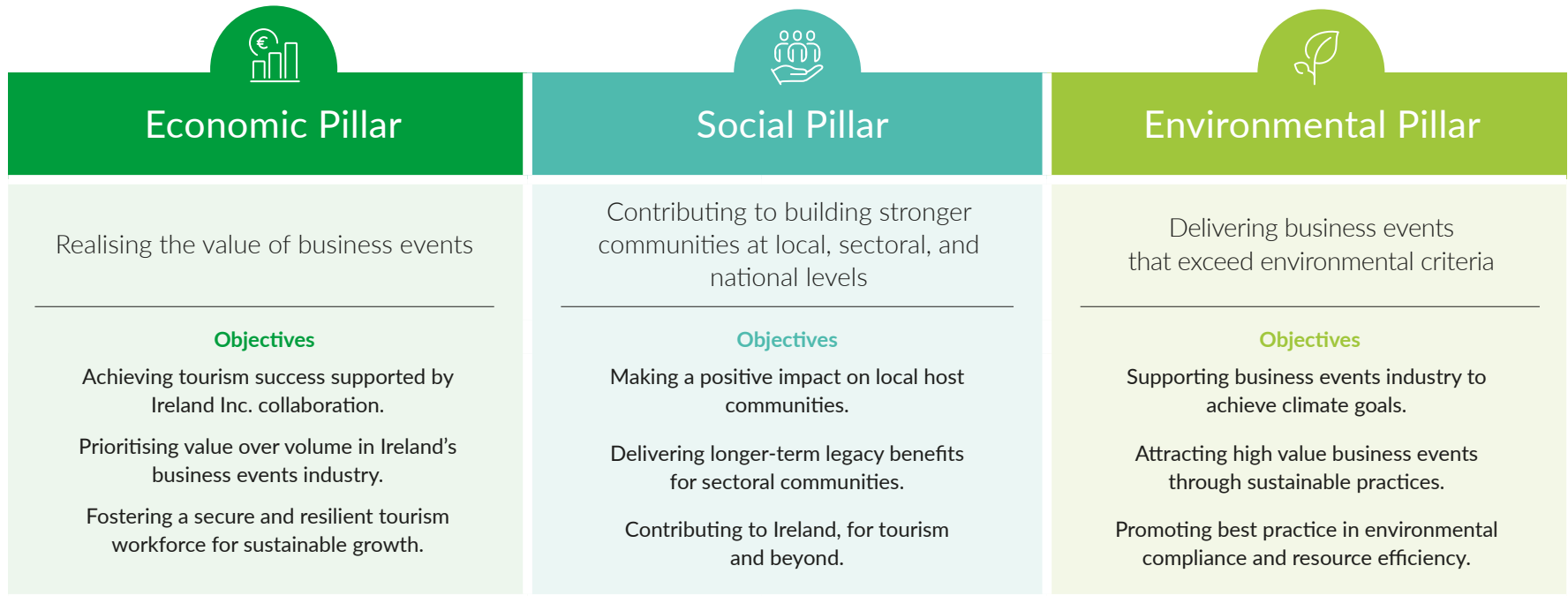
Stakeholder engagement: involving local stakeholders and government to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of the frameworks.

Measurement framework: establishing a comprehensive system to assess and report on economic, social and environmental impacts.

Capability building: providing training and tools to industry partners to maximise benefits from the framework.

Strategy Governance and Implementation





Recommendations For Implementation

To bring this Business Events Strategy to life there are a number of key imperatives required:

- ✓ Gain recognition from wider government stakeholders for the benefits of business events to support delivery of the legacy framework.
- ✓ Establishment of a Department led oversight group to oversee the implementation of the strategy.
- ✓ Establishment of agency-led steering groups with representation from industry focused on association conferences, and meetings and incentives.
- ✓ Establishment of baselines and future growth targets for the business events industry.
- ✓ Development of industry led and agency enabled implementation plans for the industry.
- ✓ Identify resource requirements to deliver on implementation plans.
- ✓ Development of strong conference ambassador pool focused on high value events through lead generation activities.
- ✓ Alignment of implementation plans with national programmes and government goals and objectives.
- ✓ Support delivery of world class delegate experience through learning and development.
- ✓ Maintain Ireland's attractiveness through the creation of a business events subvention framework.
- ✓ Creation of a business event legacy framework and measurement tool.
- ✓ Facilitate industry to increase the value of meetings and incentive business to Ireland.
- ✓ Support the business events industry to achieve sustainability standards.

APPENDIX I

Glossary of Terms

Pillars	Strategic pillars are the key areas of focus
Imperative	'Imperatives' provide the interpretation of, and then parameters for, the strategy.
Objective	The challenge or opportunity contained within the Imperative.
Business Events	There is no universally agreed term to describe the business events industry, however MICE is a widely used acronym that means Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions.
MICE	MICE is an acronym for Meetings, Incentive, Conferences, and Exhibitions
Meetings	Meetings are corporate events staged by individual companies as part of their marketing, training, motivational or communications outreach to their staff, customers or stakeholders. Examples include sales kick-offs, product launches or road shows. The meeting attendees do not generally pay to attend these meetings.
Incentives	Incentives are reward trips that are used by businesses to motivate and inspire employees to enhance productivity. The reward is an extraordinary travel experience in the form of an all-expenses-paid VIP trip.
Conferences	Conferences are typically organised by international associations to bring their members together. Due to their large scale, planning begins years in advance of the conference taking place. Conferences can also be organized by individuals or companies (Eg Dublin Tech Summit). Delegates/ attendees usually pay an attendance fee for conferences.
Exhibitions	Exhibitions are where products and services are displayed.
Incentive House	An incentive house is a company that specialises in designing, managing and monitoring Incentive Programmes for their clients. A Destination Management Company (DMC) is often used by Incentive Houses to manage the logistics of the event.
Buyer	A buyer is a person we engage with to identify opportunities to bring business events to Ireland. It is the person or company responsible for managing the procurement of a business event. These could be agents, meeting planners, associations, corporate clients etc.

APPENDIX I

Glossary of Terms.....continued

Conference Ambassador	A Conference Ambassador helps us to bring association conference business to Ireland. They tend to be in a position of influence within their international association and Irish chapter. The overwhelming majority of conference ambassadors are Irish based, however it is possible for conference ambassadors to be based overseas (eg Irish Diaspora).
Convention Bureaux	Convention Bureaux partner with us and with buyers to convert opportunities. There are five Convention Bureaux located in Dublin, Cork, Kerry, the Shannon Region and Galway. They are membership organisations funded by industry, local authorities (exc Dublin currently) and Fáilte Ireland and act on behalf of the industry members. They help convert business events for Ireland.
Professional Conference Organiser (PCO)	A PCO is a company that specialises in the management of conferences, congresses, seminars and similar events. The company acts as a consultant to the organising committee or headquarter organisation, enacting its decisions and assisting to fulfil their objectives, while using the experience and knowledge it has gained over many years of organising events.
Destination Management Company (DMC)	A DMC is a professional services company with extensive local knowledge, expertise and resources, specialising in the design and implementation of events and tours. DMCs are often used by businesses for planning activities where the company has no local knowledge.
Bleisure	Bleisure is a term used to describe travel that combines or blends both business and leisure travel. People in a bleisure trip, will typically add some extra days to their business trip in order to experience the destination.
VICE	Visitor, Industry, Community, Environment is a model or framework that has been used by destination managers all over the world, with the aim of ensuring the sustainable development of the destination by looking at the interaction between visitors, industry, community and the environment.
Regional Events	Regional events refer to events taking place outside Dublin, usually in one of the other business events hubs (Cork, Kerry, Shannon and Galway).



 **Tourism Ireland**
Marketing the island of Ireland overseas

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An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán
Department of Tourism, Culture,
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media