



Kerry County Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2021 - 2023

Introduction

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) defines sustainable tourism as ‘tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities’

In the Irish Government’s Tourism Policy Statement “People, Place, and Policy - Growing Tourism to 2025” tourism is recognised as a key element of its economic strategy, with development in the tourism sector reflecting the highest standards of environmental and economic sustainability.

As the two official bodies representing Business and Leisure Tourism within Kerry County, Kerry Convention Bureau (KCB) and Kerry Tourism Industry Federation (KTIF), with the support of key partners Kerry County Council (KCC) and Fáilte Ireland (FI), acknowledge the importance of working collaboratively to lead by example and create an actionable sustainable tourism strategy for the county.

It is our role and responsibility to encourage, develop, establish and promote sustainable practices within the Kerry tourism sector, which delivers benefit to both our visitors and all within our realms of influence, as well as best protecting the natural environment around us.

OUR VISION

Our shared long-term goal is for the county of Kerry to be recognised as Ireland’s leading business and leisure destination for sustainability, community, social entrepreneurship & responsible tourism.

OUR MISSION

To partner with our respective membership and industry partners to enable the development and implementation of sustainable tourism practices that align with both the **United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG’s)** and Irish Government’s Sustainable Tourism Action Plan and which can be measured by our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

The steps required to achieve this goal are defined in the Kerry County Sustainable Tourism Strategy; a working document which sets out our vision, mission and action plan to embed a sustainable ethos at the core of Kerry’s tourism and MICE sector, by advocating for responsible tourism and working closely with key partners and industry to develop and implement more

sustainable practices, which support economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability.

Strategy Background

The approach to creating this strategy has been guided by commitments to the following Sustainable Tourism development principles: **Inspiration, Passion, Respect and Partnership.**

The Kerry County Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2021 – 2023 aligns with the goals of the following national and Kerry County strategies:



The following policy documents also support this strategy:

- [Kerry Convention Bureau Sustainability Policy](#)
- [Kerry Convention Bureau Green Procurement Policy](#)
- [Kerry Tourism Industry Federation Sustainability Policy](#)
- [Kerry Tourism Industry Federation Green Procurement Policy](#)

The strategy consists of a guiding long-term ambition for Kerry, three focus areas that will prioritise our efforts in 2021–2023, defined targets and actions for each focus area and the stakeholders that will be involved.

In addition, the strategy provides a framework to align our objectives with the **UN SDG's**, which are as follows:



From a county wide strategy perspective, we will be placing particular focus on these four:



KCB and KTIF have committed to working together to create, develop and implement this strategy over the next three years, ensuring that the goals set out are SMART goals and that each objective of the strategy is aligned to at least one of the above UN SDGs.

Long Term Vision and Goals

The shared vision of KCB and KTIF is that by 2030, we will have collectively undertaken a journey towards achieving wide-spread sustainable tourism practices within the county of Kerry, that positively impact local and global sustainable development.

As we start to recover from the COVID19 global pandemic, Kerry aims to be an industry leading example of how a county can work together to develop its potential by contributing positively to environmental, social and economic sustainable development and thereby to the UN SDG's.

Key goals that we will work collaboratively on to achieve in the long term include:



Environmental Sustainability Strategy

Internationally, Ireland has a reputation as the ‘Emerald Isle’. Sustaining and nurturing this green image through the adoption of sustainable tourism practices is critical for future tourism growth.

We recognise that Ireland, as an island, has limitations in being sustainable. As a green and environmentally conscious nation, which is predominately accessible by air, it is important that the Irish tourism industry puts in place all necessary measures to progress on the journey to becoming a global sustainable destination.

Leveraging their positions as the official business and leisure tourism Destination Marketing Organisations (DMO’s) for Kerry, KCB and KTIF are committed to working collaboratively with Kerry’s tourism industry to achieve environmentally sustainable tourism outcomes for the county through the following objectives:

Area	SMART Objective	Key Performance Indicators	Related UN SDG
Accreditation	Be third-party sustainability certified for KCB & KTIF's own events and office operations by 2023	KCB & KTIF to have received third-party sustainability certification rating	
	Kerry to hold active third-party sustainable destination certification by 2023	Kerry to have received third-party sustainable destination certification rating	
Meeting and Event Organisers / Attendees	All KCB RFP responses and sales information to include information about Kerry's sustainability strategy, performance, features, suppliers and best practice	RFP template & sales collateral reviewed and refreshed annually to ensure information remains current	
	RFP responses and sales collateral to include information on local restaurants and caterers who have third party sustainability certification by Dec 2021	Update RFP template & sales collateral Review and refresh annually to ensure information up to date	
	KCB to actively promote use of soft mobility forms of transport (e.g., walking, public transport, bicycles) within key Kerry MICE destinations to event organisers and attendees	Review information on website and within RFP and sales collateral on annual basis to ensure current Verbally encourage event organisers to utilize soft mobility forms of transport available during site visits and fam programmes Ensure soft mobility focused content is regular inclusion in social media content plan Include showcase of activity using soft mobility transport in all KCB fam programmes	

Meeting and Event Organisers / Attendees	<p>KCB to ensure that clients are given ideas and resources to support local community environmental causes and projects</p>	<p>Review information on website and within RFP and sales collateral on annual basis to ensure current</p> <p>Verbally encourage event organisers to consider inclusion of CSR activities into their programmes during initial discussion and site visits</p> <p>Ensure CSR focused content is regular inclusion in social media content plan</p> <p>Include showcase CSR activity in all KCB fam programmes</p>	
	<p>KCB to ensure that carbon offsetting programme available to event organisers</p>	<p>Direct event planners to Carbon Offsetting Programme on KCB website</p> <p>Include information on carbon offsetting programme in RFP and sales collateral</p>	
	<p>Ensure all Kerry based meeting and event organisers are given access to annual sustainability training either organised or supported by KCB</p>	<p>KCB to organise /support yearly sustainability training for Kerry based meeting and event organisers</p>	
Leisure Visitors	<p>KTIF Discover Kerry website to include information about Kerry's sustainability strategy, performance, features, suppliers and best practice by end of 2021</p>	<p>New Sustainability Page to be created</p> <p>Information reviewed/updated on annual basis to ensure it is current</p>	
	<p>KTIF Discover Kerry website to include information on hotels & restaurants that have third party sustainability accreditation by end of 2021</p>	<p>Information to be included on new Sustainability Page</p> <p>Information reviewed/updated on annual basis to ensure it is current</p>	

Leisure Visitors	<p>KTIF Discover Kerry website to provide information on third party accredited activity and transport providers by end of 2021</p>	<p>Information to be included on new Sustainability Page</p> <p>Information reviewed/updated on annual basis to ensure it is current</p>	
	<p>KTIF to actively promote use of soft mobility forms of transport (e.g., walking, public transport, bicycles) within key Kerry leisure destinations to visitors</p>	<p>Information to be included on new Sustainability Page and Getting Around section by Dec 2021</p> <p>Social media content showcasing walking and bicycle options to be included in monthly content calendar</p> <p>Information reviewed/updated on annual basis to ensure it is current</p>	
	<p>KTIF to encourage visitors to support local community environmental causes and projects</p>	<p>Create new section on KTIF Discover Kerry website by end of 2021 to provide visitors with ideas and resources to support local community environmental causes and projects</p> <p>Social media content showcasing community projects which visitors can engage with to be included in quarterly content calendar</p>	
Trade Partners	<p>70% of KCB and KTIF member businesses to have formal written sustainability policy and if applicable, third party sustainability certification in place by end of 2022</p>	<p>Undertake audit by end of Dec 2021 to determine how many members of KCB & KTIF have formal policy and/or third party accreditation in place</p>	
		<p>Set target to achieve annual increase in KCB and KTIF member businesses having a formal written sustainability policy</p>	

Trade Partners		Set target to achieve annual increase in KCB and KTIF member businesses having third party sustainability certification	 
	KCB and KTIF to actively support destination wide policies, initiatives and/or programmes that specifically target hotels with a goal to increase reducing, reusing, recycling, and reporting on resources	<p>Review KCB, KTIF and KCC websites to ensure information is available within relevant Sustainability sections</p> <p>KCB and KTIF to include promotion of these policies, initiatives and/or programmes through social media channels and other communication channels into monthly content calendar</p>	 
	KCB and KTIF to actively support destination wide policies, initiatives and/or programmes that specifically target restaurants and caterers with a goal to increase reducing, reusing, recycling and reporting on resources	<p>Review KCB, KTIF and KCC websites to ensure information is available within relevant Sustainability sections by Dec 2021</p> <p>KCB and KTIF to include promotion of these policies, initiatives and/or programmes through social media channels and other communication channels into monthly content calendar</p>	 
	KCB and KTIF to actively support national and destination wide programmes promoting and supporting restaurants and caterers with a commitment to sustainable food	<p>Review KCB, KTIF and KCC websites to ensure information is available within relevant Sustainability sections by Dec 2021</p> <p>KCB and KTIF to include promotion of these policies, initiatives and/or programmes through social media channels and other communication channels into monthly content calendar</p>	 

Trade Partners	<p>KCB and KTIF to organise or support annual sustainability training for its member businesses, commencing in 2022</p>	<p>One sustainability training course organised or supported by supported by KCB and/or KTIF held in 2022 & 2023</p> <p>Ongoing promotion of industry training opportunities shared via KCB & KTIF communication channels</p>	
	<p>KCB & KTIF tool kit developed for all Kerry tourism partners, enabling them to easily communicate Kerry's story on sustainability to be available by end of 2022</p>	<p>KCB & KTIF project to develop and rollout toolkit to commence in Q1 2022</p> <p>All KCB & KTIF members to have access to tool kit by Q3 2022</p>	
Kerry Airport	<p>KCB and KTIF to support Kerry Airport to become net zero for carbon emissions by 2050 at the latest</p>	<p>Encourage and publicise Kerry Airport's progress towards achieving this goal</p>	
Visitor Experience	<p>KCB & KTIF to provide easily accessible information about the destination's sustainable events and tourism strategy, performance, and initiatives on respective websites by Dec 2021</p>	<p>New Sustainability Page to be added to KTIF Website in Sep 2021</p> <p>Kerry County Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2021-2023 to be shared to KCB & KTIF members in Sep 2021</p> <p>KCB, KTIF & KCC websites to be updated to include strategy in Oct 2021</p>	
Reporting	<p>Process and tools to measure, monitor and report on environmental performance within the Kerry tourism sector implemented by KCB & KTIF by end of 2022</p>	<p>KCB & KTIF to undertake research on effective measurement tools</p> <p>KCB & KTIF to create reporting score card on environmental performance which can be shared with members</p> <p>KCB & KTIF to provide information on environmental performance within the Kerry</p>	

		Tourism sector through the KCB & KTIF websites	
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Social Sustainability Strategy

The tourism sector is Ireland’s largest indigenous industry and as such has a responsibility to act ethically and drive social innovation. It is therefore essential that tourism growth and activity is supported by communities and contributes to improving quality of life.

Leveraging their individual positions as the official business and leisure tourism DMO’s for Kerry, KCB and KTIF are committed to achieving socially sustainable outcomes through the following objectives:

Area	SMART Objective	Key Performance Indicators	Related UN SDG
Culture	Bi-monthly meeting of Kerry Sustainability Team to manage ongoing implementation of Kerry County Sustainable Tourism Strategy from Sep 2021 onwards	Bi-Monthly meeting takes place Quarterly review of strategy involving input from all members of Kerry Sustainability Team Meeting minutes shared on Slack	
Community Engagement	Kerry ‘Sustainable Tourism’ Awards programme developed and launched in 2022	KCB & KTIF commence project in Q1 2022 to develop Kerry Awards programme which incentivises local businesses to improve their sustainable performance. Criteria to include businesses which support social innovation and development of sustainable products and services	 

<p>Community Engagement</p>	<p>KCB & KTIF to collaborate on one project per year, with Munster Technological University and local Hospitality Schools which will advance social innovation in Kerry Tourism, commencing in 2022</p>	<p>Meeting between KCB, KTIF and MTU to be held Q4 2021 to identify potential projects</p> <p>Align project to new MA in Regenerative Rural Tourism and Springboard Certificate Circular Economy course</p>	  
<p>Meeting and Event Organisers</p>	<p>KCB to ensure all clients are provided with ideas and resources to support local community social causes and projects</p>	<p>Review information on website and within RFP and sales collateral on annual basis to ensure current</p> <p>Verbally encourage event organisers to consider inclusion of CSR activities into their programmes during initial discussion and site visits</p> <p>Ensure CSR focused content is regular inclusion in social media content plan</p> <p>Include showcase CSR activity in all KCB fam programmes</p>	  
<p>Leisure Visitors</p>	<p>KTIF to encourage visitors to support local community environmental causes and projects</p>	<p>Create new section on KTIF Discover Kerry website by end of 2021 to provide visitors with ideas and resources to support local community environmental causes and projects</p> <p>Ensure CSR focused content is regular inclusion in social media content plan</p>	  
<p>Visitor Experience</p>	<p>KCB & KTIF to provide reliable, up to date and easy to access information on health and COVID19 safety protocols to visitors</p>	<p>COVID-19 Safety Content available on KCB & KTIF website</p> <p>Regular review of information to ensure it remains current</p>	

<p>Visitor Experience</p>	<p>KCB & KTIF to provide reliable, up to date and easy to access information on attractions, transport lines, hotels and venues that supports visitors with accessibility challenges</p>	<p>Content review of information currently provided on KCB website to take place in Q4 2021</p> <p>New accessibility section to be created and added to KTIF website by Dec 2021</p> <p>Regular review of information to ensure it remains current</p>	
<p>Reporting</p>	<p>Process and tools to measure, monitor and report on social performance within the Kerry tourism sector implemented by KCB & KTIF by end of 2022</p>	<p>KCB & KTIF to undertake research on effective measurement tools</p> <p>KCB & KTIF to create reporting score card on social performance which can be shared with members</p> <p>KCB & KTIF to provide information on social performance within the Kerry Tourism sector through the KCB & KTIF websites</p>	

Economic Sustainability Strategy

To successfully progress on the journey to becoming a leading global sustainable destination, key economic drivers such as the indirect and direct income generated by tourism, number of jobs created, tourism transport connections, business competitiveness and tourism seasonality need to be effectively monitored, measured, evaluated.

Leveraging their individual positions as the official business and leisure tourism DMO’s for Kerry, KCB and KTIF are committed to encouraging, supporting, achieving and promoting economic sustainable outcomes within the Kerry tourism sector through the following objectives:

Area	SMART Objective	Key Performance Indicator	Related UN SDG
Business Events	KCB to undertake research project to measure economic and social impact of business events to Kerry so that targets to increase impact can be set by 2023	<p>Identification and review of proposed research methodology and tools completed by Q2 2022</p> <p>Successful implementation of research project, with measurable results by end of Q4 2022</p> <p>Targets set for 2023 and beyond</p>	
Leisure Tourism	KTIF to undertake research project to assess economic benefits from current visitation trends so that targets to increase impact can be set by 2023	<p>Identification and review of proposed research methodology and tools completed by Q2 2022</p> <p>Successful implementation of research project, with measurable results by end of Q4 2022</p> <p>Targets set for 2023 and beyond</p>	
Reporting	Process and tools to measure, monitor and report on economic performance within the Kerry tourism sector implemented by KCB & KTIF by end of 2022	<p>KCB & KTIF to undertake research on effective measurement tools</p> <p>KCB & KTIF to create reporting score card on social performance which can be shared with members</p> <p>KCB & KTIF to provide information on economic performance within the Kerry Tourism sector through the KCB & KTIF websites</p>	

Review and Communication

Working in consultation with our key industry partners and stakeholders, the Kerry County Sustainable Tourism Strategy has drawn on input from the boards of KCB and KTIF, the KTIF

Sustainability Committee, Kerry County Council, Kerry Airport, Kerry branch of The Irish Hotels Federation, Fáilte Ireland and other relevant industry stakeholders.

These industry partners/stakeholders have agreed to support the collective efforts of KCB and KTIF to achieve the goals set out in this strategy, which will be managed by the Kerry County Sustainable Tourism Management Team, whose members are:

Becky Hargrove, Manager, Kerry Convention Bureau

Tony Daly, Chair, Sustainability Committee, Kerry Tourism Industry Federation

Gerry O’Riordan, Sustainability Officer, Kerry County Council

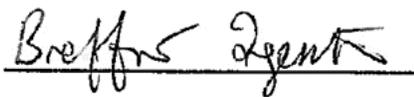
Each annual review will enable the Kerry County Sustainable Tourism Strategy team to adapt our strategy and policies to changing circumstances, at a local, national and international level.

However, we understand the importance of aiming for continuous improvement so an interim review of the strategy will be held every six months, to check in on progress and adjust/revise actions accordingly, if required.

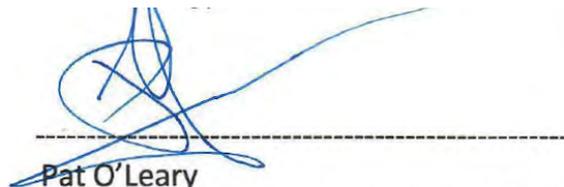
Regular communications to all key stakeholders within the Kerry County tourism industry will be undertaken, providing an update on the actions being undertaken by the Kerry County Sustainable Tourism Strategy team, relevant initiatives and supports that can be accessed and inviting tourism providers to share updates on their own sustainability achievements.

These communications will serve to provide ongoing encouragement to all our stakeholders, reminding them to maintain their commitment to be more environmentally friendly in their businesses and keeping them fully informed regarding the supports that are available locally, nationally and globally.

The preparation of the Kerry County Sustainable Tourism strategy has been overseen and approved by the following Senior Executives:



Breffni Ingerton
Chair, Kerry Convention Bureau



Pat O’Leary
Chair, Kerry Tourism Industry Federation