

Department of Environment, Climate and Communications,

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██████████
29-31 Adelaide Road,
Dublin,
D02 X285

By online submission

Date: 15/02/2024

Re: **Fáilte Ireland submission to DECC's
National (Climate) Adaptation Framework Consultation 2024**

To whom it may concern,

Introduction

Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority of Ireland, is pleased to submit our input for consideration regarding the draft *National (Climate) Adaptation Framework (NAF) Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland 2024*, as prepared by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC).

This submission has been prepared by Fáilte Ireland during the consultation process in response to the invitation on 19th Jan 2024.

Fáilte Ireland welcomes the opportunity to engage with DECC on the emerging National Adaptation Framework 2024 and to build on the well-established relationship between the Fáilte Ireland and the department.

The draft framework includes references relating to tourism and our input may allow the department to complete the plan. We hope that this submission aids the collaborative process that culminates in adoption of a new National Adaptation Framework 2024.

Fáilte Ireland's Role

Fáilte Ireland's role as the National Tourism Development Authority, is to support the long-term sustainable growth in the economic, social, cultural, and environmental contribution of tourism to Ireland. Like all sectors of the economy, tourism must play its part in helping Ireland meet its climate change targets. Doing this will require significant changes to all aspects of tourism. But in addition to the challenges, there are also opportunities to provide a sustainable tourism offering.

For over a decade, Fáilte Ireland has used the internationally recognised **VICE Model** for Sustainable Tourism which focuses on the interaction between Visitors (V), the industry (I) that serves them, the Community that hosts them (C) and their collective impact on and response to the Environment (E) to guide the future sustainable development of tourism.

Our approach aligns with the **United Nation's World Travel Organisation's (UNWTO)** definition of sustainable tourism:

"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."

As a government body, Fáilte Ireland are obligated under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 to help Ireland reach its legally binding target of delivering a reduction (from 2018 baseline) of 51% in greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2030 and achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

Tourism spans many areas of economic activity throughout the country. It is not a discrete sector, has impacts under key sectors, and has targets for reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 as outlined in the government document *"Climate Action Plan 2023 - Changing Ireland for the Better"*:

- Built Environment (Building better) - targeting commercial & residential buildings for 40-45% emissions reductions.
- Transport (Transforming how we travel) - targeting mobility for 50% emissions reductions.
- Business & Enterprise (Greening business & enterprise) - targeting industry & enterprises for 35% emissions reductions.

Fáilte Ireland has emphasised *Driving Climate Action* as a key Strategic Priority by helping tourism businesses contribute to targets set out for our industry in the national Climate Action Plan. This will be advanced through a range of supports for tourism businesses, including guidance, training, and best practice bespoke advisory at the individual business level. These actions ensure that Fáilte Ireland is supporting industry and the collective sector to drive change at business and the destination level, and to deliver on the targets set by Government by ensuring tourism plays its part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Fáilte Ireland also closely cooperates and partners with other state agencies and representative bodies, at local and national levels, to implement and champion positive and practical strategies that will benefit Irish tourism and its adaptation towards a net zero future.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Fáilte Ireland was appointed by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) as a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Champion in May 2023. We are working to bring awareness of the goals to our activities internally within our own operations, and externally in partnership with our stakeholders and customers. We understand the importance of sustainability principles in tourism and in the need for an adaptation framework to help the industry survive under a changing climate in Ireland.

The Objective of this Submission

Fáilte Ireland has prepared this submission to support and assist the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications in the formulation of the draft National Adaptation Framework 2024. The submission seeks to ensure the enhancement of tourism in Ireland. It has been prepared with inputs from sustainability and climate action expertise within Fáilte Ireland. It provides the department with a concise submission from the tourism authority dealing with sustainability and climate action. Fáilte Ireland promotes the incorporation of the principles of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for associated tourism policies.

Commentary on the Draft Plan

Fáilte Ireland is generally supportive of the draft framework and welcomes the opportunity to assist the department in preparing a new framework. The Authority is aware of the complex range of issues that the department must tackle, and our submission has been informed by these considerations.

The key comments the Authority would like to make in respect of the current draft plan are as follows:

Climate adaptation is a process seeking to minimize the costs (financial, environmental, societal) and maximize any opportunities by climate change. Fáilte Ireland supports proactive measures taken over time to build the resilience of our natural environment, economy and society posed by a changing climate.

Based on the NAF review document 2022, recommendations included the addition of three Sectoral Adaptation Plans (SAPs) including one targeting tourism. The Climate Change Advisory Council (CCAC) has also recommended that the Tourism Sector should develop an SAP (NAF 2022 p.56):

“The CCAC has recommended that the Tourism Sector should develop an SAP. This would appear to be an area where there is a lack of analysis of the impacts of climate change in an Irish context and an area where there is no clear ongoing work on this topic being undertaken via other Governmental structures.”

Fáilte Ireland supports the addition of a statutory Sectoral Adaptation Plan (SAP) for the tourism sector under a new NAF 2024.

We understand SAPs describe and assess the extent of the risks by climate change to the sector. SAP contingency plans are needed for tourism to address the risks posed by a changing climate and to ensure the climate resiliency of the sector. Fáilte Ireland will work in cooperation with other sectors and government bodies to improve adaptation coherence across the sectors and will adhere to relevant policy governance.

A few key points that frame our adaptation thinking include:

- Tourism is a cross cutting sector that depends on other sector developments in the economy and any adaptation process will require close cooperation in planning and implementation stages.
- Tourism in Ireland depends on nature and the protection of the natural environment is of critical importance to the economy and society.
- While the risks to visitors for certain outdoor tourism activities will be related directly to extreme weather events, concurrently,
- Some regions in Ireland (seasonal tourist distribution and tourist movements) may benefit from new economic activity due to more favourable weather conditions in some locations.

We support the points raised and actions proposed under following areas in the draft NAF 2024:

Document page	Topic	Reference
p.40	Opportunities for Ireland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Potential opportunities resulting from building resilience to climate change for Ireland. ➤ Ireland may achieve a comparative advantage over regions exposed to more extreme climate-related impacts.
p.95	Addition of Tourism as a Sector to include as a new Sectoral Adaptation Plan (SAP).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Based on Dept. Environment, Climate & Communications (DECC) and Dept. of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport, and Media (DTCAGSM) agreements to include additional sectors in the new NAF. Engage in a preparation of a Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Tourism.
p.98	Inclusion of Tourism in NAF 2024.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tourism is an important economic and community driver and can be impacted by climate change both directly and indirectly.
p.100	Cross-cutting interdependencies for policy issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Thematic climate change issues cross-cut government departments. ➤ The diversity of activities under Tourism cross-cuts many sectors.
p.148	Sectoral impacts associated with a changing climate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Extreme weather events (frequency & intensity) effects on infrastructure and historic sites. ➤ Outdoor tourism activities curtailed by unpredictable adverse weather conditions. Culture & heritage e.g. golfing, water sports, hiking trails.
p.150	Sectoral opportunities associated with a changing climate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Growth of ecology conscious tourism, environmental conservation, and community focused developments. ➤ Sustainable mobility/travel. ➤ Growth of domestic market due to increased warmer weather frequency – avoidance of travel abroad. ➤ Adaptation planning reduces risks of stranded assets.

We look forward in 2024 to the new National (Climate) Adaptation Framework and reiterate the commitment of Fáilte Ireland to working with the department on its delivery over the coming years.

Yours sincerely,



On behalf of, Fáilte Ireland



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