

# Tourism Recovery Taskforce

Minutes of Meeting		Video Conference	24 <sup>th</sup> June, 2020 10.00am
<b>Attendees:</b>		<b>Agenda</b>	
Ruth Andrews - Chair	Stephen Kavanagh	1. Minutes & matters arising  2. Survival Phase Recommendations – Draft TRT Interim Report  3. Work streams  3.1 Work Streams Updates  3.2 Work Streams Framework  4. AoB	
Eoghan Corry	Paul Kelly		
Martin Dalby	Eimear Killian		
Tom Enright	John McLaughlin		
Elaina Fitzgerald Kane	Pat O'Leary		
Niall Gibbons	Ken Spratt		
John Herlihy	Jane Stacey		
<b>Secretariat:</b>			
Maria Melia	Kenneth McMahon		
Colm O'Connor	Lisa Herlihy		
<b>Presentations:</b>			
Orla Carroll, Director Product Development, Fáilte Ireland			
Item	Details	Action	
1.	<p>Ruth Andrews, Chairperson, opened the meeting and welcomed the group.</p> <p>Minutes were taken as read. Proposer Eoghan Corry and seconder Elaina Fitzgerald Kane.</p> <p>Pre reads taken as read.</p> <p>A discussion ensued on a number of matters arising as referred to by the Chair, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ On review the Survival Phase Recommendations – Draft TRT Interim Report sent as a pre-read to all members as per agenda item two should have been headlined Initial report not Interim report.</li> <li>➤ The immediate priority for the July jobs initiative identified are:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General (economy wide) measures</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Agreed	

1. The tourism sector in particular would benefit from extending TWSS for a further period;
2. The zero interest rate for “warehousing” of taxes to be extended beyond 12 months to 24 months for the tourism sector in recognition of the expected slow rate of recovery of international travel and the seasonality of much of the sector;
3. Waiver of commercial rates to be extended (i) from 3 months to 12 months and (ii) to apply to all tourism businesses including those who remained open;

Tourism sector specific measures

4. A grant aid fund of €80m (current) to save vulnerable but viable businesses;
5. A grant aid fund of €36m (capital) for Covid-19 related capital expenditure designed to facilitate businesses remaining open or re-opening;
6. €32m investment in air access restoration and international marketing of Ireland now that the recovery is underway;
7. A temporary and targeted reduction in the 13.5% VAT rate would sharpen our competitiveness;

Other possible Tourism specific measures

8. Tax incentives such as a reduction in employer PRSI to incentivise staff in intensive sectors such as hospitality – perhaps as a bridge for a period of 2 years between the ending or phasing out of TWSS and full return of staff to employer payroll;
9. Expansion of the €500 tax free bonus

	<p>scheme available to employers for their employees. Suggestion is that the amount be increased to €1,000 with the requirement that the voucher be redeemed for domestic accommodation with perhaps additional top-up incentives being provided by industry.</p> <p>10. October mid term being split over two weeks depending on region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Members view the existing supports available from DBEI as not suitable for the majority of Tourism businesses and the requirement is for more targeted supports to help the industry for the survival phase.</li> <li>➤ Clarity is required on mass gatherings and an opportunity to engage with public health officials would be welcomed in order to understand the limitations and requirements.</li> </ul>	
2.	<p>Orla Carroll, Director Product Development, Fáilte Ireland presented on Financial Scheme Submissions followed by Q&amp;A.</p> <p>The draft initial report on survival phase recommendations was discussed in detail cognisant of the immediate priorities and the Financial Scheme Submissions and the following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The urgency in getting adaptation grants to businesses now so that they can re-open.</li> <li>➤ The requirement to speed up the process as items highlighted have been highlighted all along and the requirement now is for a commitment.</li> <li>➤ It was agreed that the initial report to the Minister will be for the immediate, absolute urgent interventions required between now and the end of the year.</li> <li>➤ The need to be cognisant that there is only one limited pot with a lot of industries competing for it and review our recommendations for the short, medium and long term in light of this.</li> <li>➤ The 14 day quarantine is the most urgent item facing tourism and the need to remove this which aligns with the Aviation taskforce.</li> <li>➤ October mid-term split out over two weeks would make a real difference to businesses and might be more palatable than delaying back to school for this</li> </ul>	Noted

	<p>year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Messaging needs to be clear and concise in report.</li> <li>➤ Messaging needs to be clear and directly from the Government, ideally the Taoiseach to encourage the public to go on staycations.</li> <li>➤ Staycation vouchers merits and downfalls were discussed. Look at possibility of linking destinations for staycations to the safety charter by Fáilte Ireland.</li> <li>➤ Requirement is for hospitality and tourism targeted supports as they are intertwined.</li> <li>➤ Media support in promoting Ireland for staycations.</li> <li>➤ In summary for the initial report there needs to be prioritization, urgency and presentation, need to position priorities, put a value/cost on proposals for the 1. Extension of wage subsidy schemes taking into account seasonal workers 2. Survival grant 3. Adaptation grant and 4. Working capital scheme.</li> <li>➤ Initial report needs to go to the Minister tomorrow Thursday 25/06/2020. The chair and secretariat will revise report based on feedback and send back out to all members today/tomorrow.</li> </ul>	
3.	<p>Work streams</p> <p>The Chair advised that work on-going in the work streams. Terms of reference circulated for the culture and heritage work stream and the tourism and competitiveness work stream and both work streams have had initial meetings.</p>	
3.1	<p><i>Consultation</i> work stream. The questionnaire went live last Friday evening and as of yesterday had over 550 submissions. Due to close this weekend. A report will issue of the findings in the following week. Representative groups and other key tourism businesses are submitting proposals that are uploaded to the questionnaire that need to be reviewed also.</p> <p>The chair suggested that the TRT will meet with 12 – 15 representative organisations and allow them 15-20 minutes to present their submissions.</p> <p>ITIC to present their survival/revival plan to the TRT next Wednesday.</p> <p>Following up on the call out to the CMO to meet with group.</p>	Noted

	<p>Also following up with DBEI to present to TRT at subsequent meeting.</p> <p>Stephen Kavanagh gave a brief update on the <i>International access and connectivity</i> work stream.</p>	
3.2	<p>Work streams framework</p> <p>The Chair thanked members for their feedback to date, currently working through the feedback. Will have a revised version for next weeks meeting.</p> <p>Project management and consultation should be in place in next 2 – 3 weeks.</p>	Noted
4.	<p>AOB</p> <p>Paul Kelly, Fáilte Ireland, advised that there is a new 30 second advert “Make a break for it” campaign encouraging staycations going live shortly in the domestic market. The secretariat will circulate advert to all members.</p>	
	Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 1 <sup>st</sup> July	