

Business Events Industry

Ireland's **GREEN TOOLKIT** for Business Events

A practical guide for event
organisers and professionals



MEET IN 
IRELAND

 **Fáilte
Ireland**

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An introduction to **Ireland's Green Toolkit for Business Events**

Promoting environmental sustainability in the Irish business events sector

Ireland's Green Toolkit for Business Events offers practical guidance to event organisers and professionals involved in the planning and delivery of business events hosted in Ireland—whether preparing a bid, coordinating logistics, or managing on-site execution. The toolkit helps organisers to reduce emissions, limit environmental impact, and ensure business events align with Ireland's national climate objectives.

Ireland's Green Toolkit for Business Events is especially useful for:

- ✓ Strengthening proposals with clear environmental commitments
- ✓ Aligning with Ireland's national sustainability goals
- ✓ Delivering confident, credible, low environmental impact business events

Packed with fresh ideas, top tips, practical checklists, and inspiring case studies, this toolkit helps embed sustainability into any business event – from the very early planning stages to the final event delivery. It also highlights a range of sustainability supports available from Fáilte Ireland, helping organisers create impactful, environmentally responsible business events.

Keep an eye out
for Top Tips and
Resources!



A message from

Fáilte Ireland

At Fáilte Ireland, we recognise that the future of Ireland's tourism sector depends on our collective commitment to sustainability.

As custodians of the environment and stewards of Ireland's global reputation as a leading destination for business events, we are taking proactive steps to embed sustainable practices into each event that is hosted in Ireland.

In 2025 Ireland unveiled a bold new vision for its business events sector with the launch of [Business Events 2030](#); a national strategy that represents a fundamental shift in how Ireland approaches business events.

Business Events 2030 is a product of collaboration between the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland and industry leaders. It is a strategy that is rooted in sustainable development, taking full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities. The strategy aims to make optimal use of environmental resources, respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, and ensure viable, long-term economic operations.

The Irish business events sector can become industry leaders by aligning with the government's environmental policy commitments across a variety of platforms including climate action; sustainability; reducing carbon emissions etc. Recognising environmental sustainability as a primary legacy outcome for events underscores its importance as a core value.

Fáilte Ireland is committed to empowering its stakeholders to plan and deliver events that minimise the environmental footprint. Together, we can ensure that Ireland remains not just a destination of choice but a destination of conscience for business events worldwide.

"Business Events 2030 not only enhances Ireland's reputation as a responsible and attractive destination for business events, while generating economic returns and driving employment, but it also aligns with global expectations for sustainable practices, thereby increasing Ireland's competitiveness in the market"



Paul Mockler
Head of Commercial Development





Fáilte Ireland

Championing the Sustainable Development Goals

Driving sustainable development across Ireland's business events sector

As part of the SDG Ambassadors Programme, led by the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment, Fáilte Ireland serves as an ambassador, demonstrating its leadership in advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across tourism.

Fáilte Ireland's key contributions to the SDG agenda:

- ✓ **Advocacy:** Promoting awareness and adoption of the SDGs across the tourism sector.
- ✓ **Support:** Assisting tourism businesses in implementing sustainable practices.
- ✓ **Integration:** Aligning strategic programmes and initiatives with the SDGs.
- ✓ **Vision:** Positioning Ireland as one of Europe's most sustainable tourism destinations.

Aligned with Ireland's business events strategy – Business Events 2030, the focus areas outlined below reflect the most relevant environmental and tourism-related ambitions.



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

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



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

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.



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

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.



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

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.



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

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.



13 CLIMATE ACTION

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.



17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

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



Kylemore Abbey, Co. Galway

Section 1

Ireland's Environmental Advantage

A natural choice for sustainable events

Ireland offers a compelling blend of natural beauty, progressive sustainability policies, and community-driven tourism initiatives. Known as the 'Emerald Isle', its lush landscapes, rugged coastlines, and rich biodiversity provide an inspiring backdrop for nature-aligned events.

Backed by its business events strategy, Business Events 2030, Ireland's commitment to sustainability is reflected in strong government and industry collaboration, high environmental standards, and practical and financial supports for event organisers.

With access to sustainable venues, green transport options, and eco-conscious suppliers, Ireland makes it easier to plan and deliver impactful business events that align with climate goals.

Leveraging Ireland's sustainability accolades in bids and proposals



Sustainability is now a key factor in how business event proposals are evaluated and how destinations are selected. Clients increasingly expect clear, practical demonstrations of environmental responsibility. For organisers in Ireland, this presents a valuable opportunity to align with both client expectations and national climate goals. By integrating environmental priorities into bids and proposals, highlighting Ireland's unique sustainability strengths, organisers can showcase a competitive edge and contribute meaningfully to climate action.

At a glance

Sustainability in Ireland



8 National Parks
and 600+ Natura 2000
sites protecting land and
marine biodiversity



**430+ Special Areas
of Conservation**
and 166+ Special
Protection Areas



89 Blue Flag Beaches
and 10 Blue Flag Marinas
(2025) – a European leader



**500 kilometres
of Greenways**
and 4 blueways



**5 Business Events
Hubs rank in top
40 GDS-Index**



**Sustainable
Certification**
100% of Ireland's convention
centres have achieved
environmental certification



**3 UNESCO Global
Geoparks**
Burren and Cliffs of Moher,
Copper Coast,
Cuilcagh Lakelands



**Wind and
Solar Energy**
2nd in Europe for
wind and solar energy
production per capita



**Home to Bord Bia's
Origin Green Sustainability
Programme**
Pioneering sustainable
food and drink



Food Waste Charter
A successful government
backed initiative

Need to know

Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS-Index) Rankings

Ireland has established itself as a leader in sustainable business events, with its business events hubs (Dublin, Cork, Kerry, Shannon Region and Galway) all ranked in the top 40 sustainable destinations on the Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS-Index), demonstrating a commitment to sustainable tourism.

This prestigious index evaluates cities and regions worldwide on their sustainability performance, assessing factors such as environmental policies, carbon reduction efforts, circular economy initiatives, and community engagement.



Five Business Events Hubs Ranked in Top 40 GDS-Index

Dublin
CONVENTION BUREAU

CORK
CONVENTION BUREAU

KERRY
CONVENTION BUREAU

Shannon Region
CONFERENCE & SPORTS BUREAU

GALWAY
CONVENTION BUREAU

Ranking and Results

Below you can use the search criteria to find or compare specific destinations by region, city size, or percentage improvement to find your perfect sustainable business destination.

Explore our comprehensive list of all GDS-indexed destinations and their overall performance scores.

You can also see how each destination has performed in each category, providing a more detailed analysis of their sustainability efforts.

City size: Category: Region: Sort by:

Clear filter

20 results



GDS-Index Leaders
on a global stage

[Learn more](#)



At a glance

Sustainability in Ireland's Business Events Hubs



Galway



University of Galway is a UN SDG Champion



Atlantic Technological University (ATU) hosts a sustainability observatory



84% hotels/attractions hold sustainability certifications



Galway is part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network

Clare



Home to UNESCO Global Geopark, one of three in Ireland



Pioneered Ireland's Geopark Code of Practice for Sustainable Tourism



Ireland's first certified sustainable tourism destination (GSTC)



Home to Ireland's first carbon-neutral and B-Corp Certified hotels

Limerick



Gateway to the Wild Atlantic Way, one of the longest defined coastal routes in the world



Awarded the European Green Leaf (2020) for air quality and noise levels



Smarter Travel Project - encouraging more sustainable, low-carbon transport



University of Limerick holds a Green Flag Award (An Taisce)



Dublin



The Convention Centre Dublin is the world's first carbon-neutral convention centre



EARTHCHECK

Member of the EarthCheck Sustainable Destinations programme



Dublin Bay BIOSPHERE

A designated UNESCO biosphere, and only capital city biosphere in Europe



DublinAirport

Dublin Airport is carbon-neutral since 2020

Kerry



Home to the longest section of the Wild Atlantic Way



Ireland's first International UNESCO Dark Sky Reserve



Home to Skellig Micheal – UNESCO World Heritage Site



Killarney National Park - 500 kilometres of woodland, wildlife and ecology

Cork



Awarded Mission Label by European Commission for Climate Action Plan



Sustainability Certification held by over 70% of Cork Hotels



Cork Airport is committed to achieving Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050



Cork was shortlisted in the 2024 European Capital of Smart Tourism Competition



Adare Manor, Co. Limerick

Section 2

The 7-Step Sustainable Event Roadmap

Sustainability is a thread that runs through every stage of successful event planning

This 7-step roadmap mirrors the natural rhythm of event delivery, offering structure, shared language, and practical focus areas.

At each step, sustainability is integrated intentionally, supporting better outcomes for delegates, clients, communities, and the destination.



Bringing the 7-Step Sustainable Event Roadmap to Life

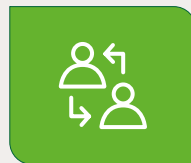


This practical checklist can be used to navigate the 7-Step Sustainable Event Roadmap.

[Download the Checklist](#)



1. Set the Vision



2. Align and Engage



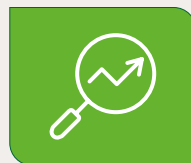
3. Source Sustainably



4. Design for Sustainability



5. Activate on Site



6. Measure and Evaluate



7. Storytelling

Establish the event's sustainability vision from the outset. Clarify what success looks like, align with Ireland's climate ambition, and embed environmental and social goals into the event's core purpose.	Purpose and Intention  
Create and share an event sustainability policy to set the tone. Clear, consistent messaging builds trust with clients, delegates, suppliers, and internal teams, and lays the groundwork for powerful engagement and storytelling.	Policy, Promotion and Engagement  
Choose suppliers and procure with purpose. Sustainable procurement is a strategic tool for reducing event footprint, supporting local enterprise, and delivering meaningful ESG outcomes.	Procurement and Collaboration  
Make sustainability visible through smart design. Prioritise certified venues, low-carbon transport, efficient layouts with accessibility in mind, reduced materials, and circular approaches that enhance the delegate experience.	Venue, Logistics and Delegate Journey   
Turn plans into action. Empower delivery teams and suppliers to follow through on commitments. Make sustainability efforts visible, inclusive, and tangible throughout the live event experience.	On-Site Delivery and Implementation  
Track outcomes and report transparently. Use data, case studies, and delegate feedback to capture learning and legacy, strengthening future planning and positioning the business event as a sustainability leader.	Measurement and Reporting 
Clear communication of sustainability efforts and achievements builds trust, inspires engagement, and amplifies impact. Plan how to share the story – through social media, newsletters, video, or other channels – and link it to the relevant SDGs to help promote global progress.	Telling the Sustainability Story 

Case Study

Meitheal: Leading by example in sustainable business events

Meitheal is Fáilte Ireland's flagship tourism trade event, bringing over 250 international buyers from more than 20 countries together with over 380 Irish tourism businesses. In recent years, Meitheal has become a live demonstration of how the 7-Step Sustainable Event Strategy can be applied in practice, with an ambition to become the most sustainable business event of its kind in Ireland.



Meitheal follows 7-Step Sustainable Event Roadmap



Step 1: Set the Vision

- A three-year Sustainability Policy drives Meitheal's ambition, with year-on-year improvement a core principle.
- Vision anchored in Ireland's business events strategy and national climate targets.
- Aligned with 7 UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- Collaborated with EarthCheck on a sustainable event verification process.



Step 2: Align and Engage

- Meitheal Sustainability Policy communicated to suppliers, venues, and partners.
- Supplier engagement based on verified sustainability credentials (e.g., ISO 20121, ISO 14001, Origin Green).
- Sustainability messaging integrated into delegate communications and on-site signage.
- Secondary school students hosted on-site for a sustainability-focused project.



Step 3: Source Sustainably

- Killarney chosen as host destination for its GDS-Index Top 20 ranking.
- Key venues hold recognised sustainability certifications (e.g., INEC Arena ISO 20121, ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO 45001; The Europe Hotel Green Hospitality Silver Award and strong local sourcing, including produce from an owned local farm; The Brehon Hotel enrolled in Fáilte Ireland's Climate Action Programme).
- 75% of food and beverage served at Meitheal sourced locally.
- Partnerships with sustainable transport, AV, signage, and materials suppliers.



Step 4: Design for Sustainability

- Coach transfers to Meitheal encouraged instead of short-haul flights to reduce emissions.
- Familiarisations trips designed with sustainability criteria, certified attractions, and low-carbon activities.
- Reuse of event assets such as printed backdrops from previous years.
- Venues designed to accommodate accessibility requirements.



Step 5: Activate On Site

- Visible waste separation stations and recycling points.
- Pre-ordering of food to minimise waste.
- Refillable water stations and measures to minimise single-use plastics.
- Venue energy and water conservation policies fully applied during the event.



Step 6: Measure and Evaluate

- Carbon footprint measured using the Fáilte Ireland Business Events Carbon Calculator.
- Benchmarking against Meitheal 2024 to target per-delegate emissions reduction.
- Local sourcing % recorded; KPIs such as euros per kilogram CO₂ considered.
- Waste measured by type and reported via external consultants.
- Post-event sustainability reporting is part of the commitment.



Step 7: Storytelling

- Generated awareness of Meitheal's sustainability story through communication channels.

Need to know

Clarity and Credibility in Sustainability Storytelling

How to Avoid Greenwashing

Sustainability is now a central pillar of event design and delivery. Alongside this shift comes a growing responsibility to communicate environmental actions clearly, credibly, and accurately. Evolving national and European legislation is designed to tackle greenwashing and ensure that any environmental claims made in the marketplace are clear, verifiable and evidence-based.

Jargon Buster



What is Greenwashing?

Greenwashing is when a company claims, through its marketing communications, to be more environmentally conscious and responsible than it actually is in practice. Greenwashing misleads customers through exaggerated claims of the environmental benefits that derive from products, services or company actions.

Ballynahinch Castle, Co. Galway

Guidelines for clear and credible reporting of business events

Focus on measurable, specific claims

Avoid vague or unqualified statements such as "eco-friendly" or "green event." Instead, reference specific standards or verified outcomes. For example: "This event is hosted in a venue certified to ISO 20121, 80% of event waste was diverted from landfill through composting and recycling."

Prioritise mitigation over offsetting

Claims based on carbon offsetting alone are no longer sufficient. Organisers are advised to first demonstrate how emissions were reduced at source – through choices around venue, transport, food and procurement.

Use recognised standards and third-party data

Environmental claims are most credible when supported by verified sources. These can include:

- ✓ Independent certifications (e.g. ISO 14001, GDS-Index ratings)
- ✓ Supplier-provided data (e.g. venue energy usage, waste diversion rates)
- ✓ Use of recognised tools, such as the Fáilte Ireland Business Events Carbon Calculator

Be transparent and accessible

Any sustainability claims made in bids, proposals, websites, or promotional materials should be backed by documentation or reports that can be reviewed by clients, delegates or stakeholders.

If a claim is made, be ready to prove it. If it can't be proved, don't say it.



How Fáilte Ireland communicated the Meitheal Sustainability Story

Watch the video





Gap of Dunloe, Killarney National Park, Co. Kerry

Section 3

Designing Business Events for Impact

From footprint to handprint – rethinking event impact

Sustainable event planning has traditionally focused on minimising harm – reducing emissions, cutting waste, and conserving resources. While these efforts remain essential, today's leading events also consider their handprint: the positive impact they leave behind. An event's footprint reflects what it consumes; its handprint reflects what it contributes – to communities, the environment, and long-term sustainability.

The chart on the following page outlines examples of activities that support sustainable event design while also creating a positive, lasting legacy. These dual goals – reducing environmental footprint and increasing positive handprint – can be achieved simultaneously. The decisions made across key areas will shape how visible, tangible, and measurable the event's sustainability impact becomes.



Examples of activities that support sustainable event design – leaving a lasting legacy.



Ha'Penny Bridge, River Liffey, Dublin City

Minimise footprint



- ✓ Reducing travel emissions➔
- ✓ Eliminating single-use plastics➔
- ✓ Lowering venue energy use➔
- ✓ Printing less➔
- ✓ Consolidating logistics➔
- ✓ Choosing green venues.....➔
- ✓ Tracking carbon➔
- ✓ Minimising/diverting food waste.....➔
- ✓ Using fewer materials➔
- ✓ Limiting water use➔
- ✓ Avoiding delegate gifts.....➔

Maximise handprint



- ✓ Funding biodiversity projects
- ✓ Partnering with social enterprises
- ✓ Co-investing in energy upgrades
- ✓ Enabling digital engagement
- ✓ Using hyper-local suppliers
- ✓ Hosting sustainability training
- ✓ Sharing carbon reports
- ✓ Piloting circular models
- ✓ Creating re-usable signage
- ✓ Supporting water conservation
- ✓ Donating to local causes

Inspiring Environmental Impact Stories

35th International Geographical Congress



- ✓ **When:** August 2024
- ✓ **Where:** Dublin City University
- ✓ **Theme:** 'Celebrating a World of Difference'
- ✓ **Objective:** Promote interdisciplinary research and encourage collaboration across different geographic disciplines and related fields

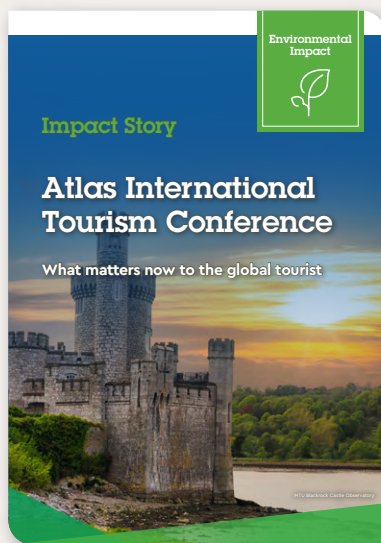
This conference was aligned with the following UN SDGs:



Sustainability was core to the event planning and here are some of the environmental highlights:

- **Public engagement:** The congress included a public engagement programme with events, interactive workshops, and outreach initiatives. Events like the "City Climate Walk" and "Mapping Ireland" through Time engaged almost 300 members of the public, adding societal impact to the congress. A core goal was to bring the congress beyond the university campus to generate wider educational benefits.
- **Carbon mitigation:** The Congress was hosted in DCU which is part of the Dublin City Council de-carbonising zone. The event raised funds through an optional environmental levy for delegates, which will support carbon insetting initiatives on university campuses in Ireland as a legacy project.
- **Hybrid event:** An innovative hybrid event was co-hosted with the Royal Geographical Society in London.
- **Water and Waste Management:** Delegates were encouraged to bring their own water bottles, and water refill stations were provided, eliminating the use of single-use plastics. Managing food waste by requiring pre-notification if delegates did not require lunch resulted in minimal food waste.

Atlas International Tourism Conference



- ✓ **When:** September 2022
- ✓ **Where:** Munster Technological University, Cork
- ✓ **Theme:** 'What matters now to the global tourist?'
- ✓ **Objective:** Address challenges facing the tourism and leisure industries

This conference was aligned with the following UN SDGs:



The Atlas International Tourism Conference had a significant environmental impact and below are some of the key highlights and outcomes:

- The newly extended reach of ATLAS as an advocate worldwide for sustainability was a major step forward, particularly driven by the presence of so many new members coming together in Cork.
- Responsible consumption was practiced, including the eradication of single use plastics, with food waste measures put in place such as preordered food and the sourcing of locally produced and sustainably accredited food where possible.
- A 'Leave No Waste' slogan was communicated with delegates and other stakeholders.
- A conference partnership with Cork city bikes was forged, with bicycles provided at The Kingsley Hotel.
- Diversity, inclusion and equity was a focus area and as a direct output of the conference, a new 'Inclusive Access to Education' programme was developed.
- The conference organisers kept the local community at the core of the conference and aligned their programme to Cork City's SDGs, exemplifying how SDGs set at a regional level can filter to create sustainable business events.



Cobh, Co. Cork

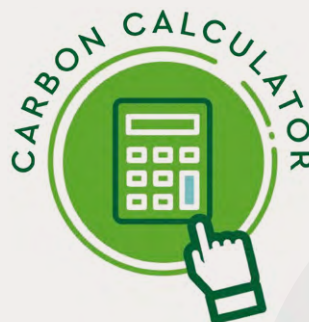
Section 4

What Fáilte Ireland can offer

Fáilte Ireland offers a comprehensive suite of supports to help event organisers deliver impactful, environmentally responsible events that align with global sustainability standards

Whether bidding for an international conference, designing low-carbon delegate experiences, or measuring and communicating environmental impact, event organisers can access a range of tools and programmes for guidance.

From destination subvention to carbon footprint tracking and tailored climate action planning, these supports empower organisers to create events that leave a meaningful legacy – for attendees, communities, and the environment.



Destination Subvention Framework



Fáilte Ireland offers a range of subvention supports for international business events to help organisers deliver exceptional events. Financial assistance during the bidding process enables event organisers to create and present winning bid documents and presentations. Site inspection funding is also available to support costs associated with travel and accommodation for key decision makers to attend site inspections.

In addition, Fáilte Ireland has introduced a new **Destination Subvention Framework**, designed to incentivise conferences that generate positive economic, social, and environmental impacts. Aligned with Ireland business events strategy, Business Events 2030, this funding model encourages event organisers to go beyond traditional metrics and deliver conferences that create a positive impact on communities and support sustainability.

Conference organisers have the potential to unlock up to €30 per international delegate for conferences that;

- ✓ Align with key priority sectors and themes
- ✓ Promote regionality, seasonality and extended duration
- ✓ Demonstrate clear potential for leaving a lasting legacy
- ✓ Show strong commitment to sustainability
- ✓ Engage and support local suppliers

Fáilte Ireland Destination Subvention for International Business Events

Guidelines,
Terms &
Conditions



Destination subvention
and eligibility criteria for
international business events

[Read more](#)



Business Events Carbon Calculator



In a world of rising expectations, measuring an event's environmental impact is a strategic and reputational essential. That is why Fáilte Ireland has created the **Business Events Carbon Calculator** – a practical event-specific tool that helps event organisers understand, reduce, and report on their carbon footprint.

Whether bidding, planning, or reporting on a business event in Ireland, this tool provides a credible, internationally-aligned foundation for environmental accountability.

Created in partnership with EarthCheck and aligned with the Greenhouse Gas Protocol, the calculator ensures that the data and approach is consistent with internationally recognised standards.

What does the Business Events Carbon Calculator track?

- ✓ **Delegate Travel:** Distance travelled, and type of transport used
- ✓ **Meals and Catering:** Menu design and number of meals served
- ✓ **Venue Energy Use:** Energy performance of the main event venue
- ✓ **Accommodation:** Emissions associated with overnight stays for delegates

By analysing these areas, organisers can identify opportunities to reduce emissions, operational costs and enhance the sustainability of their events.



If you have any queries on any of our supports, please contact us at SustainableImpactTeam@failteireland.ie

Climate Action Programme

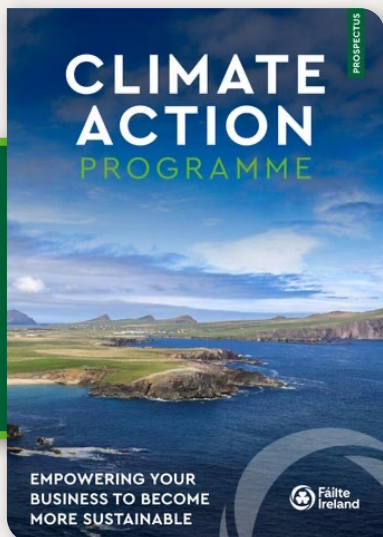


Fáilte Ireland's Climate Action Programme provides hands-on support and investment advice for tourism businesses aiming to become more sustainable.

As part of the Climate Action Programme, businesses receive an expert advisor, who is fully subsidised by Fáilte Ireland for three years. This dedicated advisor will mentor businesses on a one-to-one basis and help to develop a sustainability action plan that is tailored to each unique need and goal.

Benefits of joining the programme:

- ✓ Cut costs through reduced consumption and improved efficiency
- ✓ Get ongoing expert advisor support and resources
- ✓ Boost brand's image and reputation
- ✓ Lower emissions to meet national targets
- ✓ Upskill teams with bespoke training



Discover how the Climate Action Programme works and how to get involved

[Learn more](#)



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