

Shannon Region Sustainability Strategy 2021-2023



Introduction

The Shannon Region Conference & Sports Bureau is a public-private partnership and the official events bureau for Ireland's Shannon Region. The concept behind the bureau was to establish a public private partnership where competitors could work cooperatively to win valuable high impact Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events 'MICE' business through sustainable business practices.

A Sustainable Destination

- Limerick is a designated Green Leaf City. In 2020 Limerick was commended for its ongoing investments leading to improved air quality and noise levels. Limerick is also Ireland's first digital city integrating several public services, creating smart homes and buildings, energy districts and smart neighbourhoods.
- The UNESCO GEO Park located in The Burren, Co. Clare has a vibrant Eco Tourism Network. Co. Clare is also home to Ireland's only two Carbon Neutral Hotels: Hotel Doolin and The Falls Hotel in Ennistymon.
- Limerick is now 3 years on the Global Destination Sustainability INDEX and has increased its scoring by 10% in 2020. Clare made its first entry on the index in 2020. The GDS Index is a collaborative business initiative created to help destinations, convention bureaus and event planners drive the adoption and recognition of sustainable practices in their regions.
- Limerick is leading a multi-million European project that has seen Limerick unveiled as one of two EU Lighthouse cities that have been selected for a major climate change pilot programme.
- The University of Limerick holds a Green Flag Award from An Taisce. The award recognises their involvement in environmental education, management and action in enhancing sustainability on campus.

Mission Statement

We want to build on our existing credentials to further support the region in achieving its sustainable objectives. Our goal is to improve awareness and drive the adoption of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals in the tourism and events sector of The Shannon Region.

Strategy Background

The Sustainability Strategy aligns with the following:

County Clare Tourism Strategy 2030	Clare County Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019 – 2024	Limerick City and County Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019 – 2024	Limerick Tourism Development Strategy 2019 – 2023
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The strategy is also aligned to the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with particular focus being given to the following:



Social Objectives

	SMART Objective	KPI	UN SDG
Trade Members	Currently, an estimated one third of all food produced for human consumption is wasted. In Ireland, we generate approximately 1 million tonnes of food waste every year. We want to educate our members on how to reduce their food waste costs.	We will work towards reducing food waste among our member hotels by partnering with Savour Food (a food waste reduction initiative for businesses) we currently have member hotels in both Limerick and Clare and the goal is to have 5 from each region participate in this initiative by the end of 2022.	
Community Engagement	Support the regions Universities and Colleges in integrating sustainability into their tourism and event management curriculum.	Collaborate on at least one project per year with either a University or College in the region which will help advance social innovation. We will aim to have collaborated on one project by the end of 2022.	  

Community Engagement	Engage with local organizations to share knowledge, information, and learnings that will help them improve their understanding of sustainability.	Organise or support one event annually that will encourage local organizations to improve their performance when it comes to sustainability. We will aim to have organised/supported one event by the end of 2022.	
Event Planners	Offer meeting and event planners the opportunity to support local community projects and causes.	Provide all meeting and event planners with information on local CSR activities. Ensure this information is up to date on our website.	
Culture	Involve all bureau staff in the ongoing implementation of the Sustainability Strategy and Policy.	We will update our strategy at least once annually in consultation with staff and other stakeholders where necessary.	

		Train all new and existing staff with regards to the sustainability strategy and their roles and responsibilities in its delivery.	
Reporting	Measure, monitor and report on social performance.	Provide information on performance within the bureau through an annual sustainability progress report that will be available on our website.	

Environmental Objectives:

	SMART Objective	KPI	UN SDG
Accreditation	Increase the number of our member businesses that have a 3rd party sustainability certification. Currently 43% of hotels in Clare and 24% of hotels in Limerick have a 3 rd party sustainability certification. The goal is to have at least 70% of hotels in Clare and	Ensure that all bureau member businesses are given access to training either organised or supported by The Shannon Region Conference and Sports Bureau by the end of 2022.	

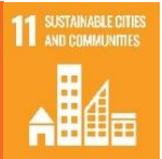
	50% of hotels in Limerick certified by the end of 2022.		
Accreditation	Increase the number of event agencies that have a 3 rd party sustainability certification and a formal written sustainability policy.	Ensure that all event agencies are given access to training either organised or supported by The Shannon Region Conference and Sports Bureau by the end of 2022.	
Trade Members	Organise/support yearly sustainability training for bureau trade members.	Ensure that all bureau members are given access to sustainability training either organised or supported by The Shannon Region Conference and Sports Bureau by the end of 2022. Promotion of any relevant industry wide training opportunities to all bureau members on an ongoing basis throughout the year.	
Trade Members	Support one destination wide policy, initiative or programme that	Promotion will be through our website, social media channels and other	

	specifically targets hotels, restaurants and caterers with a goal to increase reducing, reusing, recycling and reporting on resources.	communication channels like ezines, direct mails etc. on an ongoing basis.	 
Meeting and Event Attendees	Develop a programme to financially incentivise event participants to use public transport.	Engage with Bus Eireann (the state-owned company that runs bus services across all major towns and cities in Ireland) to discuss implementing such a programme.	 
Meeting and Event Attendees	Promote the use of soft mobility forms of transport (walking, public transport, bicycles) to event organisers and participants.	Ensure all event organisers and participants are made aware of the soft mobility forms of transport available.	 
Meeting and Event Organisers and Attendees	Continue with our efforts of encouraging conference organisers and delegates to participate in our carbon offsetting programmes.	Ensure all event organisers are offered a carbon offsetting programme and aim to have at least 10 conferences per year participate in one.	 

Meeting and Event Organisers and Attendees	Update our guide to running green events as it was created in 2012.	Provide all meeting and event organisers with access to this updated guide. The guide will include details of how to embed the SDGs on to events.	
Measurement and Reporting	Currently a lot of the data for the environmental section of the GDS Index is only available on a national level, to improve our scores going forward we need this information on a county/regional scale.	Engage with both the councils along with the energy policy statistical support unit to advise of the importance of having figures available on a local level as opposed to just national and check the feasibility around implementing this.	 

Economic Objectives:

	SMART Objective	KPI	UN SDG
Culture	To strengthen the economic growth of the local community.	We will work towards this by firstly evaluating our current purchasing strategy to compare how many of our suppliers are	 

		local versus national and international. We will then revise our procurement policy to ensure that we are not only supporting local suppliers but also locally produced products. We will aim to have this completed by the end of 2022.	
Culture	Promote wellbeing and lifelong learning opportunities within the workplace.	By providing staff with access to education and training for their own personal development while also looking after their well being within the workplace through an open culture and mental health supports on an ongoing basis.	 
Reporting	Measure, monitor and report on economic performance.	Provide information on performance within the bureau through an annual sustainability progress report that will be available on our website.	 

Consultative Process

The creation of this Strategy involved widespread consultation and buy in from our industry partners and stakeholders. This includes the board of directors of The Shannon Region Conference and Sports Bureau and members of the bureau including: The Irish Hotels Federations, Shannon Airport, Shannon Heritage, Thomond Park Stadium, Limerick City and County Council, Clare County Council, Limerick Chamber, University of Limerick, Limerick Institute of Technology and Mary Immaculate College.

A series of workshops over a 4-month period were undertaken to draw on the expectations and ambitions of the wider trade membership. The board of directors of the Bureau and the Fáilte Ireland Business Tourism Team were involved and engaged at all times as the plan progressed.

Extensive desk and web research including alignment with existing strategies and action plans played a key role in the finalisation of this roadmap. Strategic Plans for Agencies like Failte Ireland, IDA, Shannon Group, Enterprise Ireland, Clare County Council, Limerick City and County Councils were checked to ensure the business tourism message is working in tandem with what is already out in the international marketplace representative of the Shannon region brand.

The goals of this strategy will be implemented by The Shannon Region Conference and Sports Bureau team with the assistance of our industry partners and stakeholders.

Post Covid Learnings

The Covid 19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on the world. It brought international travel and tourism to a halt, the effect of which on businesses has been catastrophic. The impacts of the pandemic are likely to continue for sectors such as tourism, events and aviation as easing restrictions around mass gatherings and international travel lag behind. It is expected that 2019 levels of business will not be reached again until 2025/2026. Our immediate response has been and continues to be to support our industry by keeping them informed of recovery support schemes and grants that are available to them.

While the restoration of international travel and tourism is critical to our economic recovery, safety and assurance will be important factors for travelers going forward and so we endeavour to provide accurate, reliable, up to date and easy to access information on health and safety protocols on our website.

After a chaotic year and the anxieties of numerous lockdowns it is evident that we will see a rise in Wellness Tourism. Our location on the west coast of Ireland boasting some of the most spectacular scenery in the country makes this a perfect opportunity for us. While we already have certain experiences on offer, we plan on significantly strengthening this sector by enhancing our offerings to include some rare options like foraging walks and farm experiences. We also hope this will assist to aid over tourism by helping to disperse travelers to less visited areas. We plan on adding a new wellness section to our website to further enhance our efforts.

We have seen a decrease in over the top and excessive consumption over the past year as consumers are more mindful of what they are buying and where it comes from. The need to support local is greater than ever. As a result, we will continue to where possible source goods, services and works with a reduced environmental impact. We will continue to obtain local and sustainable goods and services and contract local suppliers.

Sustainable Meetings Destination

The Shannon Region has no shortage of both greenery and green initiatives.

The Shannon Region Conference & Sports Bureau is constantly striving to work with our members to innovate and improve on new ways to be greener than before, pushing to bring sustainability to the forefront of the industry and at the heart of what we do. Working closely in partnership with the National Tourist Development Body; Fáilte Ireland, we share the same mandate, mission, values and vision when it comes to sustainability. SRCSB wants to work with our suppliers and community to make The Shannon Region a sustainable destination for MICE events and tourism.

Shannon Region Conference & Sports Bureaus Green Procurement Policy is a process where we seek to source goods, services or works with a reduced environmental impact. We commit to promoting green procurement, to support our Sustainable Destination Strategy and to align with both Ireland's environmental and wider sustainable development objectives and the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. We endeavour to minimise the environmental 'footprints' of our procurement activities by purchasing products and services that cause minimal adverse environmental impacts while offering high quality products and services at competitive prices.

We support clients in their search for a venue that cares for the environment as much as we do, The Shannon Region has a range of venues with environmental and sustainability policies that will assist in the reduction of an event's carbon footprint.

We help clients make an easy and well-informed choice with our list of Green Meeting suppliers who are as passionate about the environment and sustainability as we are.



Karen Brosnahan
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