

VISITCORK

SUSTAINABILITY RESOURCES FOR THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

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SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IS DEFINED BY THE UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM AND UN WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION 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.”

Investing in sustainability initiatives throughout the tourism sector is not only important in contributing to our national target of halving greenhouse emissions by 2030 and achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, but it is also vital for competitiveness. In order to remain competitive in attracting business and leisure tourists, Ireland must demonstrate a real commitment to sustainability.

The following guide has been compiled by Visit Cork (Pure Cork and Cork Convention Bureau) to assist businesses in the Cork region to better understand what we mean by ‘sustainability’ in the context of the tourism and hospitality industry. We hope that the information, resources and programmes outlined in this guide will help you to develop your own sustainability strategy, which will ultimately lead to cost savings and enhanced visibility for your brand, as well as contribute to more positive environmental, social and economic impacts across the region.

Visit Cork’s sustainability initiatives are supported by our board and key stakeholders, including Cork City Council, Cork County Council, Fáilte Ireland, Cork Chamber, Cork Airport and the Irish Hotels Federation (Cork branch). The guide will be kept under review and we welcome any feedback about additional websites or useful programmes that should be included.

GENERAL SUSTAINABILITY RESOURCES FOR THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

- Global Sustainable Tourism Council
- Global Destination Sustainability Movement
- UN World Tourism Organization
- Sustainable Tourism in Ireland: Understanding the Opportunity (Fáilte Ireland, 2022)
- Delivering a Sustainable Tourism Industry (Irish Tourism Industry Confederation, 2022)

VOLUNTARY CHARTERS AND COMMITMENTS TO SUSTAINABILITY

You can demonstrate your intent to embrace sustainability and make positive changes by signing up to a national or global charter (themes such as eliminating litter, food waste, general waste). This can be not only a positive PR story, but also a public declaration of your commitment.

- Leave No Trace Ireland
- One Planet Plate
- Food Waste Charter
- Climate Neutral Now (UN)
- MyWaste.ie for Business
- Repak Ireland Plastic Pledge

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

• Fáilte Ireland Employer Excellence Programme

The Fáilte Ireland Employer Excellence Programme has been developed to support businesses to drive great employee engagement, and continuously build the appeal of their workplace. It spotlights excellent employers and help to position the tourism sector as a rewarding and attractive place to work.

• Cork Convention Bureau Social Sustainability Programmes in Cork

Take a look at some of the community engagement projects and programmes promoted by Cork Convention Bureau for ideas on how to leave a positive impact on the region.

SUSTAINABLE SUPPLIER LISTS

Think carefully about your purchasing habits and put in place a sustainable procurement policy for your organisation. Sourcing products locally will cut down on your carbon footprint, and choosing suppliers that are committed to using environmentally friendly materials, and have good workplace practices in place (fair labour, diversity and equality, community support) is all an important part of the sustainability process. Start to create your own ‘sustainable supplier’ lists, or take a look at some of the following to start:

- Origin Green - Approved suppliers
- Fifty Shades Greener – Supplier List
- Community Resources Network Ireland - Members

PLASTIC REDUCTION

Did you know that up to **50% of plastics produced in the world are destined for single-use** purposes? Furthermore, it’s estimated that more than **10 million tons** of plastic is dumped into our oceans every year! (Source: plasticoceans.org)

The tourism sector can play a significant role in helping to reduce our global carbon footprint, through the elimination of single-use plastic (SUPs) and a commitment to replace, reduce, and recycle other plastics throughout the supply chain.

For more information on how to reduce plastic consumption and eliminate SUPs in your business see the resources below:

- UNWTO Global Tourism Plastics Initiative
- PlasticSmart GREENMark
- Tips for Eliminating Single Use Plastics (Irish Hotels Federation)
- Repak Members’ Plastic Pledge – Guidelines for Hotels
- Sustainable Hospitality Alliance – Plastic Factsheet
- Zero Waste Europe – Ireland Factsheet



FOOD AND HOSPITALITY SECTOR

• EPA Resources for the Hospitality Sector

A 'Green Recovery' provides an opportunity for sectors to embed sustainability and climate action into their businesses by reducing water use, waste and energy use. The EPA has developed step by step guidance for this transition through a series of factsheets and case studies.

• Good Food Ireland

Good Food Ireland is built on sustainable principles, a commitment to prioritising local Irish ingredients, supporting Irish farmers, food producers and fishermen, benefiting local communities and safeguarding the future livelihoods of local people. All businesses are inspected before attaining membership, in order to ensure that they reach the high standards required for endorsement as premium food and drink experiences of the island of Ireland.

• Less Food Waste More Profit

This guide aims to inform people within the food service industry of the significant issue of food waste and the potential solutions. Originally published in 2010, it has been updated based on the work of the 2018 EPA research project 'Reducing Commercial Food Waste in Ireland'.

• Food Waste Charter – Hospitality Resources

Ireland's Food Waste Charter is a national initiative led by the EPA supporting Irish businesses to reduce food waste. The Charter aims to promote a collective industry commitment to reduce food waste along the entire supply chain. The website contains plenty of resources for the hospitality industry.

• CoolFood Pro

The Cool Food Pro project aims to make the catering sector more sustainable. It supports caterers like you to make changes to how you source your ingredients and plan your menus, to reduce the impact on the environment.

ZERO-WASTE

In order to be a zero-waste organisation, you need to make sustainable purchasing decisions (don't buy things you don't need!) and then think very carefully about how you can either reuse or recycle supplies afterwards. This is called 'circular economy' where goods and materials are put back into the marketplace, or disposed of responsibly (e.g., composting food) rather than discarded and sent to landfill.

If you are hosting events or conferences, consider donating leftover food and conference materials to charitable causes, such as:

Food Donation Programmes

- Feed Cork
- Cork Penny Dinners
- Food Cloud
- Too Good to Go

Goods Donation Options

- Irish Cancer Society
- Enable Ireland
- Oxfam Ireland
- Barnardos
- Society of Saint Vincent de Paul

**VISIT CORK HAS
A TARGET TO PUSH
ALL CONFERENCES
AND EVENTS TO BE
'ZERO-WASTE'
BY 2030.**

SUSTAINABILITY RESOURCES, PROGRAMMES AND TRAINING FOR THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

• Fáilte Ireland Climate Action Resources

Fáilte Ireland has named 'Driving Climate Action' as a strategic priority, and is committed to helping tourism and hospitality businesses contribute to these targets. Not only will your business become more sustainable, but you'll learn how to introduce efficient cost-saving measures.

• Meet in Ireland - Sustainable Meetings

As a world-class corporate events destination, Ireland's green credentials are central to everything we do. With constant innovation and creative thinking, Meet in Ireland has developed a series of tips on ways in which to reduce the MICE industry's footprint here in Ireland.

• IHF Green Resources

Resources for Irish hoteliers who are working with industry partners to develop sustainable resources for the sector and reduce environmental impact.

• Tourism Ireland – Sustainable Ireland site

Sustainable travel is all about protecting and respecting the places you visit. This Tourism Ireland webpage offers ideas and information about some of the top sustainable holiday activities and venues in Ireland. If you offer a sustainable tourism experience and would like your business to be included and promoted across Tourism Ireland's global channels then apply here.

• Green for Micro Local Enterprise Offices

Green for Micro is a FREE programme that helps small businesses take the first step towards becoming more sustainable, giving you access to a green consultant who'll show you the small changes that can have a big impact on your company - and the world around you.

• MyWaste.ie for Business

Content on this page has been prepared to give you the information you need to implement good waste management practices in your business or workplace. Waste prevention, waste segregation, composting and recycling are all aspects of waste management that can be improved in businesses and workplaces across Ireland by implementing some simple practices and actions.

- How to Manage Your Business Waste (Your step-by-step guide)
- My Waste Checklist

• Sustainability for Small Hospitality Businesses (elearning course) – Restaurant and Hospitality Skillnet

This short e-learning course on Sustainability has been developed for SME Business Owners and Managers to equip hospitality premises with best practices in the areas of water, waste and energy. This is a short course which will provide you with simple approaches and templates to become a more sustainable business.

• Savour Food e-Training

Every business has the power to change how they deal with waste and, in doing so, to make a HUGE improvement on our carbon footprint and help Ireland achieve the climate targets that are so important for us all. In order to do this, everybody involved in foodservice businesses needs to be actively involved. By participating in this FREE e-Training Certificate, you will be provided with the information and actions to make significant reductions in food waste.

• The Regenerative Event Checklist

Make sure you are thinking 'sustainability' next time you organise a conference or event. Or if you are a conference venue, then try to ensure your offering ticks as many boxes as possible on the 'regenerative event checklist'.



CARBON FOOTPRINT MEASUREMENT

Measuring your organisation's carbon footprint is a key part of the sustainability process. In order to reduce your footprint and improve your sustainability habits, it is important to establish your baselines (i.e., understand how much energy you are using currently). This is usually done by looking at waste, water and energy usage over 12 months, based on information from your utility bills. Once you have gathered the paperwork, then there are several online tools that will help you to make the calculations automatically. Some of these include:

- Climate Toolkit 4 Business
- Clean Technology Centre Cork
- EPA Tool for Resource Efficiency

SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORS,

The following Irish businesses offer specialised advice, consultancy and training on sustainability in the tourism industry:

- Green Hospitality.ie
- Fifty Shades Greener
- Sustainable Travel Ireland
- Change by Degrees
- The Tourism Space

THIRD PARTY SUSTAINABILITY CERTIFICATION PROGRAMMES

Getting a third-party sustainability certification is the most transparent way of demonstrating to your clients that you are taking sustainability seriously. It will become an important part of the checklist for organisations that are hosting conferences and events in Cork.

- Green Hospitality.ie
- Fifty Shades Greener
- Sustainable Travel Ireland

CARBON OFFSETTING PROGRAMMES

While carbon offsetting programmes are coming under increasing scrutiny – they are seen as an easy way for organisations to avoid reducing their carbon footprint by simply paying to offset it – the concept is nonetheless a tool that is endorsed by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. For more information and their explanation of the process see here.

Some Irish programmes that offer offsetting include:

- GoCarbonNeutral.ie
- Sycamore Lane
- One Tree Planted
- Vita

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