

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC TOU 1 (15) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

TOURISM MEETING

**NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES,
ARMAGH**

5 MARCH 2015

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The sixteenth North South Ministerial Council Tourism meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat offices, Armagh on 5 March 2015. The meeting was attended by Paschal Donohoe TD, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Arlene Foster MLA, Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, and Carál Ní Chuilín, MLA, Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure. Minister Donohoe chaired the meeting.

EU MATTERS/FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

2. Ministers noted the support that had been provided to tourism projects under the EU funded INTERREG IVA programme. They also noted the current position regarding EU Funding Programmes and agreed that the relevant tourism stakeholders in both jurisdictions would closely monitor developments at EU level to ensure that tourism would benefit from all suitable collaborative funding opportunities.

PROGRESS REPORT

3. The Chairperson, Mr Brian Ambrose and CEO, Mr Niall Gibbons, updated Ministers on the work of the Tourism Ireland Board over the previous year. The Council noted progress on implementing the Corporate Plan 2014-2016. They also noted progress with regard to delivering Tourism Ireland's SMART Objective Performance Goals for 2014 including:
 - Growing promotable revenue and promotable visitors to Ireland and Northern Ireland;
 - Maintaining the island of Ireland's high competitive interest ranking in GB, US and France and improving it in Germany;
 - Achieving 500 million Social Connections by the end of 2014 and delivering 1.8 million commercial referrals to trade and industry from digital activity; and
 - Driving the delivery of Corporate Plan objectives by continuing to enable Tourism Ireland to be a high-performance organisation that fulfils its stakeholder and corporate governance requirements.
4. Ministers were updated on the nine Board meetings that have taken place at various locations since the last NSMC Tourism meeting. Presentations at Board meetings included the Impact of the Gathering and assessments of the North American, Australian and developing markets. The Board had also reviewed and noted the high level of co-operation between NITB, Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland on hosting the Gran Partenza of the 2014 Giro d'Italia.

REVIEW OF 2014 SEASON – LOOK AHEAD TO 2015

5. Ministers received a presentation from the CEO Mr Niall Gibbons on Tourism Ireland's performance throughout 2014. This contained highlights of tourism Ireland's marketing campaign throughout 2014 including:
 - Wild Atlantic Way and Causeway Coastal Route;
 - New British Irish Visa Scheme; and
 - Overseas Publicity.

The report also highlighted the significant growth for tourism in 2014.

Ambitious targets have also been set for growth for 2015 from all main markets and Ministers noted the emerging promotional themes for 2015, in particular:

- Coastal Driving routes;
- Social Energisers offering;

- Culturally Curious offering; and
- Digital Marketing

TOURISM IRELAND BUSINESS PLAN 2015

6. Ministers approved Tourism Ireland's Business Plan 2015 and recommended the budget provision for 2015 of €53.885m.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7. The Council agreed to meet again in Tourism format in Autumn/Winter 2015.

Joint Secretariat

5 March 2015

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