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Foreword

Tourism is a powerful driver of economic growth, cultural exchange, and environmental sustainability. As we look to the future, it is crucial that we not only preserve the unique assets of our County but also enhance its appeal to visitors from around the world. This strategy is the result of careful planning, collaboration, and a shared vision for the future of tourism in County Roscommon. It reflects our commitment to creating a sustainable, inclusive, and innovative tourism ecosystem that benefits local communities, businesses, visitors and the environment alike.

This document outlines the vision, strategic pillars, and actions we will undertake to transform our tourism sector, ensuring that it remains dynamic, resilient, and globally competitive. It emphasizes responsible tourism, the protection of our natural and cultural heritage, and the creation of memorable infrastructure and experiences that leave a lasting positive impact.

Together, we can foster an environment where tourism thrives while maintaining our respect for people and places. With this strategy, we are not just shaping the future of tourism—we are shaping the future of our county, making it a destination of choice for generations to come.

Let us embrace this vision with enthusiasm and determination, as we work together to achieve our shared goals.

Choose Roscommon for a richer life.

Roscommon Cathaoirleach, Chief Executive & Tourism Officer

Liam O' Callaghan, Shane Tiernan & Lisa Joy

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Section 1 Overview

1.1 Background & Introduction

The Tourism Department in Roscommon County Council is part of the Economic, Planning and Physical Development Directorate, and is a core function of the local authority responsible for the development and promotion of tourism in County Roscommon. The overall objective of Roscommon Tourism is to develop and promote County Roscommon as a year round immersive tourist destination that offers high quality visitor experiences. County Roscommon is centrally located in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, Failte Ireland's tourism branded midlands region known for its scenic beauty, tranquil landscapes, and rich cultural heritage.

Tourism in the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands region was worth €307m to the regional economy in 2019 (€178m from international visitors and €129m from domestic visitors) and the sector sustains almost 7,000 jobs.¹

Tourism is an important economic driver in County Roscommon. In 2023, Failte Ireland reported total visitor numbers of 202,179 across 12 of Roscommon's tourist paid attractions, generating an estimated total spend of €11,352,264 in the local economy.

Roscommon has a range of natural and built attractions and a variety of festivals and events aimed at attracting visitors to the county. Highlights include Lough Key Forest and Activity Park, Strokestown Park - The National Famine Museum, Arigna Mining Experience, King House and Rathcroghan, one of the four Royal Sites of Ireland. Roscommon has the longest shoreline of the River Shannon; 140km of shoreline which represents significant tourism potential.

Significant progress has been made in developing Roscommon as a key tourism destination with the implementation of the actions contained in the Roscommon Tourism Statement of Strategy 2017-2022. The Visit Roscommon brand is growing in prominence and success with the development of a new Visit Roscommon website and active social media channels. Roscommon County Council is continuing to work with partner agencies, the tourism trade and the community to improve visitor experiences, develop new products and amenities to grow tourism in the county. Significant infrastructural projects have been delivered through the ORIS Scheme to enhance the outdoor recreational offering in Roscommon improving our walks and trails and improving access to our lakes and rivers. Marketing efforts have been strengthened through collaborations with influencers, strategic partnerships with television programs,

¹ Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2029

and targeted digital marketing campaigns, all aimed at amplifying brand awareness. Financial and marketing support for festivals and events has increased with a wide range of festivals and events taking place across the county each year. However, some challenges persist as we move forward. The lack of availability of good quality accommodation in Roscommon is a current issue and inhibits our potential to grow tourism in the county.

This Tourism Strategy sets out five key strategic pillars with specific actions to grow the tourism sector in Roscommon over the next five years. The strategy aims to build on the existing tourism brand and to support the development of new visitor experiences that improve the overall tourism product offering in the county. There is significant potential for development of the tourism sector in County Roscommon which must be harnessed.

1.2 Sustainable Tourism Approach

Adopting a Sustainable Tourism approach to the development of this strategy is vital to ensure the long-term viability of Roscommon as a destination, while simultaneously benefiting local communities, conserving natural and cultural resources, and minimizing the negative impacts of tourism in Roscommon. The aim of a sustainable tourism approach is to create a balance between the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of tourism, ensuring that tourism can be enjoyed today without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same.

The internationally recognised VICE model for sustainable tourism development identifies sustainable tourism as the interaction between Visitors, the Industry that sustains the destination, the Community that hosts the visitor and the Environment where it all takes place.

VICE Objectives for Roscommon Tourism Development

Visitors – Welcome, include and satisfy visitors

Industry –Support the growth of the tourism industry with the aim of increasing visitor numbers and spend

Community –Ensuring an economic benefit from tourism and attracting investment to improve local infrastructure and amenities in the community

Environment –Protect and promote our natural and cultural heritage resources

This strategy also takes into account the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** are a set of 17 global goals designed to address a broad range of interconnected global challenges, including poverty, inequality, environmental sustainability, peace, and prosperity, with the aim of achieving a better and more sustainable future for all by 2030.



1.3 Process to prepare a new tourism strategy

1. Review of Roscommon Tourism Statement of Strategy 2017 -2022.
2. Public Consultation Process – in person at busy tourist attraction locations and online surveys
3. Analysis of findings and preparation of Report – Main topics included accommodation, communities, greenways, outdoor activities, heritage
4. Presentation to SPC for Economic Development & Enterprise Support
5. Presentation to Roscommon County Council for final Approval.
6. Launch of Strategy



Section 2: Tourism in Roscommon

2.1 Roscommon Profile

County Roscommon is located in the geographic centre of Ireland. Its central location makes it easily accessible from all of the major cities, towns and airports across the region. Ireland West Airport is located just ten minutes' drive from County Roscommon and is the main international airport for the West, North West and Midlands regions. Three Irish Rail Intercity lines run through County Roscommon with four train stations across the county. Improvements have been made with bus services with the introduction of the TFI local link service which operates a regular service throughout the county connecting our towns and villages.

Roscommon offers a unique blend of natural beauty, rich history, and cultural heritage. Its known for its tranquil landscapes, friendly towns, and historical monuments. Roscommon provides a welcoming and peaceful setting for residents and visitors alike

The population of Roscommon grew by 9% between the 2016 and 2022 census to a total of 70,259.

2.2 Roscommon Tourism Assets

Some highlights of the key tourism assets in Roscommon include:

Castles and historical sites:

- Roscommon Castle: A striking 13th century castle located in the town of Roscommon, offering a glimpse into Ireland's norman past.
- Ballintubber Castle: An early 14th century castle located in the village of Ballintubber, noted for its rare architectural style.
- Strokestown Park House & Gardens: A well-preserved Georgian manor house with beautiful gardens, and a state of the art museum focusing on the great Irish Famine Period.
- Rathcroghan and Rathcroghan Visitor Centre: A major archaeological landscape that was once the heart of the ancient kingdom of Connacht. Rathcroghan is one of the four Royal Sites of Ireland, ancient sites of royal inauguration and is on Ireland's UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List.
- Boyle Abbey: A peaceful 12th century Cistercian abbey in Boyle, known for its tranquil setting and historical significance.
- Roscommon Abbey: founded in the 12th century and known for its impressive ruins, including a beautiful church and ancient stone carvings

Natural Attractions:

- Lough Key Forest & Activity Park: A beautiful activity park offering walking trails, cycling routes, and activities such as kayaking, zip-lining, and a tree top canopy walk. The park is also home to the impressive Lough Key, with the iconic Castle Island, providing opportunities for water sports and boating.

- The River Shannon: Roscommon's connection to Ireland's longest river offers opportunities for boating, fishing, and scenic walks along its shoreline.
- The River Suck: a major river in the West of Ireland flowing between counties Roscommon and Galway, known for coarse fishing and accessible jetty's at Frenchlawn and Dundermot enabling water activities.
- Mote Park: An ancient woodland in Roscommon town that offers a unique blend of history, natural beauty and recreational activities.

Cultural and Heritage:

- The National Famine Museum: Located at Strokestown Park, this museum provides insight into the history and impact of the Great Irish Famine, a pivotal moment in Irish history
- The National Famine Way: A walking & cycling trail on the Royal Canal Greenway route that traces the journey of those who were forced to emigrate during the Famine, starting at Strokestown Park and ending at the EPIC Museum at Dublin's Docklands.
- Roscommon Arts Centre: A modern venue for theatre, art exhibitions, and cultural events, contributing to Roscommon's thriving arts and culture scene.
- Arigna Mining Experience: A unique and immersive visitor attraction offering an authentic insight into the coal mining history in the village of Arigna.
- King House: A Palladian Georgian Mansion once the home of the King Family, and the barracks for the Connaught Rangers, now a fantastic museum and cultural centre
- Castlecoote House: A Georgian Mansion located in Castlecoote renowned for its rich history, architectural elegance and picturesque setting on the River Suck.
- Douglas Hyde Interpretive Centre: A museum dedicated to the life and work of Douglas Hyde, Ireland's first president, offering exhibits on his contributions to Irish language, culture, and politics.
- Clonalis House: Known for its distinctive Italianate Victorian architecture, and the ancestral home of the O'Connor family, one of Ireland's most prominent Gaelic families, and featuring beautiful gardens and woodland trail.
- Margaret's Kitchen: A unique Irish country kitchen offering a variety of culinary experiences including demo and dine, afternoon tea, traditional baking workshops
- Ros Clay Pottery: Hands on pottery making experience for all ages located in Roscommon town
- MUSEUMS
 - Derryglad Folk Museum: a unique 35-year collection of over 6000 items
 - Castlerea Railway Museum: has the largest collection of rail memorabilia in Ireland
 - John McGahern Barracks: An introduction to the life and times of John McGahern

- Elphin Windmill – An 18th Century Windmill and Visitor Centre
- Claypipe Museum: the history of the clay pipes being made in Knockcroghery
- Drum Heritage Centre: Displaying a large collection of historical documents
- Roscommon County Museum: dedicated to the history of Roscommon

Outdoor Adventure and Recreation:

- Walking Trails: A network of scenic walking trails across the county including the Miners Way, the Beara Breifne Way, Suck Valley Way and Sliabh Bawn showcasing the natural beauty of the landscape, from lakes and rivers to rural villages and forests.
- The Lough Ree and Lough Allen Water Areas: Popular spots for water activities such as boating, fishing, and sailing, situated in the picturesque landscapes of Roscommon.
- Angling: Angling stands, including fully accessible angling stands, are provided at many locations with clubs including Lough Ree Angling Club, Suck Valley Angling Club and Gone Fishing Roscommon.
- Golf: Roscommon has a choice of excellent golf courses throughout the county
- Castlerea Outdoor Swimming Pool: Heated outdoor public swimming pool with children's splash area
- Shannon River Adventure: Offers thrilling outdoor activities along the scenic River Shannon
- Ballyleague Access for all Boat tours: Offering guided tours on Lough Ree
- Baysports: Ireland's largest inflatable waterpark - a unique destination and family fun day in the heart of Ireland
- Viking Tours Ireland: Cruising tours on the River Shannon
- Mote Park: An ancient woodland in Roscommon town including a natural playground, star gazing seat and a series of walking trails.
- P Macs Kayaks: Tailor made kayaking excursions at Lough Key
- Zip it: High wire forest adventure tree top climbing
- Glendeer Pet Farm: Over 50 animals to pet, children's play area, fairy trail and onsite café
- Lough Key Boat tours: Guided exploration of the Lough Key's islands
- Knockvicar Alpacas: A small friendly alpaca farm experience
- Mount Allen Eco Tours: Welcomes wildlife and biodiversity enthusiasts on guided tours
- Roscommon RaceCourse: A vibrant blend of sport and entertainment to be enjoyed
- Hillstreet Clay Pigeon Shooting & Archery: Offering top clay pigeon shooting and archery experiences

Traditional Villages and Towns:

- Boyle: A charming town with a rich history and tourism attractions including the Boyle Abbey, King House, and the nearby Lough Key Forest Park.
- Roscommon Town: A well-connected cultural hub, home to historical landmarks such as Roscommon Castle, lively local shops, bars, cafes and restaurants
- Ballaghaderreen: Known for its proximity to the scenic Knock Airport and its historical significance, & wellness and cultural experiences
- Castlerea: Known for its rich history, scenic landscapes and vibrant community
- Monksland: A thriving economic hub with rich community spirit
- Strokestown: Rich in culture, heritage and sport and the home of Strokestown Park & The National Famine Museum

Festivals and Events:

- The Night and Day Festival: Ireland's new and emerging family friendly festival located in Lough Key Forest & Activity Park featuring a diverse lineup of live performances, creative workshops, and vibrant cultural activities
- Boyle Arts Festival: An annual cultural event in Boyle, Ireland, celebrating music, art, theatre, and literature with performances and exhibitions from local and international artists
- Castlerea Rose Festival: A blend of cultural celebrations, live music, parades, and the crowning of the Rose of Castlerea
- Ballaghaderreen Arts Festival: An annual celebration of arts and culture in Ballaghaderreen, Ireland, featuring a variety of performances, workshops, exhibitions, and community event
- The Roscommon Drama Festival: A vibrant celebration of music, dance, theater, and visual arts held annually in the county.
- Roscommon Christmas Festival: A festive annual event in Roscommon Town, featuring Christmas markets, light displays, live entertainment, and family-friendly activities to celebrate the Christmas season.
- The O' Carolan Festival: An annual celebration in Keadue, Ireland, honouring the life and music of the famous 18th-century harpist and composer Turlough O'Carolan, with performances, cultural events, and traditional music
- Day with the Stars: Ireland's largest outdoor country music festival hosted at Roscommon Racecourse
- Roscommon Agricultural Show: Diverse range of activities and classes including animals, horticulture, arts and crafts
- Roscommon Annual Ploughing Championships: Traditional tractor and horse ploughing competitions

Accommodation & Dining:

County Roscommon has a diverse choice of accommodation for visitors ranging from Castle Hotels, Country House hotels, friendly b&b's, self catering cottages and log cabins, and caravan and camping sites.

Visitors can choose from tearooms in stately homes, vibrant town centre café's, traditional bars, cosy waterside pubs and award winning restaurants in County Roscommon.

***Please note a full list of all the attractions, activities, accommodation, restaurants walking trails and festivals and events can be found at www.visitroscommon.ie**

2.3 Policies and Plans

The County Roscommon Tourism Strategy 2025-2030 sits within a wider strategic context that provides a rationale and direction for the development of tourism in the county.

Infographic

National Strategy & Policy

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

Roscommon County Development Plan

Local Economic & Community plan

Ireland's Hidden Heartland Regional Tourism Development Strategy

Upper Shannon, Shannon Erne and Border Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Roscommon County Tourism Strategy 2025-2030

Roscommon Outdoor Recreation Strategy

National Tourism Policy Framework 2025-2030

This National Strategy aims to “facilitate a vibrant, attractive tourism sector that makes a significant contribution to employment across the country; is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable; helps promote a positive image of Ireland overseas, and is a sector in which people want to work”.

The mission is “To support a thriving tourism sector by managing Ireland’s cultural and heritage assets, in harmony with local communities, while conserving these resources for use by future generations”. The framework focuses on 3 strategic objectives:

- 1.Environmental – a clean environment is a crucial basis of wellbeing and visitor satisfaction and in 2023 Ireland’s restored nature and scenery will still represent a key part of the tourism offering.
- 2.Economic – The tourism sector will be a significant source of employment, earnings and tax revenue, incorporating viable businesses throughout the county.
- 3.Social – Ireland’s famous welcome will be maintained through communities who do not feel overburdened by visitors. The tourism sector and local communities will be supported through education and training opportunities to adapt their tourism offerings to respond and adapt to climate change and biodiversity.

Roscommon County Development Plan

The Roscommon County Development Plan is a strategic framework outlining the county's growth, land use, infrastructure, and environmental policies, aiming to guide sustainable development and improve the quality of life for residents and visitors. Spatial planning has a role in the delivery of a number of objectives in the Tourism Strategy, including the development of flagship projects such as the Hodson Bay Waterfront Park project. It is a policy objective of Roscommon County Council’s Development Plan to promote tourism as an integral part of County Roscommon’s economic profile, supporting urban and rural enterprise and recognising the key strategic location of the county and access to tourist sites and attractions.

Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Regional Development Strategy

The Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023 – 2027 is a roadmap for the tourism industry and all stakeholders involved in tourism in the region to navigate the current challenges and steer a course towards a sustainable recovery and continued success. The plan sets out a strategic approach to unlocking the commercial potential of Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. It will ensure focus on tourism development is sustainable and regenerative and that the benefits accrue to local communities and to nature. The Roscommon Tourism Strategy 2025-2030 will assist the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands in delivering

The strategic objectives of the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands are summarised below:

1. Awareness & Recognition

Raise awareness and recognition of the region and brand among domestic and international visitors and increase the duration of visitor stays, particularly within the domestic market.

2. Visitor Experience

Enhance the range and quality of our visitor experiences to underpin the Hidden Heartlands brand proposition, leveraging the natural and cultural assets of the region in a sustainable way with a focus on ecotourism.

3. Economic Impact

Grow the economic impact of tourism and create jobs in local tourism by supporting the tourism industry (private, public and community sectors) to develop its capacity and capability while reducing its carbon footprint.

4. Regenerative Tourism

Establish the region as one of the leading regenerative tourism destinations in Europe in which tourism results in net positive outcomes for communities and nature.

5. Industry & Stakeholders

Build a committed industry and stakeholder coalition to guide and co-ordinate the sustainable development of destinations across the region

Local and Economic Community Plan 2023-2029

Tourism, and the development of a Tourism Strategy for Roscommon is one of the priority actions identified for County Roscommon in the Local and Economic Community Plan (LECP) 2023-2029. The LECP is underpinned by six high-level goals, objectives and actions that have been developed in accordance with the unique needs of County Roscommon. The implementation of the plan will be a collaborative effort that will continue to bring a wide variety of stakeholders across the county.

The overall vision for the county over the lifetime of the LECP is that 'Roscommon is a location of choice to live, visit, learn, work and play.' The high-level goals together with the associated objectives and actions support the achievement of the overall vision. In effect, whilst there is a specific objective with actions relating to the tourism sector, the work that is underway across all of the high-level goals in the LECP will support and strengthen the tourism potential of the county.

Objective	Action Description	Theme	Action Lead	Action Partners	Timeframe	KPI
3.4.1	Promote and attract domestic and international visitors to Roscommon's major tourist attractions including Rathcroghan, Strokestown Park House, Suck Valley Way, Lough Ree, Arigna Mining Experience, Lough Key Forest Park, King House Boyle, Boyle Abbey among others	Domestic and International appeal	LCDC	RCC Tourism, Failte Ireland, Volunteer organisations	ST-MT-LT	Growth in visitor revenue
	Promote County Roscommon as a destination for slow and	Slow and activity based tourism	RCC	RCC NWRA, RCC, Chambers of Commerce, LEO,	ST-MT-LT	

	activity based tourism by promoting its many assets such as the river Shannon, Lough Ree, nature walkways and parks exhibiting vast opportunities for tourism development			Community Tourism Providers		
3.4.3	Further develop Roscommon's branding in association with Visit Roscommon Land of Memories and Fáilte Ireland's Hidden Heartlands and ensure a coordinated brand identity is promoted across all sectors, to maximise brand impact for the County.	Coordinated tourism branding	LCDC	RCC Tourism, Visit Roscommon, Fáilte Ireland, LEO	ST-MT	Increase of visitor numbers and job growth
3.4.4	Facilitate the development and implementation of Roscommon's Tourism Strategy.	A Tourism Strategy	RCC – Tourism		ST	Tourism Strategy developed and adopted Implementation of Tourism Strategy actions
3.4.5	Support secondary or ancillary tourism related infrastructure, enterprises, initiatives and events through development support and funding.	An increase of secondary tourism related industries and event		RCC - Tourism, Fáilte Ireland, LEO	MT-LT	RLP Number of secondary tourism-related initiatives implemented Number of secondary tourism-related projects in receipt of funding

3.4.6	Support the development of tourism initiatives under Fáilte Ireland's regenerative tourism scheme (EU Just Transition Fund) and the preparation and implementation of Visitor Experience Development Plans (VEDPs).	Growth in tourism offerings	RCC	Faillte Ireland, RLP	ST-MT-LT	Number of projects in receipt of EU Just Transition Funding Visitor Experience Development Plans developed and adopted Implementation of Visitor Experience Development Plan actions
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Upper Shannon, Shannon Erne and Border region Destination and Experience Development Plan

The Upper Shannon, Shannon-Erne, and Border Destination and Experience Development Plan (DEDP) is a strategic initiative aimed at transforming the tourism landscape of North Roscommon, Cavan and Leitrim. The plan will influence local tourism development, infrastructure investment, and community engagement.

The **Mid Shannon and Midlands Destination and Experience Development Plan** is currently in development and will aim to influence tourism development in the South Roscommon region.

The Shannon Tourism Masterplan is a collaborative project lead by Waterways Ireland with Failte Ireland and the support of the ten local authorities along the River Shannon and Shannon Erne Waterway. The Masterplan sets out an integrated framework for sustainable tourism development along the Shannon and Shannon Erne Waterway and has the potential to position the region as a key tourism destination in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands.

Fáilte Ireland has identified the Shannon as the spine and one of two 'transformational signature products of scale' in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands that are key to unlocking the region's potential. This recognises the value and potential of both the Shannon and Shannon Erne Waterway, and their associated lakes and canals, as a critical corridor for waterbased and land-based tourism activities.

Development of new and enhanced waterside amenities enabling infrastructure in harbour locations which will be transformative for towns and villages located on the Shannon.

Just Transition Funding

The National Just Transition Fund (JTF) was announced in 2020 as a key pillar of the Government's plan for the Midlands region to support communities transitioning to a low carbon economy. The focus was on retraining workers and generating sustainable employment in green enterprise across the region.

The objective of the Fund was to facilitate innovative projects that contribute to the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the Wider Midlands region (including East Galway, Kildare, Laois, Longford, North Tipperary, Offaly, Roscommon and Westmeath) and have significant employment and enterprise potential.

Roscommon Outdoor Recreation Strategy

The **Roscommon Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2023-2028** was prepared to provide an effective and sustainable framework to maximize current and future opportunities for the participation of outdoor recreation across County Roscommon during this period. This strategy is closely aligned with the National Outdoor Recreation Strategy (NORS) 2023-2027, Roscommon County Councils Development Plan (2021-2027), Roscommon LECP 2023-2029 and the Tourism Strategy 2017-present.

Strategic Objective Number 3 from the Roscommon Outdoor Recreation Strategy is to *"Create an awareness of the outdoor recreation opportunities in Roscommon and increase the number of people active in the outdoors from all communities."*

2.4 Tourism Situational Analysis – SCOT

Strengths	Challenges	Opportunities	Threats
Centrally located in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands – easily accessible from Dublin, Galway and Sligo	Limited accommodation options	Development of Greenways/Blueways across the county	Climate Change Challenges
Longest shoreline with the River Shannon (140kms) – Boating, fishing, and wildlife	Lack of awareness of a major iconic landmark associated with Roscommon	River Shannon shoreline has significant development potential	Cost of Living crisis
High quality tourism attractions offering excellent value for money	Lack of awareness nationally of Roscommon as a tourist destination	Athlone.ie – Destination Athlone Participation	Current perception as a “pass through” county to more well established tourism locations such as the Wild Atlantic Way
Vibrant accessible towns with free parking	Limited access to the River Shannon	Dublin/Galway Greenway link opportunities	
Well managed walks and cycleways through native boglands, forests, lakeshores and parks	No formal industry led marketing group for Roscommon – restructure of Roscommon Tourism Network	Pilgrim Way from Croagh Patrick to Dublin via Rathcroghan and Strokestown – Potential contribution of walks to the tourism product	
Rich heritage and historical sites	Limited public transport options throughout the county.	Build on our rich Heritage	
Quality festivals and events including the Night and Day Music Festival, the Castlerea Rose Festival & the Roscommon Christmas Festival	Limited service provision for outdoor recreational users	Position Roscommon as an outdoor slow adventure hub	

Large diaspora due to outward-migration	Poor tourism signage in certain areas	Collaboration with neighbouring counties on tourism projects	
Close proximity to Ireland West Airport		Marketing of existing and new initiatives	
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
High quality fishing rivers and natural lakes		Develop and improve accommodation offering	
Strong proactive community engagement across the county		Capitalise on Just Transition funding opportunities	
Excellent Outdoor recreational activities		Develop transport links such as the Local Links service,	
		Promote iconic landmarks to strengthen the public's association with the county	

Section 3 Tourism Vision

Roscommon, located in the heart of Ireland, will become a culturally rich and community driven, year round thriving sustainable tourism destination, where visitors can experience historic sites, warm hospitality, peaceful landscapes and a deep connection to Irish traditions.

The Vision for Roscommon over the next 5 years is outlined below

Roscommon is:

- A year round immersive tourist destination with quality tourist attractions
- A sustainable tourist destination embracing and showcasing its rich biodiversity offering eco-tourism experiences
- A well connected county with authentic and meaningful experiences
- A county with a strong outdoor recreation offering, with Greenways, Walking Trails and Cycleways
- A destination with a vibrant festivals and events scene for all to enjoy

Section 4 – Achieving the Tourism Vision

This Tourism Strategy sets out five key strategic pillars with specific actions to grow the tourism sector in Roscommon over the next five years.

Strategic Pillar 1 - Destination Management

Destination management involves the coordination of resources and efforts to promote tourism, enhance the visitor experience, and ensure sustainable development. The key actions for effective destination management in Roscommon are as follow:

Action 1	Enhance public spaces and signage to create attractive, well guided destinations
Action 2	Improve transport and access to key tourism attractions, including waterways.
Action 3	Support diverse and accessible accommodation options for all visitor needs
Action 4	Promote sustainable tourism that protects natural and cultural assets
Action 5	Engage communities and support placemaking to ensure local benefit and pride
Action 6	Build strong partnerships with tourism bodies and local businesses to strengthen the overall visitor experience

Strategic Pillar 2 – Visitor Experience Development

Developing visitor experiences in County Roscommon involves creating immersive, memorable, and diverse opportunities that showcase the county's natural beauty, history, culture, and unique attractions. The actions that can be taken to enhance and develop visitor experiences in Roscommon are as follows:

Action 1	Develop and Promote Themed Visitor Experiences Create engaging itineraries and host cultural events around Roscommon's rich history, heritage, food, and wellness offerings.
Action 2	Expand Outdoor and Trail Infrastructure Invest in walking, cycling, and water-based trails. Promote signature routes such as the Beara Breifne Way, National Famine Way and Táin Trail.
Action 3	Enhance Heritage Sites with Immersive Technology Introduce VR and AR storytelling at key historical sites to deepen visitor engagement through cutting-edge experiences.
Action 4	Promote Local Food and Drink Tourism Develop food trails, tours, and events that highlight locally produced food and drink, supporting small businesses and culinary tourism.
Action 5	Improve Visitor Facilities and Information Access Modernize tourist information centres with interactive maps and digital tools, while digitising local storytelling for broader, inclusive access.
Action 6	Support Sustainable and Innovative Tourism Models Promote green tourism initiatives, including the sustainable development of the cruise hire sector, to ensure long-term environmental and economic resilience.

Strategic Pillar 3 – Marketing and Communications

Effective marketing and communication strategies are key to raising awareness and recognition of County Roscommon as a tourist destination of choice. The following actions can help to increase awareness, attract visitors, and position Roscommon as a top location of choice for both domestic and international visitor:

Action 1	Strengthen the Visit Roscommon Brand Develop annual marketing plans, ensure consistent branding across all platforms, and create memorable taglines that reflect the county's unique identity.
Action 2	Expand Digital Presence and Content Creation Prioritise digital marketing by regularly updating the website and social media with fresh blogs, videos, photography, and interactive tools, while phasing in QR code integration for easy access to digital brochures.
Action 3	Leverage Influencers and Media Partnerships Collaborate with influencers, journalists, and bloggers through press trips and campaigns to showcase Roscommon's attractions to key domestic and international markets.
Action 4	Promote Festivals, Events, and Local Campaigns Live-stream major events, maintain an updated events calendar, and support campaigns such as <i>Roscommon Bound</i> to engage both local audiences and the global diaspora.
Action 5	Collaborate on Regional and National Campaigns Partner with Fáilte Ireland, Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, neighbouring counties, and TV production companies to co-create marketing content and regional campaigns.
Action 6	Target International Markets and Access Points Continue working with Tourism Ireland and Ireland West Airport to promote Roscommon internationally through trade shows and marketing initiatives that highlight direct flight access to the region.

Strategic Pillar 4 – Industry Support & Collaboration

Supporting and fostering collaboration within the tourism industry in Roscommon is essential to creating a cohesive, sustainable, and thriving tourism ecosystem. The following actions can provide support and foster collaboration within the local tourism industry:

Action 1	Strengthen the Roscommon Tourism Trade Network Build a collaborative tourism network through forums, conferences, and regular engagement with local businesses, agencies, and communities.
Action 2	Support new tourism trade start ups Provide guidance and information on business supports to help new tourism and hospitality ventures succeed.
Action 3	Develop Collaborative Tourism Clusters Encourage the formation of regional tourism clusters focused on food, accommodation, and attractions to foster local collaboration and innovation.
Action 4	Build Industry Capacity through Training and Mentoring Offer ongoing capacity-building supports for existing tourism providers, including training, mentoring, and knowledge-sharing opportunities.
Action 5	Promote Access to Funding and Joint Marketing Assist tourism businesses in accessing grants and co-fund joint marketing campaigns to increase destination visibility.
Action 6	Engage Local Communities in Inclusive Tourism Involve communities in tourism development through storytelling, cultural sharing, and inclusive planning to ensure local pride and broad benefit

Strategic Pillar 5 – Accessible Outdoor Recreation

Developing outdoor recreation in County Roscommon can enhance the slow tourism offering, attract a wide range of visitors, and promote healthy living for both locals and tourists. With its rich natural landscapes, including lakes, rivers, boglands and forests, Roscommon is ideally positioned to offer a variety of outdoor activities. The actions necessary to develop outdoor recreation in Roscommon over the course of this plan are:

Action 1	Develop and Promote Signature Trails and Greenways Enhance existing walking, cycling, and greenway trails, promote signature routes, and support TII-led greenway development to attract active tourism.
Action 2	Expand Water-Based Tourism Experiences Develop a dedicated water trail, support water-based tours on the River Shannon, and implement the Lough Key and Hodson Bay waterfront Park masterplans.
Action 3	Improve Trail and Outdoor Accessibility Upgrade trail infrastructure to ensure accessibility for all, and support the introduction of bike rental services at key locations.
Action 4	Enhance Wildlife and Nature-Based Tourism Promote wildlife watching and nature experiences in key natural areas to appeal to eco-conscious visitors.

Action 5	Invest in Recreational Infrastructure Develop public amenities like rest areas, changing rooms, picnic spots, and shelters at popular outdoor and waterside locations.
Action 6	Support the River Shannon Discovery Points Initiative Roll out and promote Discovery Points along the Shannon to strengthen its role as a central tourism asset.

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Section 5- Strategic Vision Projects

The Vision projects outlined below have the potential to substantially transform and grow tourism in County Roscommon. Both projects have received funding from the Failte Ireland EU Just Transition Fund Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme (2023-2026) and will require ongoing support from Roscommon County Council to ensure their delivery. The appropriate environmental assessments will be carried as part of the planning and design process for both projects.

Project 1: Hodson Bay Waterfront Park EU Just Transition Fund Project - RCC Lead Partner with Waterways Ireland.

EU Just Transition Fund Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme (2023-2026) - Scheme C and D State Agency and Local Authority Partnerships

Category 2 Costs up to detailed design, planning/consents, construction tendering and award.

The Hodson Bay Waterfront Park Project will involve the development of new lakeside amenities at Hodson Bay, Athlone, Roscommon. The proposal includes the following main elements:

1. Water Sports Pavilion - this is a redevelopment of an existing building to provide a modern fit for purpose facility for on water activities, amenities and a café. This will be a unique selling point and major attraction for Hodson Bay.
2. Marina Enhancement - this will be an expansion and enhancement of the existing marina which will provide increased moorings and facilities for visitors. This increase in capacity and improved access to the water will promote a greater connection for visitors with the lake and encourage longer stays in the area.
3. Sun Deck and Lagoon - this area will activate the water's edge providing opportunities for rest, relaxation and play and forms the west landside edge of the lagoon area
4. Marina Square and Gardens - addresses the marina, providing a space for programmed activity and events while serving as a functional amenity for marina activities. A small Active Travel Hub provides a nodal point along the proposed cycle network.
5. Events Space - located north of the pavilion, provides space for relaxation a little removed from the water and provide an events space
6. Enabling Public Realm - provides for the enabling paths, active travel hubs and parking to enable connection and use of the waterside features above.

Funding was secured from the EU Just Transition Fund to deliver the planning and detailed design phase of this project which will be completed over the course of this plan.

Project 2: Lough Key Forest & Activity Park Masterplan – Coillte Lead with Roscommon County Council project partner

EU Just Transition Fund Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme (2023-2026) - Scheme C and D State Agency and Local Authority Partnership

Category 2 Costs up to detailed design, planning/consents, construction tendering and award.

Lough Key Forest and Activity Park is a key visitor destination in County Roscommon and within the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands region. It is a naturally beautiful activity park offering walking trails, cycling routes, and activities such as kayaking, zip-lining, self-guided historical tour, and a tree canopy walk. The park is also home to the impressive Lough Key, with the iconic Castle Island, providing opportunities for water sports and boating.

It has created significant local employment and generates economic activity within the local and wider regional economy of County Roscommon. Coillte and Roscommon County Council engaged a project team to deliver a strategic plan for the next 5-10 years for Lough Key Forest and Activity Park. The key strategic objectives of the Masterplan are as follows:

1. Widen the range of activities at Lough Key to provide more variety for guests to enjoy over a multi-day stay
2. Expand the accommodation on site and broaden the variety to encourage many more people to spend more than one day at the park
3. Grow the economic benefits of the park both directly on site and in the wider area of North Roscommon.

Funding was secured from the EU Just Transition Fund to deliver the planning and detailed design phase of this project which will be completed over the course of this plan.

6.1 Implementation, Monitoring & Review

The County Roscommon Tourism Strategy 2025-2030 will be implemented by multidisciplinary teams within Roscommon County Council including the Tourism Department under Economic Development, Regeneration Department, Planning Department, Local Enterprise Office, Climate Action, Community, Arts and Culture and local area offices.

The Strategy will also be implemented in collaboration with national stakeholders including Failte Ireland, Waterways Ireland, Coillte, Ireland West Airport, Tourism Ireland, the Roscommon tourism trade and the community.

Roscommon County Council's Tourism Department will prepare annual operational plans for delivery, in the context of Roscommon's adopted annual budgets and Annual Service Delivery Plans.

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