

BEST PRACTICES MISSION TO IRELAND
OCTOBER 8TH – 14TH, 2007

COMPETITIVENESS THROUGH BEST PRACTICES

FINAL REPORT

BEST PRACTICES MISSION TO IRELAND
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I. Introduction

The Competitiveness Through Best Practices Program provides tourism operators with first-hand industry knowledge and information on development and marketing models which exemplify such attributes as quality, high productivity, extended seasonality and motivation to travel. Best Practices Missions are learning opportunities that are organized for tourism operators from Atlantic Canada. Each mission travels outside of Atlantic Canada to a destination that is considered to have “best practices” within a particular sector (theme) of tourism. Such missions are designed to expose private sector operators and representatives of sustainable tourism communities to successful tourism operators/entrepreneurs and outstanding products. It is intended that this exposure will stimulate the generation of new product ideas, improved practices in customer service, innovative operational techniques, sound planning models and partnership opportunities for the Atlantic tourism sector. Although the missions themselves serve as a form of demonstrative research, the program is intended to reinforce the importance of following the “Research/Product/Marketing Continuum” model in all tourism endeavours.

The Competitiveness Through Best Practices Program is a partnership between the Tourism Industry Association of New Brunswick and Tourism Atlantic – ACOA.

Participants in this mission included high-level senior officials within government and private sector from Atlantic Canada. The group consisted of eleven representatives including Deputy Ministers of Tourism from two of the four Atlantic Provinces, as well as industry leaders from across the region.

The Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership Best Practices Mission took place October 08 – 14, 2007 and exposed the senior management group of participants to successful tourism partnerships, operators/entrepreneurs and outstanding products on the island of Ireland.

The Mission allowed the group to meet with industry leaders who are instrumental in working with their tourism industry and partners to grow tourism in Ireland. Significant to their success is the government’s recognition and support of tourism as a viable economic generator for Ireland and the injection of European Union funding to the industry and its partners. De-regulation of air access has also contributed significantly to their increase in tourists and growth in tourism.

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Ireland has a number of highly successful tourism partnerships both domestic and cross-border. These successful partnership models, coupled with a similar product match to that of Atlantic Canada and similar challenges facing the regions' tourism industry, made it an ideal destination for a best practices mission for this group.

The exposure will stimulate the generation of new product ideas, improved practices in customer service, innovative operational techniques, sound planning models and partnership opportunities for the Atlantic tourism sector. The mission serves as a form of demonstrative research.

The mission was deemed to be very successful by all of the Team with “not enough time” and “too rushed” appearing as the only comments of negativity. The presenters, information presented, geography covered and coordination of the mission overall averaged a ranking of 3.7 out of 4.0.

II. The Purpose

The purpose of the Best Practices Mission was to expose this senior management group of ACTP to successful tourism partnerships, operators/entrepreneurs and outstanding products on the island of Ireland. Being able to identify how Atlantic Canada could benefit through the Best Practices of what had been learned on Ireland through similar models to ACTP was deemed significant.

III. Primary Expectations

Each participant in the mission was provided with a questionnaire as part of their application to attend the Best Practices Mission. The following provides a summary of the participants' primary expectations for the Best Practices Mission:

Some of the key learning objective:

- Exposure to successful models for marketing and/or product development partnerships including partnership structure, governance, funding, etc. that work similar to ACTP
- The operation of legislative partnerships versus non-legislative partnerships;
- The commercialization of Regional Tourism Partnerships;

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- Learn about the “how and why” Ireland (as an island and destination) has experienced a tremendous tourism boom and what might be learned and applied in Atlantic Canada;
- Challenges the tourism industry of Ireland is currently facing and steps being taken to overcome these challenges;
- To meet with other DMOs and development agencies and learn what issues and problems they face and see what strategies they use to compete. Also interested in organizational structures, governance models and funding sources/levels over partnerships structures;
- To see a sample of true Irish signature product;
- To learn how tourism organizations (both government–national and regional) are marketing with levels of cooperation (i.e. who handles what areas of responsibility, is there cost sharing, etc.);
- Looking for examples of partnerships like ACTP’s (perhaps there are none);
- Learn how to improve air access and improve rural destinations;
- To gain an understanding to the various governance models presently in place for municipal, provincial and national Tourism Boards. In particular to learn how Private Sector worked with these organizations towards the common goal of growing tourism;
- To learn how the Island of Ireland, with its structure of counties, regions, and divisions, which even exist on a national level, manages the administration and marketing of its tourism product on a local and international level. On a global level, this destination is direct competition and all that can be learned from their successful tourism model should be learned;
- To meet with representative of key tourism groups in Ireland to gain a better understanding of their approaches to partnership development, marketing, and product development.
- To learn about the important connections between culture, heritage, and tourism.

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IV. Mission Itinerary

Monday, October 8th

Morning/Afternoon Some participants travel from Atlantic Canada to Ireland

Tuesday, October 9th

- 10:00am Group to meet in lobby of hotel.
- 10:15am Depart for Guinness Storehouse for private tour
St. James's Gate, Dublin 8
- 10:30am All participants arrive in Dublin, Ireland
David MacNulty, Tourism Development International to meet group
at airport.
- 11:15am Participants board coach at airport and depart for Guinness
Storehouse
- 12:00pm Entire group meet for lunch at Guinness Storehouse
- 1:15pm Tour of Georgian Dublin
- 3:00pm Check into Hotel
- 7:00pm Dinner Hunter's Hotel

Wednesday, October 10th

- 8:30am Meeting Fáilte Ireland – www.failteireland.ie
Speakers: Ciaran Tuite, Head of Product Management
Paul Keeley, Director of Market Development
Topics include:
- Overview of Fáilte Ireland
 - Development of Ireland products such as golf, hotels, etc.
 - National Development plans
 - Marketing of Ireland's tourism products
 - Cooperative marketing opportunities – industry and public sector
- 10:30am Meeting / Familiarization Dublin Tourism – www.visitdublin.com
Speaker: Ciara Sugure, Marketing Manager
A unique visitor information centre: an old church in the heart of
Dublin that has been renovated into a high traffic tourist
information centre.

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- Growth of tourism in Dublin
 - How the city is keeping up with the growth
 - Marketing Dublin as a city destination
- 1:30pm Meeting Irish Tourism Industry Confederation (ITIC) – www.itic.ie
Speaker: Richard Burke, Chairman
Topics include:
- Urban/Rural split: Spatial split in Irish tourism
 - Role of ITIC in developing and effecting change in tourism policy
 - ITIC's view of Ireland's tourism partnership's: Legislative versus non-legislative tourism partnerships
- 3:00pm Meeting Tourism Ireland – www.tourismireland.com
Speaker: Mark Henry, Head of Marketing
Topics include:
- Tourism Ireland's mandate
 - Overseas marketing of the island of Ireland
 - Support Northern Ireland in meeting its tourism potential
 - Ireland's International Marketing Strategy/Target Markets/Budgets
 - Cooperative marketing opportunities – industry and public sector
- 7:00pm Meeting / Private Reception / Dinner East Border Region (Co. Louth) – www.enjoyebr.com
Topics to discuss during reception/dinner:
- The opportunities and challenges of cross-border partnerships.
- 10:00pm Check into hotel

Thursday, October 11th

- 7:30am Depart for Belfast
- 9:00am Meeting Northern Ireland Tourist Board – www.nitb.com
Speakers: Allan Clark, Chief Executive

Catherine Thompson, Director of Finance & Business
Development

Orla Ferren, Communications Manager

Topics to include:

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- NITB's role in product development and marketing
- The Destination North West Joint Marketing Campaign
- NITB's signature products that were developed to communicate the all this unique about Northern Ireland tourism. These projects include:
 - Titanic Quarters
 - St. Patrick and Christian Heritage
 - Giants causeway and Antrim and Causeway Coast Area
 - The Walled City of Derry
 - The Mournes

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- 10:30am Familiarization tour of Belfast and some of NITB's signature products
- Guide: Liz Beaton
- Giants Causeway
 - Titanic Quarters
 - Walled City of Derry
- 4:45pm Depart Derry for Donegal
- 7:00pm Check into country houses in Donegal
- 7:30pm Dinner with Donegal Tourism Operators & Local Tourism Players

Friday, October 12th

- 8:30am Depart Donegal
- 9:00am Visit W.B. Yeats Grave (Co Sligo)
- 11:00am Meeting with Ireland West Airport Management (Co. Mayo) –
www.knockairport.com
Speaker: Liam Scollan, Group Managing Director
Topics to include:
- Air access to western Ireland
 - Successes and challenges western Ireland is facing in tourism
- Depart for Connemara
- 2:00pm Depart by air for Aran Islands by Aer Aerann
- 1:45pm Arrive on Aran Islands

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- 2:15pm Check into Kilmurvey House
(www.irelandwide.com/acom/kilmurveyhouse/index.htm)
Kilmurvey, Inis Mór, Aran Islands
Co. Galway, Ireland
- 2:45pm Familiarization tour of Inis Mór by bicycle and/or walking
with local guide
- 4:00pm Meeting with the Inis Mór Cooperative
Topics to discuss:
▪ Dealing with seasonality
▪ Rural tourism
- 5:30pm Return to Kilmurvey House
Supper at the house
- 8:00pm Visit a pub and listen to traditional Irish music

Saturday, October 13th

- 8:15am Depart Kilmurvey House for airport
- 9:00am Travel from Aran Island to Kildare
- 2:00pm Check into the K Club (www.kclub.com)
Straffon, Co Kildare Ireland
- 7:30pm Gala Dinner

Sunday, October 14th

- Morning Group travels back to Atlantic Canada

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IV. ACTP Leadership Team Mission Participants:

Mission Leader

Rob McCloskey, Director General
Tourism Atlantic – ACOA PEI & Tourism
100 Sydney Street, PO Box 40
Charlottetown, PE C1A 7K2
902.626.2479
Rob. McCloskey@acoa-apeca.gc.ca

Participants

ACOA Participant

Rob McCloskey, Director General, Tourism Atlantic – Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Rob was born in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island in 1958. He received his early schooling in the province's educational system, graduating in 1980 with Bachelor of Science degree, majoring in Biology, from the University of Prince Edward Island. Rob entered New York University on a Tisch fellowship in 1981, graduating with a Masters of Arts in Mass Communications in 1983. It was also in New York that Rob began his career, working with several large, international advertising agencies and where he was originally exposed to the worlds of advertising and tourism. Since leaving New York in the late-eighties, Rob has enjoyed a successful career in Atlantic Canada's tourism industry, working with both private and public sector interests. Over these years, he has been:

- The Vice-President of Marketing and Sales for Rodd Hotels & Resorts, Atlantic Canada's largest locally-owned hotel chain with properties in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.
- Executive Director of Marketing and Sales for Tourism Prince Edward Island, responsible for all the marketing, sales and research efforts involved in developing Prince Edward Island as a world-class tourism destination.
- And most recently as the Director General of Tourism Atlantic, a branch of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, responsible for developing pan-Atlantic tourism strategy, projects and programs.

He is married to Cindy, has two wonderful children, Brennah and Bridget, and a hyper English springer spaniel named Coltrane. He continues to make his home on Prince Edward Island

ACTP Secretariat Participant

Don Cudmore, Executive Director, Tourism Industry Association of Prince Edward Island

Don Cudmore was born and educated in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. After becoming a certified junior chef, he began working in the food service

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industry at the Confederation Centre of the Arts, as an Assistant Chef and advanced to Director of Catering. Don spent twenty-three years in the hotel industry as the General Manager of numerous Rodd Hotels & Resorts in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. In April 1995, he assumed the role of Executive Director of the Tourism Industry Association of Prince Edward Island (TIAPEI). Presently Don is involved with the Tourism Advisory Council, Provincial Signage Review Committee, Prince Edward Island Touring Product Review Committee, and the Workers Compensation Appeals Tribunal. He is the chairperson for the Atlantic Canada Caucus. TIAPEI is the Secretariat for the Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership; as such Don is actively involved in all aspects of the ACTP Agreement. Don resides in Cornwall, PEI with his wife Dianna.

New Brunswick Participants

Rob Robichaud, CEO, Greater Moncton International Airport

Born in Moncton New Brunswick (NB), Rob joined the Royal Canadian Navy upon graduation and received his commission as a naval officer in 1968. He served aboard several naval destroyers until 1974, performing such duties as Watchkeeping Officer, Ship's Diving Officer, Communications/Electronic Warfare Officer and Anti-Submarine Air Controller. He also completed two tours with the NATO fleet during that period. He cross trained to the Air Force in '74 and received his pilot wings a year later. After two operational flying tours, he attended the Canadian Forces Command and Staff College in Toronto in 1985 followed by staff assignments in army HQ's in Montreal and National Defence HQ's in Ottawa. Upon promotion to Lieutenant-Colonel, he became the Project Manager for the EH101 Search and Rescue Helicopter project and later, Project Director for the Griffon Helicopter project. Between 1994 -1996 he commanded 403 Helicopter Operational Training Squadron in CFB Gagetown, NB.

In 1996 he was posted to NORAD's Cheyenne Mountain as Missile Operations Officer. Rob took his release in 1997 and returned home to Moncton where, in August, he was hired as the Managing Director of the Greater Moncton International Airport. In 1999 he became its CEO. He continued serving in Canada's Reserve Force between 1998- 2001 as Liaison Officer for New Brunswick. Rob sits on the Boards of the Canadian Airports Council, the Atlantic Institute of Logistics and Transportation, the Tourism Industry Association of New Brunswick, the Atlantic Air Cargo Gateway Group and is currently the President of the Atlantic Canada Airports Association. He was awarded the Queen's Jubilee Medal for his "contributions to Canada" in 2004. He enjoys golf and hunting and reading. He is married to the former Frances McCarthy of Moncton and they have three children, James, Patricia and Michael and four grandchildren.

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Ron Durelle, Acting Deputy Minister for New Brunswick Tourism and Parks

On September 10, 2007, Ron Durelle was appointed Acting Deputy Minister with the Department of Tourism and Parks. He is also the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Department and has been in this role since 2004, and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience acquired throughout his 25 year career with the New Brunswick Public Service. His experience includes work assignments with the Office of the Auditor General, Office of the Comptroller, Department of Finance and the Department of Health and Wellness. Ron has served on a number of national and provincial advisory committees. He has a degree in business administration from the University of New Brunswick and has a Certified General Accountants designation.

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Newfoundland & Labrador Participants

Roger Jamieson, Past President, Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador

Mr. Jamieson is the owner/operator of Kilmory Resort in Swift Current, the province's only four-star, multi-season cottage resort and recipient of Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador's 2006 Golden Umbrella Award for Mr. Jamieson's significant contribution to the association. Before 1990, Mr. Jamieson worked in broadcasting, managing Radio Networks across the island. Mr. Jamieson is the industry representative on the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Tourism Product Touring Team, past President of Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador, past Industry Chair of the Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership's management committee and has served as a Director of the Heritage Run Tourism Association, as President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Campgrounds and Attractions Operators Association, member of the Canadian Tourism Commission Board of Directors, as well as a member of the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council.

Carmela Murphy, Director of Marketing, Dept. of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, NL

Ms. Murphy began her career with the Provincial Government in 1987 with the province's Industry Department and has held a number of positions in policy and economic development. She later joined the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation and has held a number of positions in the tourism portfolio including Manager of Tourism Development and Director of Tourism. She has been Director of Marketing since October 1999.

During her tenure in Government, she has served as on a number of Federal Provincial committees and Boards including the Battle Harbour Historic Trust. Ms. Murphy holds a Bachelor of Commerce Honours (co-operative) degree from MUN.

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Nancy Healey, Executive Director of Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador (HNL)

HNL is dedicated to the development and promotion of the tourism/hospitality industry in Newfoundland and Labrador. HNL focuses its efforts in three areas:

- Advocacy to various levels of government on issues and challenges facing the tourism industry;
- Professional development –providing training and workshops to owner operators and their employees to enhance the quality experience of our visitors; and
- Various project to advance the quality of the tourism product.

Nancy is also an executive member of the Newfoundland and Labrador Business Caucus a collaboration of nine industry associations pulled together under the Strategic Partnership initiative (Business, Labour and Government) modeled after the successful Irish economic and social policy initiative. Business caucus is active on several fronts to address challenges to development in the province. Nancy has also been involved in enhancing access to the province both via marine and air. Prior to joining HNL she held various positions with the provincial government, the College of the North Atlantic and a private business and public relations consulting firm. She also worked for 7 years with the St. John's Board of Trade in a variety of capacities. She holds a Bachelor of Arts with majors in Political Science and Canada Studies from Memorial University and a Bachelor of Journalism from the University of King's College. Nancy has been a tourist to Ireland 2 times in the past 4 years leading members of her extended family on excursions around country and is fascinated with Ireland's culture and tourism and relishes this opportunity to learn how Ireland developed such a strong tourism product.

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Nova Scotia Participants

Kelliann Dean, Deputy Minister, Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage

A native Nova Scotian, Kelliann Dean joined the Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage in January 2004 as Deputy Minister. Kelliann has extensive experience in strategic business communications and business development. From 2001 to 2004, she served as vice president of business development for Nova Scotia Business Incorporated, the province's business development agency. For 13 years, Kelliann worked at the Business Development Bank of Canada in Halifax and Montreal where she held positions of increasing responsibility in the areas of communications, public relations, human resources, marketing and business development. Prior to leaving, she was assistant vice-president, strategic initiatives. As Deputy Minister, Kelliann is a member of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia Board of Governors and Executive Committee, chair of the Nova Scotia Museum Board of Governors and vice chair of the Nova Scotia Public Archives Board of Trustees. She also serves on the boards of the Canadian Tourism Commission and the Trade Centre Limited. Kelliann holds a bachelor of public relations degree from Mount Saint Vincent University and a master's degree in business administration from Saint Mary's University.

Danny Morton, Resort Manager, White Point Beach Resort, Queens County, NS

Mr. Daniel Morton has been with White Point Beach Resort for over 20 years. He has been involved in the tourism industry throughout his life starting in a family business early on and completing his Hotel Management Degree Program at George Brown College in Toronto. His many volunteer involvements have included community development, cultural and tourism related organizations. He is a Past President of the South Shore Tourism Association and currently Vice Chair of TIANS.

John Somers, Director of Marketing and Planning, Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Heritage & Culture

Mr. Somers began his career with the Government of Nova Scotia as a research and statistical officer in 1990. Since that time he has held positions in direct and internet marketing as well as managing research and strategic planning before assuming his present role. His current responsibilities include both conventional and electronic marketing, direct-to-consumer promotions, the province's toll-free visitor information service and the provincial visitor information centres. Mr. Somers represents his provincial government on the ACTP Marketing Committee, on which he currently serves as chair.

Prince Edward Island Participants

Chris Jones, Director of Policy, Planning & Research, Tourism PEI

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Born in New Brunswick in 1961, Chris holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from the University of Prince Edward Island and a Master of Science from the University of Guelph and has been employed for the last 22 years in both the public and private sectors. In the private sector, Chris was a Senior Consultant with the Coopers and Lybrand Consulting Group. He joined the public sector in 1992 and served as a Director with the Island Regulatory and Appeals Commission. At the Commission, Chris had the responsibility to oversee the administration of the provinces tribunal on issues related to land use and ownership. It was during his tenure, that the Commission introduced mediation as an opportunity to settle land disputes. Chris started with Tourism Prince Edward Island in 2001 as Director of the Policy, Planning and Research Division. His particular focus is on the development of strategic partnerships with public and private industry. In his current role, Chris is responsible for organizational planning and developing a model to allow the crown corporation to maximize efficiencies as a provincial marketing agency. Chris currently sits on the Canadian Tourism Commission Research Committee and is a Board member of the Canadian Chapter of the Tourism and Travel Research Association and the Tourism Research Centre at the University of Prince Edward Island. Chris resides in Stratford, Prince Edward Island with his wife Kathy and their two girls, Hillary and Bailey.

Gordon MacInnis, Past President, Tourism Industry Association of Prince Edward Island

Gordon's post-secondary education consisted of attendance at Prince of Wales College and the University of Prince Edward Island where he earned his Bachelor of Arts Degree. Following graduation he taught at North Granville, Ebenezer, Cornwall Elementary and Eliot River Elementary Schools and eventually assumed the role of Principal of Eliot River Elementary School (1975 – 1986). Mr. MacInnis was elected to the Legislative Assembly and served as a Member of the House from 1986 – 1996 representing the District of 2nd Queens. During his time in government he served as the Minister of Tourism 1986 – 1989; Minister of Transportation and Public Works 1989 – 1991; Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation 1991 – 1993; Minister of Transportation and Public Works 1993 – 1994; Minister of Education 1994 – 1996; and Minister of Human Resources 1995 – 1996. Gordon has been deeply involved in the Tourism Industry on Prince Edward Island for many years and he and his wife, Winnifred, operate a very successful tourist business – Cavendish Maples Cottages in Cavendish. He has served the Tourism Industry in the following capacities; on the Executive and President of the Tourism Industry Association of PEI, President of the Cavendish and Area Tourist Association, member of the group that started the planning for the Cavendish Municipality and served on the first Board of Municipality. Mr. MacInnis is currently the regional New Brunswick / Prince Edward Island private sector representative on the Canadian Tourism

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Commission Board of Directors and PEI industry representative for the Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership Management Committee. Gordon and his wife, Winnifred have three children and live in Charlottetown, PEI.

John Cudmore, President & COO, Rodd Hotels & Resorts

John Cudmore is President & COO of Rodd Hotel & Resorts, Atlantic Canada's largest privately owned hotel chain, consisting of ten hotels that span across Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The company targets the following as its primary markets: meeting, convention, sport, commercial traveler, motor coach, family and golf. John is a Tourism Advisory Council board member, Vice-President of Tourism Charlottetown & The Prince Edward Island Convention Partnership, Canada Select National Rating Program Board Member, Chair of the National Criteria and Prince Edward Island Board Member.

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VI. Mission Activities and Presentations

Below is a summary of the activities and presentation of the Best Practices Mission. The tables summarize the participant's responses

1. Fáilte Ireland, Wednesday, October 10, 2007 – 8:30 am

Fáilte Ireland	Poor	Good	Very Good	Excellent
	1	2	3	4
Knowledge of presenter			3.8	
Quality of Information provided			3.7	
Information Content			3.8	
Time Allotment			3.3	

Contacts

Ciaran Tuite – Head of Product Development

Paul Keleye – Paul Keeley, Director of Market Development

Background and Overview of How Things Work at Fáilte Ireland:

Fáilte Ireland is the main tourism organization that provides direct funding and programs in Marketing, Product Development and Human Resource training programs on the Island of Ireland (ie involved in both Northern Ireland and the Republic). The organization has approximately 400 staff with 100 spread in the regions, 140 in the marketing department and 140 in the Human Resource and Training Departments. The budget is 92% directly granted by Governments and 8% fee for service. The organization manages an annual budget of approximately \$150,000,000. This is the body through which European Union contributions are assessed to assist in much infrastructure and product development work.

Fáilte Ireland is also directly involved in developing and fostering a workforce to supply the tourism industry. Over 249,000 (12% of the Irish workforce) are employed in Tourism, 30% of whom are immigrant and visiting workers. The organization assists coordination between private sector and regulatory bodies.

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The organization is also responsible for compiling and providing related research for both business and public sector organizations.

Working with Industry and Public agencies, the Fáilte Ireland Tourism Product Development Strategy 2007 – 2013 has been completed and adopted and implementation has begun. This document represents an investment in tourism product of 540 million euros over the project implementation period.

Comments of the activity/presentations, and lessons learned:

Challenges for the future were identified and include a gradual phase out of funding from EU although currently and through the life of the strategy funding will not be a problem. Lessening the rural area dependence on the local market is a goal of the strategy. Currently international travelers are aware of Dublin as a travel experience resulting in an imbalance between urban / rural visitor travel.

Overall Fáilte Ireland is an active, well funded, public body organization that appears to work productively within the scope of its mission “To guide and support the development of sustainable a sustainable tourism industry in Ireland”. Growth statistics provided show ongoing positive growth.

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As a result of our visit to **Fáilte Ireland** the following points have been noted:

1. the organization is an extremely successful one as a result of the monetary contribution and support from the EU
2. the government recognized the power of tourism as an industry and economic generator in choosing to put money from the EU into tourism
3. Fáilte Ireland is in the field and does have a productive and positive relationship with the industry
4. The power of tax breaks has resulted in the development of new tourism product throughout the rural districts of Ireland
5. This session provided an excellent perspective on the need to grow tourism and its importance to the economy

2. Tourism Dublin – Wednesday, October 10 – 10:30 am

	Poor	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Tourism Dublin	1	2	3	4
Knowledge of presenter			3.8	
Quality of Information provided			3.7	
Information Content			3.7	
Time Allotment			3	

Background and Overview of How Things Work at Tourism Dublin:

Tourism Dublin plays a similar role to the regional tourism industry associations in Nova Scotia. They are marketers of their area (Dublin) to their regional partnering with Fáilte Ireland and Internationally with Tourism Ireland. Their marketing abilities (dollars) are based on a fee for service billing structure with Fáilte Ireland and their own ingenuities. They are an example of industrious as they work on an impressive number of revenue streams for marketing dollars. They run a central reservation system for tourism related products, their main visitor centre doubles as an extensive gift shop and their concept “Dublin Pass” allows tourists to purchase a pass to access multiple attractions. Partnering with the Community, Businesses, Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland has allowed for the development of an impressive promotional program. This includes fulfillment (complimentary and saleable) publications, web site with downloadable walking

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tours and a DVD. The organization hosts media tours and provides Media with complimentary passes and itineraries for self – directed exploring options. Up to 40 consumer shows are attended each year along with Tourism Ireland and trade fairs are hosted whenever available.

Contacts:

Ciara Sugure, Marketing Manager (www.visitdublin.com)

Comments of the activity/presentations, and lessons learned:

A very impressive level of activity and accomplishments was showcased during the presentation.

The main visitor centre is located in the centre of Dublin. The venue is very effective and a great example of living history. This also ensures the heritage building will be maintained.

Tourism Dublin is a good example of how a DMO operates.

Excellent use of their website and downloads (podcasts)

The Media Pass program is most impressive

The gift shop, offices, reservation centre and information centre all seemed to be extremely well run.

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As a result of our visit to **Tourism Dublin** the following points have been noted:

1. Great use of a multi – tourism facility;
2. A good example of how a DMO operates. Information gathered from the session will be passed along to Tourism Charlottetown.
3. There did appear to be jealousies over subsidies and tax breaks.

3. Tourism Irish Industry Confederation

Wednesday, October 10 – 1:30 pm

Tourism Irish Industry Confederation	Poor 1	Good 2	Very Good 3	Excellent 4
Knowledge of presenter			3.7	
Quality of Information provided			3.6	
Information Content			3.6	
Time Allotment			3.4	

Background and Overview of How Things Work at Irish Tourism Industry Confederation:

The ITIC is a membership organization made up of major tourism businesses (Air Lingus, tour companies, product focused companies such as Guinness and Waterford) as well as other organizations such as Irish Vintners Association, Car Rental Association, Fáilte Ireland etc.

This group of private and public sector organizations has activities that include initiating and managing research projects desired by the industry, providing advocacy to the government, participating in the Product Development Strategy plan 2007 – 2013 at all levels. The organization provides the public and private sector link and is the voice for the Irish Tourism Industry.

Contacts:

Richard Burke, Chairman

Comments of the activity/presentations, and lessons learned:

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As a result of our visit to **Irish Tourism Industry Confederation** the following points have been noted:

1. How Ireland is looking at the global competition in Ireland;
2. What their quality program development and maintenance is;
3. What the seasonality issues are in rural areas;
4. How tourism stays front and centre in national plans;
5. How heritage product is protected;
6. How infrastructure changes are weighed to their effect on tourism;
7. How we share similar positions on lobbying tactics and how they tackle the bureaucratic and political systems.

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4. Tourism Ireland, Wednesday, October 10 – 3:00 pm

Tourism Ireland	Poor 1	Good 2	Very Good 3	Excellent 4
Knowledge of presenter			3.8	
Quality of Information provided			3.6	
Information Content			3.4	
Time Allotment			3.4	

Background and Overview of How Things Work at Tourism Ireland:

Tourism Ireland is a sister organization to Fáilte Ireland and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. Tourism Ireland is focused on representing the whole of Ireland to international markets overseas. The responsibilities of the organization also include ensuring brand maintenance of all product marketing. The organization manages a 2007 budget of 76 million Euros and has 160 staff. One hundred are spread worldwide in 20 tourism offices.

Funding is leveraged with contributions from the EU and specifically partnership opportunities with the private sector.

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Contacts:

Mark Henry – Head of Marketing www.tourismireland.com

Comments of the activity/presentations, and lessons learned:

This was a very good demonstration on their world wide marketing efforts.

As a result of our visit to **Tourism Ireland**, the following points have been noted:

1. Interesting to learn how they are structured and that their focus is solely on International Marketing
2. Very interested in their contact centre and that they are not booking rooms or packages.
3. Similar to CTC and how both organizations are concerned about market share.

5. East Border Region, Wednesday, October 10

	Poor	Good	Very Good	Excellent
	1	2	3	4
Knowledge of presenter			3.8	
Quality of Information provided			3.8	
Information Content			3.8	
Time Allotment			3.3	

Background and Overview of How Things Work at East Border Region:

At the town of Carlingford, 20 local and area business people, politicians and interested residents met with the group. The new Ambassador of Ireland former Prince Edward Island Premier Pat Binns was in attendance.

The East Border Region has existed for the past 30 years and is comprised of 7 municipal units from both Northern Ireland and the Republic. All units on the route from Dublin to Belfast have joined forces (despite county, town and international borders) and recognize the area as a district product area in itself.

Comments of the activity/presentations, and lessons learned:

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The warm welcome, reception and dinner was unanimously considered overwhelming and beyond expectations. The only challenge collectively recognized was the degree of difficulty in gathering much information due to the social nature of the event.

As a result of our visit to **East Border Region** the following points have been noted:

1. The area is a great example of cooperation with the guest / customer being top of mind.
2. A very positive experience where there was mutual respect for what each of our groups was accomplishing through our tourism vision and goals.
3. “Great product, people and pubs... Special thanks to Ambassador Binns.”

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6. Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Thursday, October 11 – 9:00 am

Northern Ireland Tourist Board	Poor 1	Good 2	Very Good 3	Excellent 4
Knowledge of presenter			3.6	
Quality of Information provided			3.7	
Information Content			3.6	
Time Allotment			3.1	

Background and Overview of How Things Work at Northern Ireland Tourist Board:

The Northern Ireland Tourism Board is to the North what the Fáilte Ireland is to the Republic in the South. Although the mandates are similar (marketing and product development) it is more heavily involved currently in product development. Resources are being applied to making Northern Ireland a viable and serious competitor in the global tourism market.

The first target market of concentration is the Republic of Ireland and the continuing blurring process of the borders between the two. Air access and cruise ship visitations are two areas of particular interest and concentration effort for the Board.

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Contacts:

Allan Clark – Chief Executive www.nitb.com

Catherine Thompson – Director of Finance and Business Development

Orla Ferren – Communications Manager

Comments of the activity/presentations, and lessons learned:

The Board recognizes the opportunities that a sustained tourism industry could represent as the region develops and renews following a period of unrest.

The group benefits from substantial partnership assistance from the EU.

As a result of our visit to **Northern Ireland Tourist Board** the following points have been noted:

1. A good overview of interesting work that is being done on Product Development
2. A very good presentation that highlighted an abundance of funding.
3. An interesting perspective on whether Belfast was getting their fair share from the EU and how they are capitalizing on “iconic” opportunities (Titanic).

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7. Tour of NITB Signature Products, Thursday, October 11 – 10:30 am

	Poor 1	Good 2	Very Good 3	Excellent 4
Knowledge of presenter			3.7	
Quality of Information provided			3.4	
Information Content			3.4	
Time Allotment			3.1	

Contacts:

Liz Beaton

Background and Overview of How Things Work with NITB Signature Products:

Positive changes in the political situation have fostered a large growth in visitation to the North. The development of product and infrastructure is a primary concern to accommodate the influx of visitors and ensure a quality experience. The Board is spearheading five major development projects as anchor attractions. The Titanic project (Titanic was built in Belfast) is part of a large renewal project for the waterfront on the outskirts of Belfast. The 90 million pound project will be completed by 2012 to welcome the world during the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the ship. Other attractions include restoration of the Derry (the oldest walled city in Europe), St. Patrick’s Christian Heritage Site, Giant’s Causeway and The Mourne’s natural area.

Future developments will be done that spread visitation from urban areas, increase length of stay of visitors and spread economic benefit. Belfast is also considering a convention centre that may be part of the Titanic waterfront development area.

Comments of the activity/presentations, and lessons learned:

As a result of the tour of NITB Signature Products. the following points have been noted:

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1. Very impressed with the level of cooperation, product development focus and investment in this area.
2. This truly demonstrates the benefits of playing to your strengths – identifying what you have that is unique in the world a prioritizing investment and development.

8. Donegal Tourism Operators and Local Tourism Players,
Thursday, October 11 – 7:30 pm

	Poor	Good	Very Good	Excellent
	1	2	3	4
Knowledge of presenter			3.1	
Quality of Information provided			3.0	
Information Content		2.9		
Time Allotment		2.9		

Background and How Things Work at Donegal Tourism Operators and with Local Tourism Players:

An informal setting did not allow for a thorough understanding of how the organization is operating though it was the first time that “lack of funding” was mentioned.

An excellent showcase of Irish hospitality and food.

Brief Description of activities / presentations:

A wonderful dinner with no formality to it.

9. Ireland West Airport Management, Friday, October 12 – 11:00 am

	Poor	Good	Very Good	Excellent

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	1	2	3	4
Knowledge of presenter			3.7	
Quality of Information provided			3.4	
Information Content			3.5	
Time Allotment			3.2	

Background and Overview of How Things Work at Ireland West Airport:

The Ireland West Airport is a true success story of a sole priest believing the area could be developed as a destination by providing air access. Since its opening in the late 70's, the airport has grown to become international with regular flights to many parts of Europe and occasional flights to North America. The airport has distinguished itself as a viable option to the hectic and crowded Dublin airport and is becoming a favourite for leisure tour group customers looking for a convenient link to the more rural experiences offered in the Western portion of the Island.

Contacts:

Liam Scollan – Group Managing Director www.knockairport.com

Brief Description of activities / presentations:

The airport is undergoing an extensive expansion and has been recognized as a valuable link to the global marketplace by its partners at Fáilte Ireland and the EU.

Comments of the activity/presentations, and lessons learned:

As a result of our visit to **Ireland West Airport Management** the following points have been noted:

1. The group was able to pass along ideas on how to expand links to the North American market and all were excited with the prospects.
2. An interesting history in terms of how to develop a rural airport.
3. There appears to be significant airport subsidy at play.
4. A great example of “the little airport that could” and how one person’s vision for the airport has resulted in tremendous connectivity on tourism and business growth in the area and country.
5. An excellent example of what can happen when air access is opened.

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10. Inís Mór Cooperative, Friday, October 12 – 4:00 pm

	Poor 1	Good 2	Very Good 3	Excellent 4
Knowledge of presenter			3.8	
Quality of Information provided			3.6	
Information Content			3.6	
Time Allotment			3.5	

Background and Overview of How Things Work at Inís Mór Cooperative:

This Cooperative has focused all of their efforts on the survival of their community; the third largest of the three Aran Islands. The residents of the Island of Inís Mór are determined to ensure their part of the country remains relevant in the cultural make up of Ireland.

Overview / highlights of how things work in this location:

Tourism, culture and heritage opportunities are all being investigated and developed with fervor as these people thrive to ensure their way of life becomes sustainable on a long term basis.

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Comments of the activity/presentations, and lessons learned:

As a result of our visit to **Inís Mór Cooperative** the following points have been noted:

1. There is a huge challenge in retaining young adults by providing viable livelihoods, maintaining services for all areas and fostering the traditional culture and language that makes their lives unique.
2. Tourism has been their predominant method of attaining economic stability and support has been provided by the national government.
3. The sincere high value that the residents place on their environment environs and culture was at a minimum “moving”.
4. This is a great example of rural economic development that has had EU support (but the question is how they will cope without EU funding).

VII. Evaluation of Mission

The **Best Practices Mission to Ireland** exposed the ACTP management team participants to a broad range of tourism organizations and an insight into how they function. Opportunities to see a sample of Ireland’s signature attractions and experience their “authentic hospitality” was also part of the mission.

The coordination of the mission by David McNulty, Tourism Development International (TDI) was deemed to be exceptional by all participants. Mr. McNulty coordinated a tight schedule that resulted in the program being delivered and hosted by leading tourism experts and professionals.

Following the completion of the mission each participant completed a detailed evaluation. The evaluation of the mission captures the participants’ comments on strengths, weaknesses and lessons learned / recommendations. These collective questionnaire comments coupled with dialogue with participants has been used to determine whether or not the mission met the expectations of each participant and was an overall success.

Details of the participants’ overall evaluation of the mission are captured below.

1. Strengths

- Very useful to learn what other DMOs/development agencies are doing. (It was reassuring to see that in most cases their approach to Tourism development is similar to our own. Just Better Funded!);
- Well organized (David McNulty);
- Variety of meetings developing rural destinations;
- TDI and their experience in strategies and product development;

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- Product tours, by far;
- How well the Mission showcased Atlantic Canada to Ireland. (Having the Ambassador to Canada, take time to speak to our group and the East Border Region certainly demonstrated how we are fortunate to be able to showcase our region and country in such a united fashion.);
- The ability to cover an enormous amount of “ground” in such a short time. Our organizers made every minute count and, while at times the pace was grueling, it was necessary and beneficial. There was just enough down time. All of our meetings were relevant;
- The professionalism, openness and sharing nature of all the presenters without exception;
- The familiarization opportunities related to product knowledge were varied, interesting, and extremely well organized;
- The eclectic nature of the accommodation experienced was perfect for getting an overview of the Irish product. (i.e. commercial, Inn, B&B, resort);
- Meeting a wide range of people/positions related to the industry from operators to politicians, to government employees...all facets of the industry were represented in our exposure;

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2. Weaknesses

- Too short, would have liked to spend more time discussing issues with local/small operations;
- Less is more, more time with the bigger entities
- Too much, too rushed, never get opportunity to delve in. Too much travel;
- Time! Too many marketing presentations, all the same;
- The days were long and left little time to better understand the communities and culture and appreciate what tourists enjoy.
- There were times when a presentation would be over that I felt there was much more to say and ask- i.e. at times the schedule was tight. The itinerary also was extremely challenging specifically on Day 1 due to the travel schedules...The only other suggestions for improvement I could make would be to have a facilitated session of participants soon after the mission's completion so notes and lessons learned could be shared. Hearing differing perspectives of a same experience could be beneficial to the overall learning;
- Should allow some "sponge" in the schedule to allow for a longer stay in a particular location if it has high touristic qualities;
- We may have been too rushed. Perhaps by adding an extra day we could have had more time to reflect on each of the sessions.

3. Lessons Learned / Recommendations

- What I saw re-enforced much of what we are doing in Nova Scotia. It also enforced the importance of significant government investment. Also much of the Irish tourism "miracle" was due to the massive EU intervention facilitating a lot of "catch-up" with the rest of Europe.
- Improve our website. Change variety of packages offered.
- Now have a better idea of what makes a good product. Good examples of how to get government to believe and invest in tourism.
- What we saw was not really relevant to me as a Secretariat rep but the product tours were very helpful on a provincial basis!
- Understanding better the huge HR challenges for Prince Edward Island and Atlantic Canada. There are certainly reasons for concern and will require action by our HR department. As well I will be relaying details on some of the initiatives being carried out by Dublin Tourism to Tourism Charlottetown as a best practice.
- As we look at the marketing opportunities for Atlantic Canada as a unified region, the examples seen and lessons learned in Ireland will without a doubt be referenced often during discussions. The most important message I plan to enthusiastically convey to our own tourism organization is to share what can be accomplished when the concept of "Tourism First"

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is embraced by all levels and departments of government and business: not only those traditionally and directly connected to tourism. This is what the industry in Ireland appears to have done. “Tourism First” is used as part of their decision-making and value systems. It is apparent and has facilitated the development to marketing inside the country and internationally. In the competitive global marketplace of today, it behooves us to act on encourage the merits of the lessons learned during this valuable time.

- This mission has given us definite new marketing ideas to explore, as well as signal the need to reinforce to government the importance of tourism to the province and the need for increased investment.
- We are looking at structural changes to the way we develop and deliver tourism as a government agency.
- Focusing on tourism had had a positive impact for other sectors

Did this mission meet, exceed or fail to meet your expectations? Why do you say that please explain?

Exceed expectations 67%

- Everything was well coordinated. Time lines were reasonable. We were able to stay on schedule. Accommodations were very suitable. Our local guide was very helpful and made sure even the smallest detail was dealt with right away.
- As well as the normal networking opportunities one comes to expect from this type of a mission, I found the exposure to Ireland and the funding sources available to the Tourism Boards helps me become more aware as how competitive and global in scope tourism is.
- The missions well exceeded my expectations. I was thoroughly impressed with the quality of presentations we were exposed to. All presenters were well prepared and eager to share their stories including successes and challenges. I also have to say the level of enthusiasm from all those involved in hosting our group was impressive. We were appreciated for the time and effort we dedicated to learning about their development as a tourism industry as well as a country of people. The experience was exceedingly positive on a professional and personal level.
- This was the first best practices mission that I attended and I was impressed by the level of attention to details and the high caliber of the presenters that we met. I was also overwhelmed by the hospitality of the groups we met with and their enthusiasm/willingness to share their perspectives with us. I came away from this mission, not only with some important insight re: the need for government’s demonstrated commitment to tourism but the importance of collaboration beyond borders and the

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need to focus efforts strategically. I was amazed by not only the warmth and hospitality of the Irish people, but the camaraderie that developed within our mission team!

- Given that my knowledge of the tourism industry is limited, I gained much more of an understanding than I thought I would. Also, had the opportunity to meet and socialize with tourism professionals.
- The mission exceeded my expectations in that we met with all the key stakeholders including an unplanned meeting with the Ministry. Each of the presenters were not only knowledgeable about their own operations but brought an interesting perspective as to how things fit together (or not). It was interesting to hear that fragmentation in the industry is a common problem that we share.

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Met expectations 33%

- The mission was basically what I had anticipated.
- What I expected to achieve I did.
- Did not expect to see comparable partnerships to ACTP. There were some good examples of rural or regional partnerships.

Conclusion

The Best Practices Mission participants from ACTP were from a dynamic cross section of roles. This sometimes resulted in there being a varying degree of usefulness for some of the information provided and sessions attended. Such being the case however, there was still at no time a collective negative comment that came from any single session of the mission.

It is important to note that the presenters and their presentations were almost all ranked “Very Good” in terms of the knowledge of the presenter and the quality and content of the information presented. “Time Allotment” was the only negative comment that did appear with any frequency.

The coordination of the entire mission by Bernadette Power of Tourism Atlantic / ACOA and David McNulty, Tourism Development International is certainly part of the reason for its success. Mr. McNulty understood what the ACTP participants hoped to achieve through the mission and he was diligent in ensuring that the program was developed to meet the needs of the group and delivered by the industries leaders and experts.

Participants have indicated that as a result of the mission they will be applying “lessons learned” in their own workplaces.