

Boyne Valley Tourism Strategy 2016-2020



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Birthplace of Ireland's Ancient East

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Executive Summary



The immediate goal for the destination is to create and sustain direct and indirect employment generated through increased tourism activity.

Executive Summary

Boyne Valley Tourism commissioned W2 Consulting to develop a new tourism and marketing strategy for the Boyne Valley Destination. The Boyne Valley Tourism Plan covers the period of 2016-2020 and follows the previous plan created in 2012.

The immediate goal for the destination is to create and sustain direct and indirect employment generated through increased tourism activity. An increased focus on domestic and international source market opportunities are designed to increase the volume of demand for tourism service providers and increase tourism revenue flows throughout the region. The strategy has identified the role of the wider destination contributing to developing the tourism experience from urban gateways to the rural economy. The strategy for 2016-2020 is designed to capitalise on the depth of natural and built resources and market the destination based on the diversity of experiences it will offer visitors.

The preparation of the strategy included a wide range of consultation with a broad range of stakeholders and range of primary research methods. The research was conducted between September and November 2015 and included;

- Survey of 135 International Visitors to Boyne Valley through face to face interviews at a number of visitor sites (Hill of Tara, Trim Castle and Brú na Bóinne)
- Survey of 500 Domestic Tourists (300 interviews across the Republic of Ireland and 200 interviews across Northern Ireland)
- Survey of Boyne Valley Tourism Trade
- Survey of Incoming Tour Operators Association
- Three Strategy Planning Sessions with industry hosted in Navan and Drogheda
- Tourist mystery shopper research on a range of visitor attractions and services.
- Boyne Valley event programme review
- Destination marketing and digital marketing review
- Thirty individual stakeholder interviews representative of all groups in tourism industry and agencies involved in tourism.

The 2016-2020 Strategy is designed to focus on areas of growth potential, identify key projects that will act as a stimulus for tourism development and bring the Boyne Valley tourism brand to the next level through marketing innovation. Boyne Valley Tourism represents a central destination marketing and advocacy body, however, the success of the plan will be through a collective approach with the tourism trade and other key stakeholders.

Tourism Destination Catalytic Projects



A number of catalyst projects were identified for the destination to develop over the course of this plan. The projects were identified through the consultation process with a number of projects already under consideration. These projects are proposed to expand the product mix while providing a platform for key areas to have an immediate development focus. The seven project areas include;

The Boyne River – Boyne Navigation

The principal objective is to restore navigation on the River Boyne and the canal network between Drogheda and Navan which will in turn attract and retain visitors in the area.

Connected Trail Development and Animation

The Boyne Valley offers a wealth of walking and trail options in a world class heritage setting. Internationally, the creation of themed walking tours / amenities has transformed destinations. The heritage and historical asset base combined with the myths and legends of Ireland centred around the Boyne Valley offer international profiling opportunities through route creation.

World Class Heritage Experiences

The Boyne Valley is home to the greatest concentration of heritage sites in Ireland of international interest, in addition to being the location for a UNESCO World Heritage site. The location of international sites of significance within the Boyne Valley provides an international opportunity that will only be realised through the enhancement of the overall visitor experience at a number of the 'signature sites' across the destination.

Gateway to the Boyne

Drogheda is positioned as the Gateway to the Boyne Valley. This gateway theme and the need to increase the use of the river asset requires programming to utilise the water resource while enhancing the riverside area of Drogheda.

Interpretation Experience

In the absence of extended 'Living History' provision across the main heritage sites and trails in the Boyne Valley, digital provision needs closer examination for enhancement of the visitor experience. The scale of opportunity digital offers for site interpretation, trails, marketing and product development is significant.

Accommodation Capacity

The region suffers from a lack of accommodation which is a significant deterrent among tour operators for scheduling the area for overnight stays. The pressure on the destination is a lack of hotel rooms and private sector support should be provided to stimulate consideration of the area for investment.

The broadening of the bednight stock through more contemporary forms of accommodation also needs encouragement particularly in the promotion of rural based tourism enterprises.

Developing Tourism Towns

Strong performing destinations require an integrated approach to tourism provision combining quality day time and evening economy provision. The enhancement of a number of urban destinations as gateway towns or exploration bases should be considered.

The development of a pilot Tourism Destination Towns will provide a focused approach to developing the tourism experience in urban areas that are currently underperforming.

Tourism Strategy Development

Six strategic pillars have been identified as the basis for the tourism development strategy for the Boyne Valley destination over the next five years. Within each of these strategic themes are a range of objectives that will focus the direction of Boyne Valley Tourism and its tourism partners. The six strategic pillars and desired outcome by 2020 are as follows;

IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST®
Wander Through Time

- 1. OUTCOME 20.1 IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST**
 Boyne Valley is recognised as the Birthplace of Ireland's Ancient East through the existence of sites of national and international significance and supporting visitor experiences.
- 2. OUTCOME 20.2 DESTINATION TOWNS**
 Improve the character and quality of Boyne Valley Gateway towns and exploration bases to offer a higher level of tourism provision for visitors.
- 3. OUTCOME 20.3 EVENTS AND FESTIVALS**
 A structured and innovative calendar of events and festivals that will attract domestic and international visitors.
- 4. OUTCOME 20.4 ACTIVE OUTDOORS**
 An integrated active outdoors approach that positions the Boyne Valley as a destination with quality activity resources, attractions, adventure and amenities.
- 5. OUTCOME 20.5 FOOD & DRINK**
 Boyne Valley is recognized as the national food and craft drinks tourism destination.
- 6. OUTCOME 20.6 TOURISM DISPERSION**
 Increased rural tourism focus to ensure a greater dispersion of visitors across the countryside and rich landscapes of the Boyne Valley.

6 Markets Framework

- Internal Marketing
- Interactive Marketing
- External Marketing
- Referral Business
- Influence Business
- Alliance Marketing

Experience Marketing Development



1.0

Introduction & Overview

The introduction of Ireland's Ancient East programme and the increasing awareness of the Boyne Valley as a national tourism destination highlights the immediate scope for tourism growth across the destination.



The Boyne Valley tourism region of County Meath and south County Louth contains the greatest concentration of national heritage assets in Ireland. The area is home to a UNESCO World Heritage site. The product base has expanded to include some of Ireland's largest family attractions and an expanded adventure and activity base. The natural environment offers visitors coastal, river and lakeside vistas against the backdrop of some of Ireland's finest landscapes. The heritage of the area is steeped in innovation, conquest and pilgrimage. The natural resources yield international class food produce that equal the world class heritage proposition of the destination. The strategy for 2016-2020 is designed to capitalise on the depth of natural and built resources and market the destination based on the diversity of experiences it will offer visitors.

The Boyne Valley Tourism Plan has been created to adopt a strategic approach to tourism development and marketing across the destination. Since the creation of the most recent strategic plan, a number of macro-economic factors have contributed to national and regional tourism performance and provided the foundation for Boyne Valley Tourism to build on its tourism performance. A confident global outlook for tourism combined with international travel trends suggest a strong performing sector that the Boyne Valley is well positioned to capitalise on. The introduction of Ireland's Ancient East programme and the increasing awareness of the Boyne Valley as a national tourism destination highlight the immediate scope for tourism growth across the destination.

Tourism has represented a critical economic sector in the recent stabilisation of the Irish economy. Its future role in economic development will be central to national planning. Through the implementation of this tourism strategy for

Boyne Valley, stakeholders are recognising the necessity to establish tourism as a credible and valuable contributor to the wider economy.

The strategic plan maps out ambitious long term goals combined with innovative ways of developing the destination through collaborative efforts. Destination success will only be achieved through the unity of approach.

Innovation
multi stakeholder
partnership
strategic
unified
collective approach
ambitious
confident global outlook
experience innovation
spirit of creativity

The immediate goals for the destination are to create and sustain direct and indirect employment generated through increased tourism trade. An increased focus on domestic and international source market opportunities are designed to increase the volume of demand for tourism service providers and increase revenue flow throughout the region. The strategy has identified the role of the wider destination contributing to developing the tourism experience from urban gateways to the rural economy.

The past number of years have seen an investment into establishing the destination as a viable option for visitors supported by an enthusiastic, innovative and dedicated trade. The destination can now advance further through the opportunity Ireland's Ancient East presents. The Boyne Valley tourism offering is well positioned to capitalise on the destination programme and will challenge the trade to seize this opportunity.

Alignment of all stakeholders is central to achieving this ambition. Delivering a quality tourism destination is a multi-stakeholder task and must be undertaken in a unified and coherent manner. The alignment of future economic development policy that impacts on tourism delivery will underpin the Boyne Valley's capacity to reach the milestones required to present it as one of Ireland's most sought after destinations.

The current regional performance reflects the scope for growth and the gaps in the market place. Low levels of group business, a reliance on banqueting to sustain hotels, reduced occupancy rates at peak periods in the tourism calendar in comparison to other regions, highlights where the collective effort is required over the coming years.

The 2016-2020 Strategy is designed to focus on areas of growth potential, identify key projects that will act as a stimulus for tourism development and bring the Boyne Valley tourism brand to the next level through marketing innovation.

Boyne Valley Tourism represents a destination marketing and advocacy body. However, a collective approach in partnership with the tourism trade is central to tourism success. The history of the Boyne Valley reveals the scale of innovation that prospered throughout the area.

The development of tourism through experience innovation will recapture this spirit of creativity while capitalising on the wealth of natural and built tourism assets across the destination.

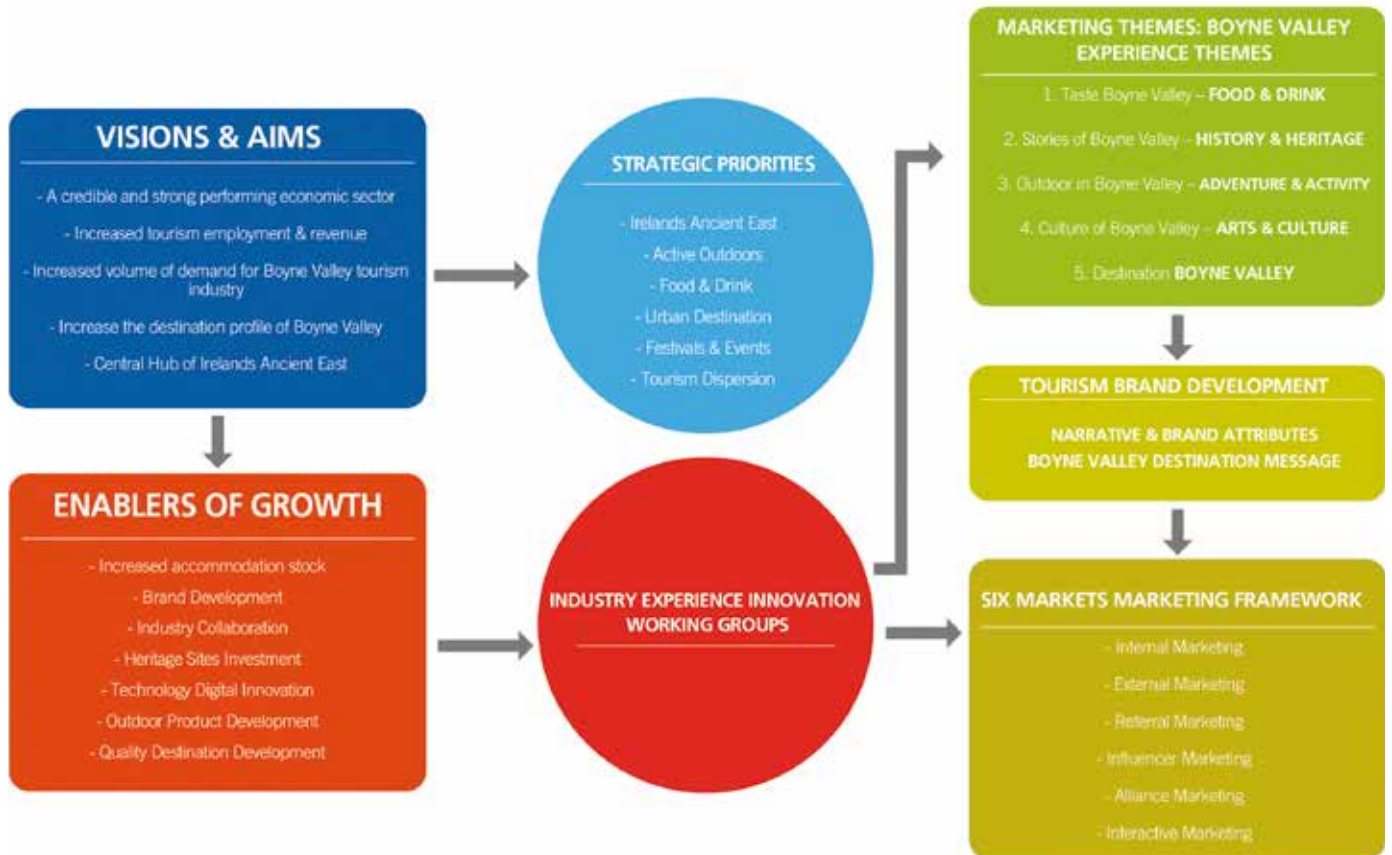


2.0

A New Strategy for Boyne Valley Tourism

Boyne Valley Tourism Strategy & Marketing Development

Boyne Valley will become one of the leading tourism destinations in Ireland based on a collaborative destination marketing approach and return on marketing investment focus.



more megalithic art in the Boyne Valley than in all the rest of Europe put together

Every 55 international tourists help support 1 tourism job

A great location, close to Dublin and Belfast with just under 1,400 hotel bedrooms.

100%
of international visitors would recommend a visit to the Boyne Valley

3.0

Boyne Valley: Research Summary



The foundations for the new tourism strategy and marketing plan are based on research and industry consultations.

The foundations for the new tourism strategy and marketing plan are based on research and industry consultations. The process resulted in an examination of the current perception of the destination, international destination marketing opportunities and product development programming. An assessment of the destination was undertaken to examine current associations with the area and identify areas for all stakeholders to focus on in the development and marketing of the Boyne Valley. The research was conducted among domestic tourists and overseas visitors to Ireland.

A total of 500 domestic tourists were interviewed through face to face interviews at various sampling points around Ireland. The sample consisted of 300 surveys conducted throughout the Republic of Ireland and 200 surveys conducted in Northern Ireland. The Republic of Ireland sample was gathered at the National Ploughing Championships and interview locations in Clare, Limerick, Kerry and Galway. The Northern Ireland survey was conducted at sampling points in Belfast, Newry and Derry. 135 international visitors were interviewed at a number of visitor sites in the destination that included Trim Castle, Brú na Bóinne and Hill of Tara.



Industry Performance

Analysis of the performance of the hotel industry across the Midlands and East (Boyne Valley area included) reveals how the industry performance is dominated by the domestic market, underperforming in key overseas markets and is currently extremely reliant on wedding business. (Source: Crowe Horwath Ireland Hotel Industry report 2014)

Analysis of the performance of the hotel industry across the Midlands and East reveals how the industry performance is underperforming in key overseas markets

The key performance indicators are as follows:

- 71.5 % of business is sourced in the Republic of Ireland compared to 61.3 % national average.
- Only 4.6 % of business in the region is generated through the North American market, compared to 9.6 % nationally.
- The gap between the region and national average for visitors from Great Britain, Germany and France is relatively comparable. However, it continues to lag behind compared to other destinations.
- 18.2 % of hotel business across the destination is generated by weddings, compared to 9.7 % nationally. The South West represents the next highest reliance on wedding business (9.9 %) highlighting the significant emphasis on the wedding industry for hotels in Midlands and East.
- The percentage of business generated by tour operators (4.9 %) is the lowest of all regions examined.
- The level of conference and incentive business generated across the region is almost half the national average while the MICE segment only accounts for 1.5 % of hotel business in the region.
- The volume of business conducted online is underperforming compared to other destinations with 9 % of business generated through internet bookings compared to 13.9 % as the national average. Average occupancy for hotels in the region is 62.4 %. This compares to 67.8 % as the national average.
- Occupancy at peak periods (May to September) are the periods of performance where the gap between national performance versus regional is most evident. August represents the highest period of occupancy at 81.8 % compared to the national average of 86.9 %.
- Total bed capacity across all types of accommodations for Co. Meath is 3,569 and 1,803 for Co. Louth.
- A total of 1,117 hotel rooms are available in Co. Meath offering 2,614 beds for visitors. A total of 624 rooms are available in Co. Louth offering 1456 beds.

International Visitors

- Almost half of international visitors to the area have heard of the Boyne Valley (48 %) prior to their visit to Ireland.
- Visitors indicated that visiting the Boyne Valley destination was a more important consideration than visiting specific County destinations. There was very low awareness of the County composition of the Boyne Valley destination.



- The main factors that influenced visitors to the Boyne Valley were history and heritage and the desire to visit a particular attraction.
- The main expectations of visitors to the Boyne Valley area before their visit were ancient history, castles, learning about history and specific attractions e.g. Newgrange.
- Eight out of ten international visitors associate historical sites with the Boyne Valley while almost seven out of ten overseas visitors also associate the heritage of Ireland with Boyne Valley.
- A quarter of international visitors associate the area as being close to Dublin with 20 % associating it as being the home to international heritage sites of significance.
- National tourism websites, TripAdvisor and specific visitor attraction websites were identified as the most important information sources for visitors prior to their visit to the Boyne Valley.
- Over half (53 %) of international visitors are aware that there is an UNESCO World Heritage site in the Boyne Valley area.

(Source: Survey conducted Oct '15 in Bru na Boinne, Trim Castle and Hill of Tara)

Domestic Visitors (ROI)

- 69 % of domestic visitors had heard of the Boyne Valley in contrast to 92 % who had heard of the Wild Atlantic Way.
- History, countryside, walking and activities are the features most associated with the Boyne Valley as a tourism destination.
- 42 % of domestic visitors had visited an attraction in the Boyne Valley area but did not overnight in the area. A further 39 % stated that they have day tripped to the area but never visited the Boyne Valley for an overnight stay. The top associations with Boyne Valley were attractive countryside, historic towns and places, heritage sites and visitor attractions.
- Activities, value for money and range of attractions are the main influencing factors for domestic visitors when considering a destination for a short break. Newgrange, Kells monastic site and the Hill of Tara were the most visited attractions among domestic visitors.

(Source: 300 surveys conducted throughout the Republic of Ireland gathered at the National Ploughing Championships and interview locations in Clare, Limerick, Kerry and Galway.)

Domestic Visitors (Northern Ireland)

- Almost half (48 %) of Northern Ireland respondents had heard of the Boyne Valley in contrast to 51 % who had heard of the Wild Atlantic Way.
- The Battle of the Boyne (42 %) was the most frequently mentioned feature of the Boyne Valley.
- Attractive countryside, historic towns and heritage sites are the main areas of association with the area.
- Tayto Park (36 %) was the most visited attraction by respondents.
- The promotion of visitor attractions and value breaks are the most important considerations for prospective visitors in the Northern Ireland market.



- The marketing of the destination was not important to prospective visitors with a preference for stronger focus on attractions, packages and more reasons to visit the area.

(Source: 200 surveys conducted in Northern Ireland at sampling points in Belfast, Newry and Derry.)

Boyne Valley Trade

- Over three quarters of the Boyne Valley tourism trade had experienced growth in their business in the past year with only 2 % experiencing a decline in their business performance.
- The domestic market (47 %) accounts for the vast majority of business generated in the Boyne Valley with 29 % being generated from overseas markets. A further 24 % generate their business evenly between the domestic and overseas market.
- The North American market (30 %) and the UK (28 %) are the most important source markets for overseas visitors to the area.
- 76 % of all international visitors to Boyne Valley originate from the North American, UK, German, French, Spanish markets. A further 13 % originate from the rest of Europe.
- The tourism trade identified competing against established destinations and the challenges of marketing internationally as the biggest barriers faced by the local tourism industry.
- The desired marketing priorities for the Boyne Valley tourism industry are the communication of the region as a destination for activities and adventure, the Boyne Valley food offering, positioning as a family break destination and a cohesive Boyne Valley destination marketing approach.
- The focus for attracting international visitors should be on Ireland's Ancient East programme, developing the Boyne Valley destination, history and heritage, diverse product offering in the area and the Boyne Valley food proposition.
- The Boyne Valley tourism industry proposes that the marketing messaging for the destination should be focused on the extended product offering available to visitors, the range of unique attractions across the region, in addition to ease of access from Dublin.

(Source: Questionnaire Survey of tourism trade and face to face interviews)



4.0 Tourism Destination Catalytic Projects

Tourism Destination Catalytic Projects

THE BOYNE RIVER

Boyne Navigation Project

CONNECTED TRAIL DEVELOPMENT AND ANIMATION

Greenway & Blueway Development

WORLD CLASS HERITAGE EXPERIENCES

Enhancing the quality of tourism provision and amenities

GATEWAY TO THE BOYNE

Development of Drogheda Pontoon

INTERPRETATION EXPERIENCE

Tourism technology and digital realm

ACCOMMODATION CAPACITY

Grow hotel stock

DEVELOPING TOURISM TOWNS

Create Tourism Town Destinations



1. The Boyne River – Boyne Navigation

The River Boyne is a key element of the tourism asset base but is not currently utilised to any significant level. The river offers a fascinating narrative for the destination and has the potential to be transformational in terms of the scope of tourism economy activity it can generate.

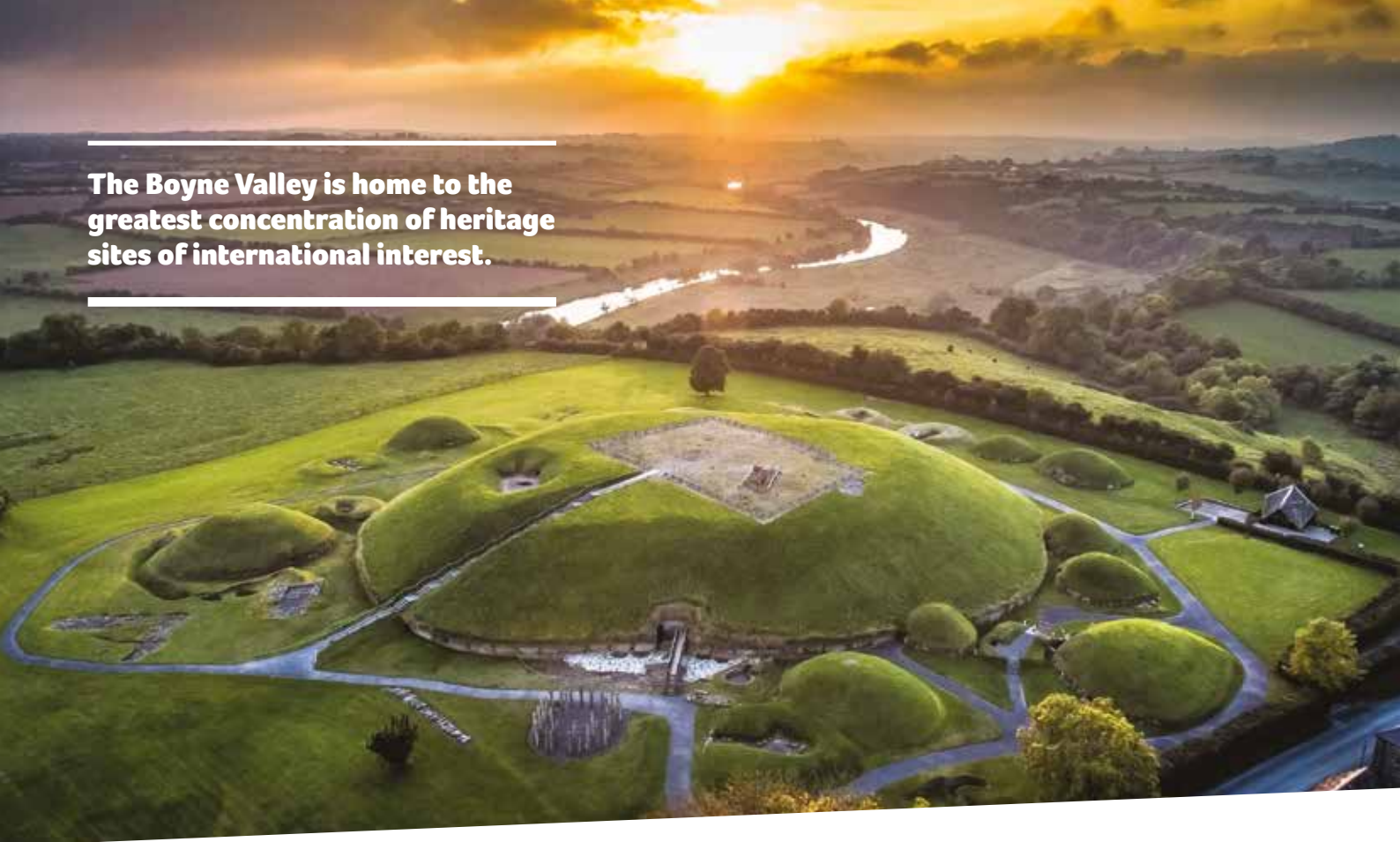
The Boyne Navigation project involves the restoration of one of the region's greatest assets, the Boyne Navigation system which comprises the river, canals and towpath. The principal objective is to restore navigation on the River Boyne and the canal network between Drogheda and Navan which will in turn attract and retain visitors in the area.

2. Connected Trail Development and Animation

The Boyne Valley offers a wealth of walking and trail options in a World Class Heritage setting. Internationally the creation of themed walking tours / amenities has transformed destinations. The heritage and historical asset base combined with the myths and legends of Ireland centred around the Boyne Valley offers international profiling opportunities through route creation. The existing plans for the Navan to Kingscourt Greenway and the Boyne Blueway offer immediate scope.

The region needs to support the development of trails through the

The Boyne Valley is home to the greatest concentration of heritage sites of international interest.



appropriate amenities that can differentiate walking, cycling and outdoor provision that contribute to the destination brand as a quality outdoor destination. The marketing and programming of multi day walking tours and national walking events needs to advance. A variety of historical and pilgrim themes can be supported by the inclusion of 'softer' route enhancements that include food and local cultural experience opportunities. A number of comparable international best practice examples need examination to harness the potential of a structured approach to trail and route development.



3. World Class Heritage Experiences

The Boyne Valley is home to the greatest concentration of heritage sites in Ireland of international interest, in addition to being the location for a UNESCO World Heritage site. There are a further two sites featured on Ireland's Tentative World Heritage list, namely Kells (Early Medieval Monastic Sites) and the Tara complex (Royal Sites of Ireland). The location of international sites of significance within the Boyne Valley provides an international opportunity that will only be realised through the enhancement of the overall visitor experience at a number of the 'signature sites' across the destination. The Boyne Valley Infrastructure review has reviewed immediate requirements across all key visitor sites. Based on this report a priority plan should be implemented to focus on a number of key sites where visitor facilities can be upgraded and provide a consistent tourism experience across the destination. Areas for initial consideration include Newgrange, Knowth and Loughcrew, Hill of Tara and Hill of Slane.

4. Gateway to the Boyne

Drogheda is positioned as the Gateway to the Boyne Valley. This gateway theme and the need to increase the use of the river asset requires programming to utilise the water resource while enhancing the riverside area of Drogheda. The proposals around a floating pontoon should be advanced to create a scale of activity focused on the river and generate tourism enterprise. The close proximity of a number of heritage and cultural experiences in Drogheda would benefit from the enhancement of the river area and the positioning of the River Boyne as a tourism catalyst for the area.



5. Interpretation Experience

In the absence of extended Living History provision across the main heritage sites and trails in the Boyne Valley, the digital offering needs closer examination for enhancement of the visitor experience. The scale of opportunity digital offers for site interpretation, trails, marketing and product development is significant. A cross sector focus combining the tourism destination with the technology sector for initial digital development should be considered to position the Boyne Valley as a hub for advancing digital tourism experiences while also aligned with the development of Ireland's Ancient East. The development of the digital realm should include enterprise agencies locally and nationally to consider the opportunity of focusing on Boyne Valley as a tourism technology development site.

6. Accommodation Capacity

The region suffers from a lack of accommodation which is a significant deterrent among tour operators for scheduling the area for overnight stays. The reliance on the wedding banqueting business among hotels also results in limited capacity in the area for weekend breaks and short stays.

The composition of guests staying at hotels highlights a reliance on the domestic market and also reflects the transient nature of the destination. The increasing pressure on Dublin for bednights highlights the additional opportunity for the Boyne Valley area.

The absence of a five star hotel property also limits the scope to attract certain types of business. The pressure on the destination is a lack of hotel rooms and private sector support should be provided to stimulate consideration of the area for investment.

The broadening of the bednight stock through more contemporary forms of accommodation also needs encouragement particularly in the promotion of rural based tourism enterprises.

7. Developing Tourism Towns

Strong performing destinations require an integrated approach to tourism provision combining quality day time and evening economy provision. The enhancement of a number of urban destinations as gateway towns or exploration bases should be considered.

This should be considered not only in the context of tourism development but also with an increased focus on the built environment in urban areas and the quality of the public realm across the destination.

The development of a pilot Tourism Destination Towns will provide a focused approach to developing the tourism experience in urban areas that are currently underperforming. It is proposed that the focus of the Tourism Destination Towns is based on industry collaboration to create a scale of activity among direct and indirect tourism providers that will contribute to the overall level of visitor services.

The creation of Tourism Destination Towns will provide a focal point for local commercial interests to collaborate on destination town promotion, marketing, business tourism, business development, advocacy for tourism, event development and ongoing programming to target domestic and international visitors.

5.0 Tourism Strategy



Six Strategic Pillars for the Development of Tourism in the Boyne Valley

OUTCOME 20.1

IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST

Boyne Valley is recognised as the heart of Ireland's Ancient East through the scale of sites of national and international significance located across the region.

OUTCOME 20.2

DESTINATION TOWNS

Improve the quality of Boyne Valley Gateway towns and exploration base's to offer a higher level of tourism provision for visitors.

OUTCOME 20.3

EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

A structured and innovative calendar of events and festivals that will attract domestic and international visitors.

OUTCOME 20.4

ACTIVE OUTDOORS

An Active Outdoors approach that positions the Boyne Valley as a destination with quality activity resources, attractions, adventure and amenities.

OUTCOME 20.5

FOOD & DRINK

Boyne Valley is a national food and craft drinks tourism destination – the Irish Gastro Valley.

OUTCOME 20.6

TOURISM DISPERSION

Increased rural tourism focus to ensure a greater dispersion of visitors across the countryside and rich landscapes of the Boyne Valley.

Outcome 20.1

Ireland's Ancient East

Adopt a partnership approach with Fáilte Ireland to develop Boyne Valley as the 'Birthplace of Ireland's Ancient East' through the existence of sites of national and international significance and development of enhanced visitor experiences.



Objectives

1. Ireland's Ancient East

Boyne Valley will be considered among visitors as the 'Birthplace of Ireland's Ancient East' becoming the starting point to explore the Ireland's Ancient East leveraging off its rich heritage base supported by new tourism experience development in partnership with Fáilte Ireland.

2. Collective Industry Marketing

Develop a cohesive marketing approach with Fáilte Ireland and Boyne Valley trade partners to reflect Boyne Valley's positioning within Ireland's Ancient East.

3. Improved Interpretation

Work with Fáilte Ireland, OPW and the tourism trade to set new standards of interpretation across key Boyne Valley sites to create a key point of differentiation for the Boyne Valley destination.

4. Boyne Valley Driving Route

Enhance the Boyne Valley driving route through experience development and itinerary development focused on expanded touring options that incorporates a wider product and activity mix.

5. Package Development

Develop a cluster of packages, itineraries and experiences across the Boyne Valley for international marketing to promote longer stays and cross selling among the tourism industry.

6. Enhance Brú na Bóinne's profile as an World Heritage Site Destination

Support Fáilte Ireland and OPW measures that will enhance Brú na Bóinne as a world class international heritage destination and UNESCO World Heritage Site while supporting development projects that increase accessibility levels to Knowth.

7. Asset Base

Develop a greater level of awareness of the Boyne Valley as home to the largest concentration of heritage sites of national and international significance in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland activity.



Outcome 20.2 Destination Towns

Improve the quality of Boyne Valley Gateway towns and exploration bases to offer a higher level of tourism provision for visitors.

Objectives

1. Urban Tourism Development

Develop a programme to create a series of Tourism Destination Towns, initially focusing on the four urban areas of Drogheda, Navan, Trim and Kells.

2. Evening Economy

Develop an evening economy focus to support the Boyne Valley's position as a destination with a wide range of unique programming to increase dwell time and visitor expenditure.

3. Tourism Awareness – Boyne Valley Business Welcome

Develop a community wide approach to involving all businesses indirectly involved in tourism and educate them in their role within the sector.

4. Cultural Quarter

Develop a multi-site cultural quarter strategy that will become the focal points for sustained cultural and arts development across the Boyne Valley. Development of one permanent site (Drogheda) and one site branded as a Cultural Hub to enhance the marketing of the area (Kells).

5. Business Tourism

Support the hotel industry in the development of business tourism activity through structured marketing and development of a system to react to niche sector opportunities on Dublin's doorstep through a collective industry effort.

6. Cultural Entertainment Product Development

Support the opportunity for developing a private sector cultural evening entertainment product to attract increased levels of group and individual business to the area.



Outcome 20.3 Events And Festivals

A structured and innovative calendar of events and festivals that will attract domestic and international visitors.

Objectives

1. Event Model

Identify and support the creation of two signature annual events for the Boyne Valley based on the implementation of a new event strategy model that supports the enhancement of existing quality events in operation across the destination.

2. Event Calendar

Implement an event calendar model to structure the timing of events supported through key event milestones for marketing and communications.

3. Niche Events

Support the creation of niche events delivery that contribute to the cultural, historical and natural identity of the Boyne Valley.

4. Arts Festival

Expansion of the Drogheda Arts Festival to include a Boyne Valley 'Fringe' event that expands the reach of the arts across the Boyne Valley with the objective of increasing the attendance of domestic and international visitors.

5. Sports Tourism

Develop a niche sport tourism focus on events that contribute to projecting the natural and built environment of the Boyne Valley prioritising a major walking festival, mass participation events, equine, golf and a multi-sport games festival.



Outcome 20.4 Active Outdoors

An integrated active outdoors approach that positions the Boyne Valley as a destination with quality activity resources, attractions, adventure and amenities.

Objectives

1. Trailways Development

Develop the active destination asset base through the promotion and support of the Greenway and Blueway models.

2. Walking Product

Develop a series of themed walking trails for domestic and international marketing to create single and multi-day packages across the Boyne Valley ensuring unique interactions with built heritage and natural landscapes.

3. National Family Attractions Centre

Position the Boyne Valley as a national centre for family attractions, adventure and activities that promotes longer stays and cross selling among the attraction and activity sector.

4. Agency Partnership

Work in partnership with key agencies to develop active the outdoors product that promotes the Boyne Valley as an active destination consistent with Boyne Valley Tourism objectives.

5. Route Innovation

Animate walking and cycling tourism activity through the creation of Boyne Valley heritage and cultural resources, amenities and branding that will position the area as a quality destination for outdoor leisure.

6. Boyne River

Transform tourism engagement with the River Boyne that transforms it into an active resource and tourism facility by improving river infrastructure at key points from Drogheda across the journey of the River Boyne subject to environmental assessment.

7. Leisure Market

Maximise the overseas tourism potential of the diverse leisure activity market that will focus on the golf product, equine, angling and other outdoor activities.



Outcome 20.5 Food & Drink

The Boyne Valley is recognised as the national food and craft drinks tourism destination.

Objectives

1. Integrated Marketing

Incorporate Boyne Valley Food messaging into product marketing that integrates food across a range of product and outdoor activity areas e.g. walking and cycling experiences combined with food experiences.

2. National Food Destination

Develop an integrated food and drink approach that connects the new food innovation hub, food and drink production, cookery training, food retail and dining across the Boyne Valley to market the destination as a leading Irish food destination.

3. Signature Boyne Valley Food

Create a Boyne Valley signature dish campaign where signature foods will be incorporated into destination and tourism venue marketing e.g. hotels, restaurants, cafes, attractions, towns, villages.

4. National Event

Support the creation of a national food and drink festival that is combined with a supporting event theme e.g. music, entertainment, active destination, arts and culture.



Outcome 20.6 Tourism Dispersion

Increased rural tourism focus to ensure a greater dispersion of visitors across the countryside and rich landscapes of the Boyne Valley.

Objectives

1. Rural Tourism High Potential Areas

Support areas of Rural Tourism with High Potential for strategic development that will encourage tourism dispersion throughout the Boyne Valley with a thematic focus – Coastal Boyne Valley, Lakelands (North Meath Lakes) and Heritage (Oldcastle, Loughcrew).

2. Niche Product Development

Promote and support the development of the agri tourism, eco tourism and maritime tourism product base that reflects the accessibility to rural tourism across the Boyne Valley.

3. Agency Alignment

Work in partnership with relevant statutory agencies to prioritise product investment and training that will increase the rural tourism product base.

4. Irish Culture

Examine the feasibility of an Irish language and cultural experience product development across local Gaeltachts.

6.0

Marketing the Destination

Six Markets Marketing Framework Implementation

Boyne Valley Destination Marketing Catalysts

Adopting a collaborative approach to marketing the Boyne Valley destination whereby the trade are cross selling and promoting partners services and products across all industry sectors.

Governance – expand the board to represent the wider Boyne Valley industry across the full geographic and product landscape.

Create a Tourism Leadership Group that will regularly provide strategic and advisory guidance for key destination projects

Demonstrate innovation through events based on the development of Niche and Signature events.

Improve the digital experience for prospective visitors and tourists on the ground.

Capitalise on signature tourism assets for specific markets and segments such as Tayto Park (Domestic) and Newgrange, Battle of the Boyne, Hill of Tara (international).

Focus on authentic experience-based development across the five experience pillars – Boyne Valley Experience Wheel.

Create industry innovation groups / work with existing groups across each of the five experience pillars to stimulate new marketing activity and idea generation.

Marketing Principles

All marketing will adopt a Return on Marketing Expenditure (ROME) focus. Marketing efforts will be targeted on experience pillars and destination strategy growth areas.

There will be enhanced Boyne Valley brand presence across all marketing activities and industry partners are expected to also incorporate the Boyne Valley Brand. This will position the brand nationally and internationally.

Targeted cooperative marketing investment with our trade will be based on the following criteria

1. Investment into Destination Profile
2. Sales orientated marketing activity
3. Creation of a structured approach to familiarisation trips

in partnership with the industry across the six markets framework

Ensuring the destination delivers a dynamic web presence to become an online responsive destination.

Establish a range of KPI's across all areas of marketing investment for annual monitoring.

Promotion of the destination as the home to World Class Heritage and Interpretative Experiences.

Six Markets Framework



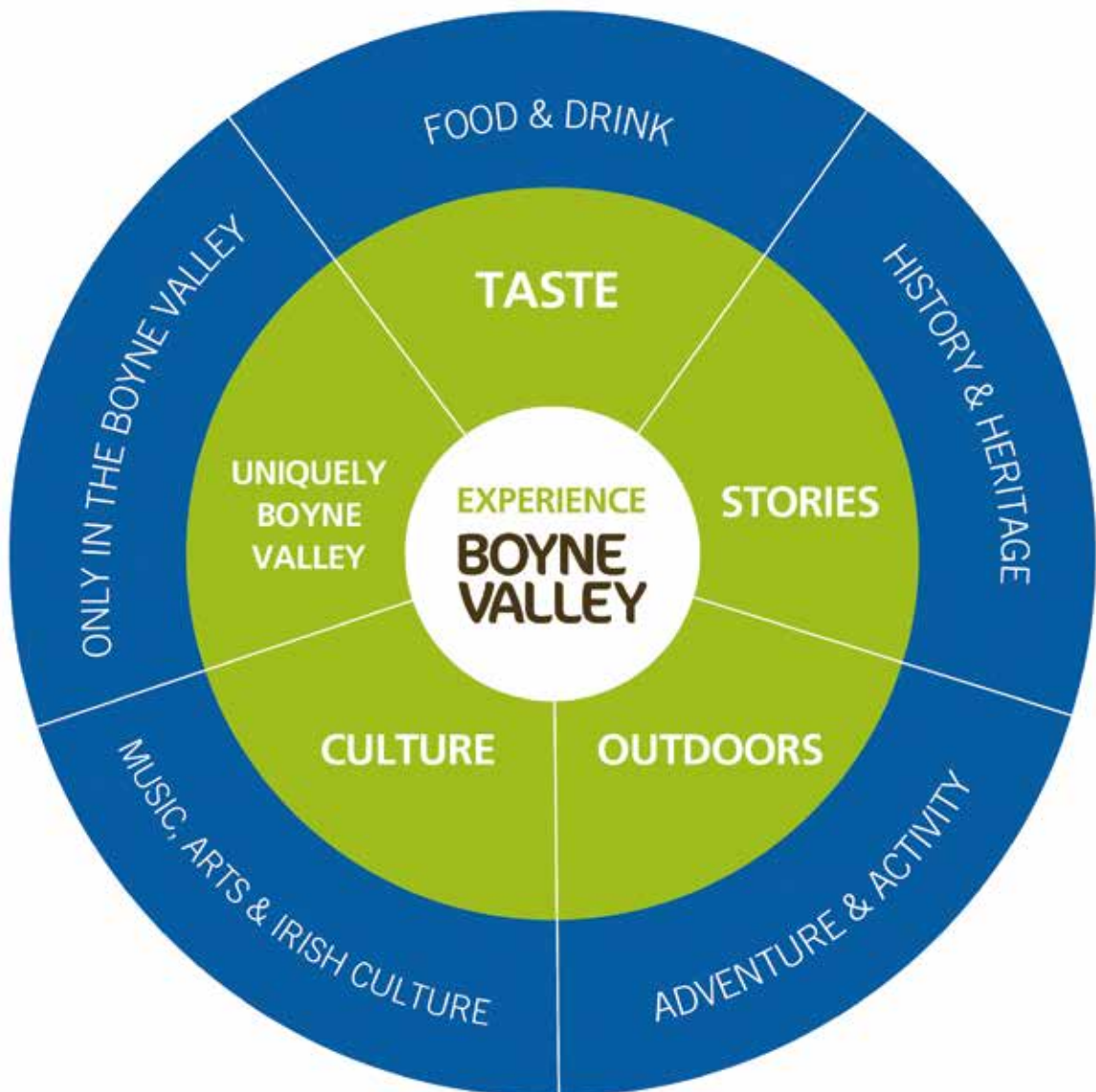
Internal Marketing	Members tourism trade, industry knowledge
Interactive Marketing	Quality standards of tourism product
External Marketing	Domestic and international visitors
Referral Business	Tourism Ireland, Fáilte Ireland
Influence Business	Incoming tour operators association, special interest groups, overseas operators
Alliance Marketing	Regional stakeholders & statutory agencies

The destination marketing framework is based on ensuring a consistency in marketing activity across all the key markets that influence and sustain the tourism industry.

The ongoing focus will be on a regularity of communications through the six stakeholder markets with an increased emphasis on digital marketing, public relations and activity that contributes to development of the Boyne Valley Tourism brand.

The marketing strategy requires collaboration, industry leadership and innovation and increasing the focus towards sales orientated marketing activity to ensure return on investment for the destination. The development of the brand narrative is designed to capitalise on the tourism asset base across the Boyne Valley and communicate the diverse range of experiences that visitors to the destination will encounter.

The development of a cross selling and promotion ethos within the industry will contribute to the bundling of experiences meeting the economic objectives of increasing dwell time in the area and increasing visitor spend.





The marketing strategy requires collaboration, industry leadership and innovation and increasing the focus towards sales orientated marketing activity to ensure return on investment for the destination.

Developing the Boyne Valley brand through the Experience Economy



The ability to market unique and authentic visitor experiences forms the core of the marketing communications plan.

Destinations are now competing with each other based on the ability to develop and sell unique experiences for their visitors.

The development of the experience themes are based on developing the destination narrative that combines its positioning as a national destination for heritage with the wealth of activities provided through the natural landscape, activities, events and attractions.

The development of the experience theme is to contribute to the wider Boyne Valley narrative and the construction of the destination brand that communicates the range of things to do beyond visiting the wealth of international class heritage attractions.



Experience Marketing Development

The Boyne Valley Tourism experience pillars are focused on the legend of Boann who identified the five streams of wisdom that flowed into create the River Boyne.

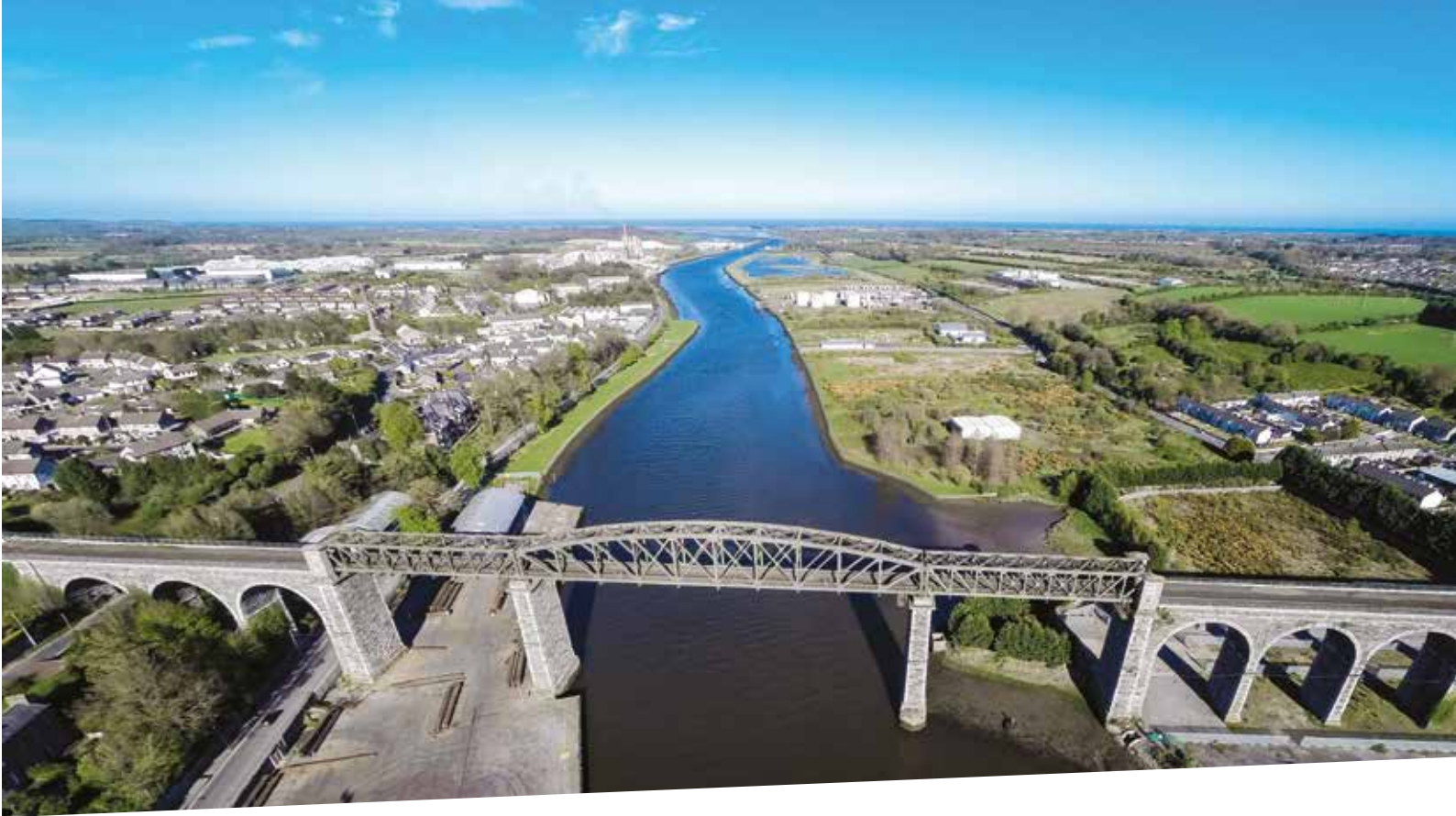
These streams of wisdom each reflected one of the five senses. The experience development strategy for Boyne Valley Tourism will enable a focus on a broad range of activities that will complement each other and facilitate the creation of a broader mix of schedules and itineraries for visitors to consider.

The model is based on the aspiration to deliver world class experiences for our visitors supported by signature

experiences across each of the areas of taste, stories, outdoors, culture and the unique Boyne Valley.

The development of the standards across the wider tourism economy underpins all future planning to ensure our visitors experience the quality destination promise that is communicated.





Integrated and Collaborative Marketing Approach



Boyne Valley tourism industry is proactively working as a collective group to share information, stimulate ideas for collaboration and grow the sector as one cohesive industry.



Internal Marketing Priority Actions

Marketing Objectives

1. Consistent delivery of Boyne Valley Destination Brand usage across all platforms.
2. Industry ownership of Boyne Valley Brand.
3. Industry Education Platforms.
4. Sectoral leadership to promote innovation across all tourism sectors.
5. Marketing Communications portal for Boyne Valley trade to cross sell and create joint promotion.
6. Industry activity development to contribute to sustained external PR and Marketing activity.

Stakeholder Promise

Boyne Valley tourism industry is proactively working as a collective group to share information, stimulate ideas for collaboration and grow the sector as one cohesive industry.

Key Markets

1. Boyne Valley Tourism Members
2. Boyne Valley Tourism Stakeholders
3. Boyne Valley Executive

Core Marketing Focus

1. Brand development and industry ownership
2. Industry Education
3. Communications structures
4. Content generation for marketing activity

Marketing Programme Development

Destination Brand Development

- Creation of new destination visual identity
- Development of brand visual asset bank and digital assets for industry use
- Online brand development and marketing in alignment with new destination brand identity and marketing strategy.
- Enhancement of promotional event marketing collateral to reflect destination ambition.
- Development of new standard of branded marketing communications collateral for core product areas that adheres to a new destination brand.
- Communicate the core elements of the Boyne Valley tourism narrative for brand consistency in marketing across all members of Boyne Valley Tourism.
- Application of new brand approach to priority activity areas identified under the experience pillar strategy.



Digital Marketing / Social Media

- Development of monthly organically generated social media activity plan based on key calendar and event milestones.
- Social Media content management and pooling of Boyne Valley platforms to focus on one strong platform.
- Marketing investment in website and social media platforms focused on experience themed marketing programmes.
- Development of a membership approach to social media information and content sharing to collectively promote key events and cross promote complementary tourism providers.

Industry Education

- Internal Industry Familiarisation Trips – ‘On Your Doorstep’ industry education campaign to heighten awareness of the wider tourism product among the local tourism trade
- Product / Service /Event Information Sharing System
- Creation of internal monthly online communications and PR platforms for distribution among industry.
- Creation of internal marketing campaigns to align targeted visitor information sharing e.g. ‘Our Weekly Staff Picks’ within hotels, attractions with recommendations of experiences generated by internal stakeholders.
- Incorporation of Boyne Valley branding across all member’s media platforms.

Destination Marketing & Management Profiling

- Destination Marketing Profile development and DM Collateral to support role.
- Increase the number of Boyne Valley Tourism members through evidence based marketing showing return on membership investment.



Product Development Marketing

- Programme specific development – e.g. Meet in Boyne Valley to refocus on targeting the Business Tourism sector.
- Development of sector leadership groups to develop marketing programming with sector ‘champions’ appointed to be key information / innovation point of contact.

Boyne Valley Promotion

- Development of Boyne Valley Tourist Card for industry wide promotion, themed marketing and social media innovation.
- Creation of the ‘Boyne Valley Bucket List’ concept to convey the range of unique experiences across the region for use across all promotional platforms.
- Creation of annual Seven Wonders of Boyne Valley applied to key industry sectors for experience development marketing.
- Signature Dish – Gastro and Activities Valley - Examine sector specific promotional initiatives that can be used for cross selling of activities e.g. walking / cycling combined with marketing of gastro riches on the various trails.

Events

- Creation of an information structure for event marketing where relevant events are promoted across all member marketing platforms.
- Develop an event promotion template for event promoters to submit information and event marketing collateral to Boyne Valley for inclusion in internal and external marketing programming

Membership Communications

- Create a quarterly ezine based on member profiling and Boyne Valley Tourism updates based on agreed marketing metrics.
- Provide ongoing content based on past and current PR exposure for the destination that will provide ongoing social media / online activity.
- Implement and manage a communications programme to instil a focus with the industry on the ‘experience’ product.
- Development of Experience Led Tourism Awards for trade and communities across the Boyne Valley.

Return on Marketing Expenditure

- Development of key marketing expenditure performance measures for communication to trade from social media reach, promotional campaign impacts, PR reach, trade and promotional activity, membership cross promotion.



Boyne Valley is the leading visitor destination in Ireland's Ancient East telling the story of Ireland through a diverse range of authentic and exciting visitor experiences.

External Marketing Priority Actions

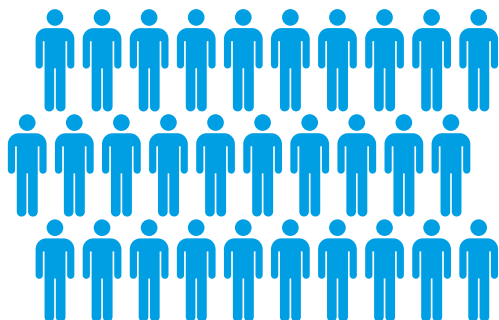
Marketing Objectives

1. Enhancement of the Boyne Valley destination brand profile to become one of the most dynamic and innovative destinations in Ireland.
2. Experience led marketing providing the basis for marketing activity.
3. Cross selling and joint promotion focus for the trade.
4. Increased return on investment marketing focus for all marketing and communications activity.
5. Marketing and Industry promotion that has a conversion to sales focus
6. Coherent marketing approach among Boyne Valley tourism industry

Stakeholder Promise

Boyne Valley is the leading visitor destination in Ireland's Ancient East telling the story of Ireland through a diverse range of authentic and exciting visitor experiences.

Key Markets & Segments



International Visitors

Key Segments – Culturally Curious, Great Escapers

Key Source Markets – Great Britain, North America, Germany, France

Domestic Visitors

Key Segments – Connected Families, Culturally Curious, Great Escapers, Footloose Socialisers

Key Source Markets – Dublin, Rest of Ireland, Northern Ireland

Core Marketing Focus

- Brand Collateral Development
- Experience led marketing
- Digital Marketing Assets
- Consumer PR

Marketing Programme Development

Destination Marketing

- Rebrand and alignment of all materials to new brand reflecting new experience led focus.
- Ensuring sales tools are in place across all segments to capitalise on all marketing activity.
- Positioning of Boyne Valley Tourism as point of contact for destination marketing.
- Placement of Boyne Valley brand name with all event or destination activity across the region.

ROI Based Promotional Activity

- Alignment of all future investment into destination profile enhancement.
- Sales & Marketing focus to ensure conversion of activity to sales through increased joint promotion with industry
- Familiarisation Trips development based on strategic pillars and experience led approach
- Trade & Consumer Show participation based on agreed sales / destination outputs.

Digital Marketing Assets

- Develop a suite of digital marketing assets for use by Boyne Valley Tourism and membership base that positions the region in alignment with the destination brand.

Experience Led Marketing

- Marketing focus around key experience pillars to communicate diversity of Boyne Valley tourism experience.
- Itinerary / multi day development focus across all product groups with emphasis on cross promotion of additional activity e.g. links golf, angling combined with food and craft drink product experiences.

Digital Marketing & Social Media

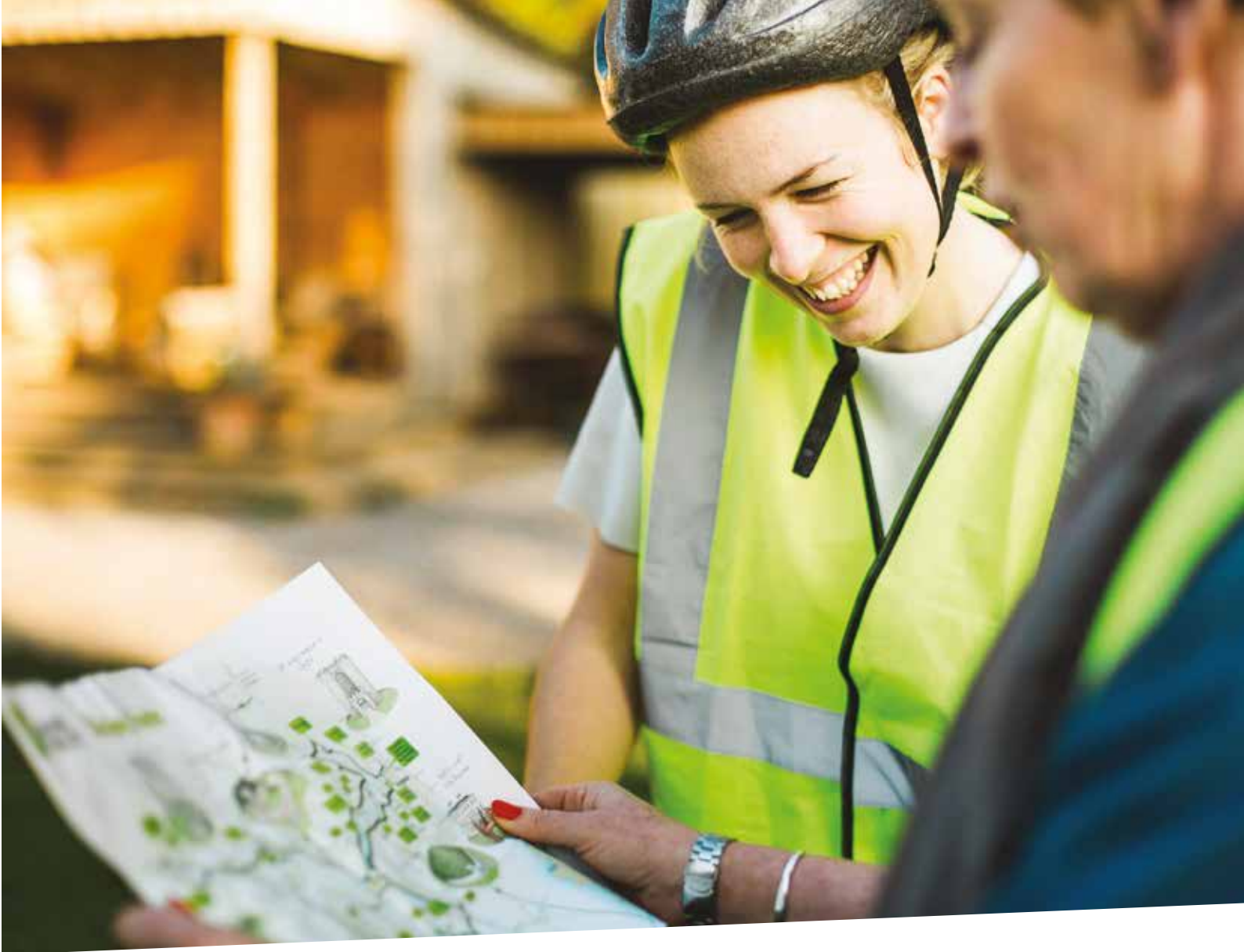
- Creation of a digital marketing calendar based on events, experience focus, strategic marketing goals.
- Implement a coherent digital marketing and social media focus based on the strategic pillars and experience marketing focus.
- Develop a new consumer facing website in alignment with strategic pillars and experience marketing focus.

Destination Marketing & Management Profiling

- Destination Marketing Profile development and DM Collateral to support role.

Consumer PR

- Create a scheduled annual calendar of consumer public relations based around key marketing and event milestones for the destination.
- Develop a PR database of key consumer PR contacts.
- Devise a public relations structure that will be reactive to ongoing opportunities across each of the strategic pillars.
- Invest in a structured approach to PR around major events.
- Create an in-house consumer PR structure to regularly feed key media outlets across all media platforms



Boyne Valley Promotional Activity

- Examine emerging market opportunities through the development of dedicated marketing programmes aligned with market requirements - East to East – Asian Market focus development
- Product marketing focus e.g. Nordic market for golf, UK fishing marketing
- Leverage off Family Market advantage through heightened awareness of the wider range of family experience in the Boyne Valley area.
- Boyne Valley Card programme implementation developed with the theme of a passport to the Boyne Valley – Authentically Boyne Valley, Authentically Irish
- Irish culture theme expansion to capitalise on historic and contemporary culture e.g. traditional pubs of Boyne Valley, Food and Music.
- Niche Product focus on areas such as education, archaeology.

Events

- Promotion of event calendar with cross promotion of ancillary tourism service providers around events e.g. accommodation, food & beverage, retail.
- PR investment around key event themes to take ownership of key market opportunities e.g. Halloween, Family market, gastro valley, arts & culture.



Influencer Marketing Priority Actions

Marketing Objectives

Position Boyne Valley Tourism as a proactive destination marketing organisation that works with key industry influencers to communicate the diverse tourism offering available for group and Free Independent Traveller (FIT) business.

Stakeholder Promise

A quality visitor destination with a wealth of tourism resources delivered through interesting and varied experiences.

Key Markets & Segments

1. Incoming Tour Operator Association
2. Overseas Operators
3. Transport & Tour Companies
4. Special Interest Organisations
5. Event & Conference Organisers
6. Journalists
7. Bloggers

Core Marketing Focus

1. New experience development options
2. Regular communications through industry and product updates newsletter
3. Product / Sales propositions for incoming operators
4. Content for media and online media platforms



A quality visitor destination with a wealth of tourism resources delivered through interesting and varied experiences.

Marketing Programme Development

Brand

- Develop annual content programme to deliver the wider Boyne Valley brand message based on the six strategic pillars to focus referral market communications approach using product activity news, events, joint trade activity.

Digital Marketing Assets

- Provision / Access to Boyne Valley digital assets and brand collateral.

Experience Led Marketing

- Bi-monthly update on new experience development focus on marketing and industry news.

Digital Marketing & Social Media

- Provision of content and PR related content to target media sources.

Business Tourism / Destination Approach

- Develop 'Meet in Boyne Valley' marketing strategy in collaboration with trade to target regional and national.
- Boyne Valley Tourism to become the destination marketing contact resource for trade enquiries.

Public Relations

- Creation of structured influencer PR milestones in collaboration with industry.
- Leverage off citizen journalism opportunity through bloggers and professional industry bloggers.

Influencer Education

- Collaborative familiarisation trips with industry based around unique annual Boyne Valley proposition e.g. Loughcrew Equinox, Laytown Races to create annual marketing milestone in calendar for influencer market.
- Industry targeting of ITOA membership for annual education programme delivered through experience innovation.
- Targeting of product / sector specific influencers as part of annual familiarisation trip strategy.
- Develop fringe activity around key events in Boyne Valley to host influencer trade workshop / education sessions.

Referral Marketing Priority Actions

Marketing Objectives

Work in partnership with national marketing bodies to deliver the Ireland's Ancient East promise to visitors to the Boyne Valley.

Stakeholder Promise

Boyne Valley is the most proactive area within Ireland's Ancient East working to capitalise on the international marketing opportunity that the destination development programme presents.



Key Markets & Segments

1. Fáilte Ireland
2. Tourism Ireland – National and Overseas Offices

Marketing Programme Development

Brand

- Develop annual content programme to deliver the wider Boyne Valley brand message based on the six strategic pillars that will leverage off the opportunity presented by Ireland's Ancient East.

Digital Marketing Assets

- Provision / Access to Boyne Valley digital assets and brand collateral.

Experience Led Marketing

- Bi-monthly update on new experience development based on the supply of content from the Boyne Valley Tourism trade based on the Ireland Ancient East brand promise.

Digital Marketing & Social Media

- Provision of regular content and PR related content that will be used to target media sources in partnership with national agencies.

Public Relations

- Proactively seek opportunities to work with the national agencies to facilitate innovative familiarisation trips for trade and media.

Ireland's Ancient East

- Proactively examine means of developing product and profiling opportunities by ongoing consultation with the Ireland's Ancient East team.

That the quality of our visitor experiences consistently exceed expectations.



Interactive Marketing Priority Actions

Marketing Objectives

Work with industry partners and agencies and stakeholders to continuously improve the tourism experience for our visitors.

Stakeholder Promise

That the quality of our visitor experiences consistently exceed expectations.

Key Markets & Segments

1. Direct service providers - Tourism industry
2. Indirect service suppliers e.g. retail
3. Representative groups – Vintners, Irish Hotels Federation, Retail Association, Business Associations

Marketing Programme Development

Destination Marketing

- Development of focus on quality standards and continuous improvement through brand messaging through internal marketing
- Work with training and development agencies to advocate improved training opportunities for tourism employees.
- Develop community wide programme that generates awareness of the role of all direct and indirect tourism service providers in developing the welcome message across the Boyne Valley.

Visitor Feedback

- Encourage a culture of assessing customer experience and continuous improvement of service standards.
- Undertake assessment of visitor feedback and benchmarking service quality standards within the industry and areas in order to identify areas of improvement.



Alliance Marketing Priority Actions

Marketing Objectives

All future investment and strategic development planning among all statutory agencies will align with the longer term goals of the Boyne Valley destination programme.

Stakeholder Promise

A coherent approach to tourism development among our agencies supporting agreed long term development objectives for the sector.

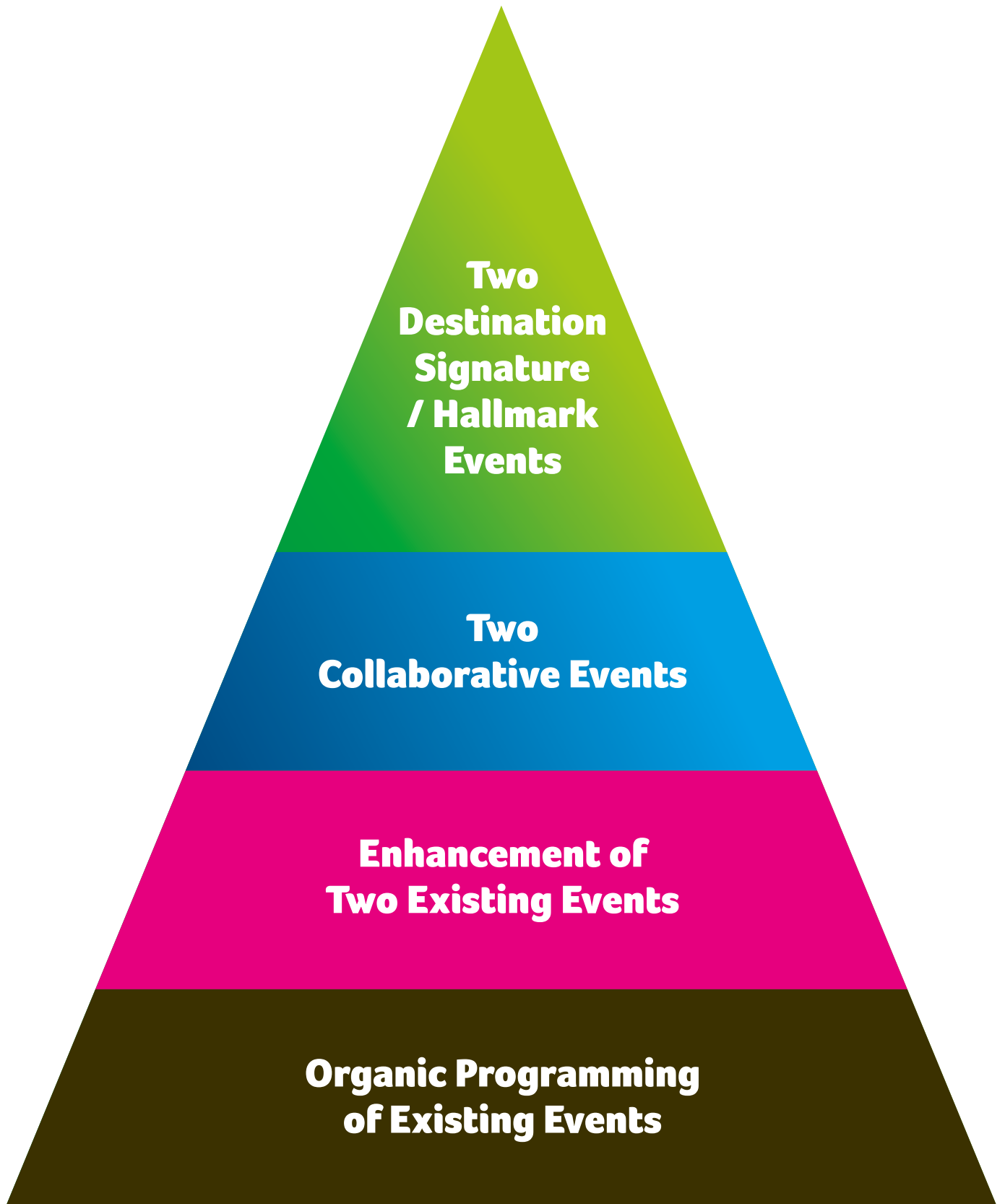
Key Markets & Segments

1. Local Authorities
2. Enterprise Agencies
3. Local Development Agencies
4. Transport Agencies
5. Government Departments
6. Arts & Culture Bodies
7. Heritage Bodies
8. Sports Bodies
9. Industry Representative Bodies
10. Rural development agencies

Marketing Programme Development

- Communicate the ambition of tourism to become one of the region's key economic sectors through regular industry public relations.
- Development of Boyne 'tourism investor' database of all agencies with an input into policy or funding that impacts the development of the tourism destination.
- Creation of a regular communications system to regularly engage with the wider stakeholder base.
- Examine the hosting of bi-annual alliance marketing meetings to examine collective approaches to tourism development.
- Examine areas of joint programming that will deliver key elements of the strategic plan.
- Examine alignment of funding programmes that will create investment opportunities for tourism development under the six strategic pillars for Boyne Valley Tourism.
- Examine cross sectoral experience for the development of tourism related resources that propel elements of the Boyne Valley tourism offering e.g. digital, interpretative technology.

Event Development Model



Event Led Activity

The development of Boyne Valley themed events should capitalise on the heritage and resources in the area. The proposed model for event development is based on creating two signature events over the next five years that will attract national and international visitors while contributing to the overall destination brand. The recommendations are based on an assessment of gaps in the marketplace, the quality of existing Festivals and leveraging off the historical and natural assets from the Boyne Valley.

As an Urban gateway, the area can capitalize on a sizeable market in surrounding counties, cities and towns as well as marketing itself to a wider domestic and international audience. The idea behind the event experiences is to create new means of targeting these audiences, create experiences for all those who visit through unique delivery and presentation.

It is recommended that the development of destination signature events are initially based on investment and enhancement of existing events that already have achieved market recognition. Further event innovation can be applied subject to addressing market gaps or supporting niche events with growth potential.



The success of the Spirits of Meath should be replicated at an earlier stage in the event calendar year. The significance of Easter within the area offers immediate scope while the hosting of the Grand National at that time of the year offers further scalability with a wider family theme to adopt the branding position as the national destination for families. The collaborative approach enables wider destination buy in at a number of times during the year.

It is proposed that two existing events are reviewed to assess their capacity to scale up for a wider regional impact. Drogheda Arts Festival represents an immediate opportunity for consideration by extending it to embrace 'fringe events' across the Boyne Valley subject to discussion with the DAF committee.

The opportunity around active outdoors and walking needs further examination to create an event of scale while fringe events could include small events such as Ramparts Foliage Walk to position the outdoors proposition of the area.

The model is devised on examining means of scaling up events with potential while promoting event innovation to add fringe events to existing events and Festivals. The creation of events should adhere to the experience marketing framework delivering event opportunities across each of the experience pillars. Below are some examples which are not definitive. They require the interest of the festival committee to implement.

Active Outdoors	Boyne Valley Walking Festival, National Family Festival
Urban Destinations	Navan Comedy & Music Festival
Food & Drink	National Gastro & Craft Beers Event – Craft Oktoberfest with Country Music
Ireland's Ancient East	National Women's Bookclub Weekend in Drogheda targeting female audience aligned with Stories concept
Tourism Dispersion	Development of multi sport tourism event across destination.
Events & Festivals	Drogheda Arts expanded into Boyne Valley



7.0

Measuring Tourism Impact



The focus on return on investment and an increased focus on sales orientated marketing requires a structure to measure the annual outputs of the industry.

A range of metrics exist and require formulation into a reporting structure that will communicate the impact of marketing activity and industry performance. The absence of specific destination indicators will require a bespoke approach to generating performance statistics. These will complement the national CSO industry performance statistics and additional trade performance indicators such as regional hotel occupancy.

Hotel Occupancy Indicators

Take a sample of the hotel trade to assess annual occupancy rates specific to the Boyne Valley Tourism trade.

Accommodation Availability

Annual monitoring of available approved accommodation stock.

Boyne Valley Brand awareness

Assess domestic and international visitor brand awareness of Boyne Valley destination branding.


Industry performance

Annual industry performance barometer and key issues review. This will also include

1. Visitor Attractions - Annual visitor attraction performance data
2. Sectoral Performance - Annual sector performance
3. Economic Performance - Inclusion of data collection within research programming to assess full and part time employment in the tourism industry
4. Domestic Market & International Market Growth - Take a sample of tourism businesses to determine the composition of source markets for Boyne Valley Tourism

Communications Impact Analysis

Monthly monitoring of PR outputs, audience reach and Social Media reach as result of marketing activity.



8.0 Implementation Framework



Outcome 20.1 Ireland's Ancient East

Boyne Valley is recognised as the 'birthplace' of Ireland's Ancient East through the existence of sites of national and international significance and supporting visitor experiences.

Objectives		Stakeholders	Timeframe
1	Ireland's Ancient East	Boyne Valley Tourism, Fáilte Ireland	commence 2016
2	Collective Industry Marketing	Boyne Valley Tourism, Industry Groups	commence 2016
3	Improved Interpretation	Attractions, OPW, Fáilte Ireland	commence 2018
4	Boyne Valley Driving Route	Fáilte Ireland, Louth Co. Council, Meath Co. Council	commence 2017
5	Package Development	Boyne Valley Tourism, Industry Groups	commence 2016
6	Enhance Brú na Bóinne's profile as an World Heritage Site Destination	Dept. of Arts Heritage & Gaeltacht, Fáilte Ireland, Louth Co. Council, Meath Co. Council, National Monuments Service, OPW	Ongoing
7	Asset Base	Boyne Valley Tourism, Fáilte Ireland	commence 2016



Outcome 20.2 Destination Towns

Improve the quality of Boyne Valley Gateway towns and exploration bases to offer a higher level of tourism provision for visitors

Objectives		Stakeholders	Timeframe	
1	Urban Tourism Development	Develop a programme to create a series of Tourism Destination Towns, initially focusing on the four urban areas of Drogheda, Navan, Trim and Kells.	Chambers of Commerce, Louth Co. Council, Meath Co. Council	commence 2016
2	Evening Economy	Develop an evening economy focus to support the Boyne Valley's position as a destination with a wide range of unique programming to increase dwell time and visitor expenditure	Chambers of Commerce, Entertainment Venues, Hotels, Restaurants, Tourism Committees, Vintners Federation of Ireland	commence 2018
3	Tourism Awareness – Boyne Valley Business Welcome	Develop a community wide approach to involving all businesses indirectly involved in tourism and educate them in their role within the sector.	Boyne Valley Tourism, Chambers of Commerce, Tourism Industry	commence 2017
4	Cultural Quarter	Develop a multi-site cultural quarter strategy that will become the focal points for sustained cultural and arts development across the Boyne Valley. Development of one permanent site (Drogheda) and one site branded as a Cultural Hub to enhance the marketing of the area (Kells).	Arts Offices, Heritage Offices, Louth Co. Council, Meath Co. Council, Local Committees	commence 2017
5	Business Tourism	Support the hotel industry in the development of business tourism activity through structured marketing and development of a system to react to niche sector opportunities on Dublin's doorstep through a collective industry effort.	Boyne Valley Tourism, Fáilte Ireland	commence 2016
6	Cultural Entertainment Product Development	Support the opportunity for developing a private sector cultural evening entertainment product to attract increased levels of group and individual business to the area	Boyne Valley Tourism, Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann, Louth Co. Council, Meath Co. Council	commence 2018



Outcome 20.3 Events and Festivals

A structured and innovative calendar of events and festivals that will attract domestic and international visitors.

Objectives		Stakeholders	Timeframe	
1	Event Model	Identify and support the creation of two signature annual events for the Boyne Valley based on the implementation of a new event strategy model that supports the enhancement of existing quality events in operation across the destination.	Boyne Valley Tourism, Existing Events & Festivals, Louth Co. Council, Meath Co. Council	commence 2018
2	Event Calendar	Implement an event calendar model to structure the timing of events supported through key event milestones for marketing and communications.	Boyne Valley Tourism, Existing Events & Festivals	commence 2017
3	Niche Events	Support the creation of niche events delivery that contribute to the cultural, historical and natural identity of the Boyne Valley.	Arts/Heritage Offices – Louth Co. Council, Arts/Heritage Offices –Meath Co. Council, Boyne Valley Tourism, Industry Groups	commence 2018
4	Arts Festival	Expansion of the Drogheda Arts Festival to include a Boyne Valley 'Fringe' event that expands the reach of the arts across the Boyne Valley with the objective of increasing the attendance of domestic and international visitors, in conjunction with the DAF committee.	Arts Community, Arts Office Louth, Arts Office Meath, Drogheda Arts Committee	commence 2017
5	Sports Tourism	Develop a niche sport tourism focus on events that contribute to projecting the natural and built environment of the Boyne Valley prioritising a major walking festival, mass participation events, equine, golf and a Tailteann multi-sport games festival.	Boyne Valley Tourism, Event Rights Holders, Louth Sports Partnership, Meath Sports Partnership	commence 2019



Outcome 20.4 Active Outdoors

An integrated active outdoors approach that positions the Boyne Valley as a destination with quality activity resources, attractions, adventure and amenities.

Objectives		Stakeholders	Timeframe	
1	Trailways Development	Develop the active destination asset base through the promotion and support of the Greenway and Blueway models	Canoeing Ireland – Blueway, Coillte – in relation to walks, Louth Co. Council, Louth Leader Partnership, Meath Co. Council, Meath Partnership, Waterways Ireland- Blueway, Waterways Ireland – Boyne Branch	commence 2019
2	Walking Product	Develop a series of themed walking trails for domestic and international marketing to create single and multi-day packages across the Boyne Valley ensuring unique interactions with built heritage and natural landscapes	Coillte – in relation to walks, Louth Co. Council, Meath Co. Council	commence 2020
3	National Family Attractions Centre	Position the Boyne Valley as a national centre for family attractions, adventure and activities that promotes longer stays and cross selling among the attraction and activity sector.	Boyne Valley Tourism, Fáilte Ireland, Industry Groups	commence 2016
4	Agency Partnership	Work in partnership with key agencies to develop the active outdoors product that promotes the Boyne Valley as an active destination consistent with Boyne Valley Tourism objectives.	Canoeing Ireland – Blueway, Coillte- in relation to walks, Fáilte Ireland, Louth Co. Council	commence 2016
5	Route Innovation	Animate walking and cycling provision through the creation of Boyne Valley themed resources, amenities and branding that will position the area as a quality destination for outdoor leisure.	Boyne Valley Tourism, Louth Co. Council, Meath Co. Council	commence 2020
6	Boyne River	Transform tourism engagement with the River Boyne that transforms it into an active resource and tourism facility by improving river infrastructure at key points from Drogheda across the journey of the River Boyne subject to environmental assessment.	An Taisce, Canoeing Ireland – Blueway, Louth Co. Council	commence 2020
7	Leisure Market	Maximise the overseas tourism potential of the diverse leisure activity market that will focus on the golf product, equine, angling and other outdoor activities.	Activity Groups, Activity Providers, Boyne Valley Tourism, Golf Clubs	Ongoing



Outcome 20.5 Food & Drink

Boyne Valley is recognized as the national food and craft drinks tourism destination.

Objectives		Stakeholders	Timeframe	
1	Integrated Marketing	Incorporate Boyne Valley Food messaging into product marketing that integrates food across a range of product and outdoor activity areas e.g. walking and cycling experiences combined with food experiences.	Food Series, Hoteliers, Restaurants, Vintners Federation of Ireland	commence 2017
2	National Food Destination	Develop an integrated food and drink approach that connects the new food innovation hub, food and drink production, cookery training, food retail and dining across the Boyne Valley to market the destination as a leading Irish food destination	Boyne Valley Tourism, Food Series	commence 2016
3	Signature Boyne Valley Food	Create a Boyne Valley signature dish campaign where signature foods will be incorporated into destination and tourism venue marketing e.g. hotels, restaurants, cafes, attractions, towns, villages.	Boyne Valley Tourism, Food Series	commence 2017
4	National Event	Support the creation of a national food and drink festival that is combined with a supporting event theme e.g. music, entertainment, active destination, arts and culture	Boyne Valley Tourism, Existing Events & Festivals, Food Series, Louth Co. Council, Meath Co. Council, Vintners Federation of Ireland	commence 2017



Outcome 20.6 Tourism Dispersion

Increased rural tourism focus to ensure a greater dispersion of visitors across the countryside and rich landscapes of the Boyne Valley.

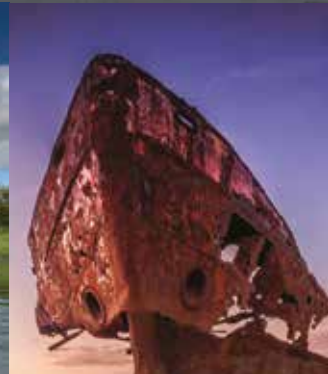
Objectives		Stakeholders	Timeframe	
1	Rural Tourism High Potential Areas	Support areas of Rural Tourism with High Potential for strategic development that will encourage tourism dispersion throughout the Boyne Valley with a thematic focus – Coastal Boyne Valley, Lakelands (North Meath Lakes) and Heritage (Oldcastle, Loughcrew).	Louth Co. Council, Meath Co. Council, Leader	commence 2019
2	Niche Product Development	Promote and support the development of the agri tourism, eco tourism and maritime tourism product base that reflects the accessibility to rural tourism across the Boyne Valley.	Leader, Waterways Ireland	commence 2017
3	Agency Alignment	Work in partnership with relevant statutory agencies to prioritise product investment and training that will increase the rural tourism product base	All Agencies	commence 2018
4	Irish Culture	Examine the feasibility of an Irish language and cultural experience product development across local Gaeltachts.	Arts Office, Meath Partnership, Udaras na Gaeltachta	commence 2017



**BOYNE
VALLEY**

Birthplace of Ireland's Ancient East





Images Courtesy of:

Noel Meehan, Copter View, www.copterview.ie

Ireland's Content Pool, Failte Ireland

Baltray Shipwreck – Picture Ireland

Drogheda Arts Festival – Jenny Matthews

Spirits of Meath Festival – Barry Cronin

Battle of the Boyne – OPW

Boyne Valley Tourism Strategy 2016-2020

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