



The biennial Irish Tourism Industry Awards showcase the country's most successful and innovative tourism products, services and experiences. They are organised and presented by the Irish Tourist Industry Confederation, ITIC's industry members, Fáilte Ireland, and Tourism Ireland.

The inaugural 2015 Irish Tourism Industry Awards will be presented at a Gala Dinner on **24th April 2015 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Dublin – Burlington Road**, Dublin 4, Ireland. Award winners will receive a trophy together with winners' plaques/decals for display on premises and in online and other promotional materials.

The Awards give recognition to and promote people, companies and organisations – overseas and at home – that have made significant contributions to developing, marketing, selling and delivering improved visitor experiences in Ireland and to increasing the number of visitors from overseas.

In particular, the Irish Tourism Industry Awards aim to:

- Publicly recognise and reward excellence
- Provide a benchmark for best practice
- Encourage the continual raising of standards
- Provide better visitor experiences
- Emphasise the value of the tourism sector
- Promote an annual platform of celebration
- Provide networking opportunities for operators and supporters.

AWARDS CATEGORIES

For the 2015 Awards there are 11 awards in three principal categories:

1. International Initiatives (2)
2. Tourism Innovations (4)
3. Tourism Experiences (5)

International Initiatives

1. Best International Marketing Initiative
2. Best International Access Initiative

Tourism Innovations

1. Best Leisure Tourism Innovation
2. Best Business Tourism Innovation
3. Best Environmental Tourism Innovation
4. Best Local Authority Tourism Innovation

Tourism Experiences

1. Best Festival / Event Experience
2. Best Adventure Experience
3. Best Food Experience
4. Best Cultural Experience
5. Best Urban Experience

In addition, each year a special Theme Award responds to a particular theme of that year. For the inaugural Irish Tourism Industry Awards, this is ***Irish Design 2015***, the showcase for the best of Irish design at home and internationally, coordinated by the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland.

The ***Best Design in Tourism*** award brings design to the forefront for all tourism operators and encourages them to consider design as a mechanism to add value in the development of new products, services or visitor experiences. In addition to receiving the award, the winner will be offered the services of a designer to work with them for six months on a particular project.

2015 Theme Award

1. Best Design in Tourism

AWARDS TIMETABLE

Public Launch:	11 th November 2014
Promotion:	November and December 2014, January 2015
Submissions By:	16 th February 2015
Shortlists By:	6 th March 2015
Winners By:	27 th March 2015
Awards Event:	24 th April 2015

AWARDS ELIGIBILITY

Entry to the 2015 Irish Tourism Industry Awards is open to all bona fide tourism businesses, entrepreneurs and events, in Ireland or in overseas markets, operating during 2013 and/or 2014.

Submissions are processed online through an eAwards portal in a three-part process:

- Completion of nomination form
- Completion of questionnaire
- Uploading of submission in PDF format to support the nomination, to include documentary materials, photos, videos, and testimonials, as appropriate

Site visits may also be required for some categories.

AWARDS JUDGING PANELS

All submissions are initially assessed by an industry organising committee of five, who prepare a shortlist for each category for presentation to a panel of five judges, who then evaluate the submissions based on a set of specific, published criteria for each category.

The industry organising committee of five comprises:

- Alex Connolly, Fáilte Ireland
- Paul Gallagher, Irish Hotels Federation
- Ruth Andrews, Irish Tour Operators Association
- Eamonn McKeon, Irish Tourist Industry Confederation
- Margaret O'Reilly, Tourism Ireland

The judging panel of five comprises:

- Maurice Pratt – Chairman, Uniphar (Chair)
- Breege O'Donoghue – Company Director, Penney's/Primark
- Karen Erwin – Founder & Principal, Erwin Mediation Services
- Kara McCoy – Online Manager of Advanced Aggregators & Hotel Travel, Google
- Pól Ó Conghaile – Travel Writer & Journalist/Contributing Editor, Independent Travel
- Plus sectoral experts if or as required

The judging criteria for each category, where appropriate, include:

- Strength and long-term viability
- Commitment to visitor satisfaction
- Innovation, growth, and product development
- Contribution to increased visitor numbers from overseas
- Human resources development
- Community involvement
- Conservation of environmental resources
- Accessibility for all

AWARDS CRITERIA

INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

1. *Best International Marketing Initiative*

This award is presented to the individual or organisation that has devised and implemented the most outstanding tourism marketing campaign or initiative in an overseas market. Submissions are evaluated on their creativity, innovation, production quality and effectiveness, and include, but are not limited to, new programmes, bundling of experiences, and new ways of communicating – through a video, audio, digital media or print campaign or multi-media campaign – that are directed at increasing the number of international visitors to Ireland.

Judging Criteria:

- Efficacy and viability of the campaign strategy (20%)
- Innovativeness/uniqueness of creative materials (20%)
- Engagement/interactivity with the target audience, including innovative use of digital media (20%)
- Converts awareness/interest into increased visitor numbers (20%)
- Enhances the local, provincial and/or national tourism image (20%)

2. *Best International Access Initiative*

This award is presented to a business or organisation – a carrier, tour operator, travel agent, online travel agency, airport, infrastructural project, etc – that has demonstrated a commitment to, and innovation in, the development, delivery, promotion and successful sales of a new product, programme or service that has opened up new overseas markets or sectors and increased the number of international visitors to Ireland.

Judging Criteria:

- Incremental traffic growth (50%)
- Innovativeness and creative presentation of Ireland (25%)
- Opening up new markets and/or sectors (25%)

TOURISM INNOVATIONS

1. Best Leisure Tourism Innovation

This award is presented to the tourism business or organisation that has created the most exceptional tourism product, service or experience for holidaymakers and/or those visiting friends and relatives or taking short breaks, and which are centred on the fundamental principles of hospitality and customer service.

Judging Criteria:

- Product/experience – sector / market match creativity and innovation of design (40%)
- Research, information, analysis and effectiveness of execution (20%)
- Stimulative economic impact (20%)
- Promotes incremental tourism activity in the host community (20%)

2. Best Business Tourism Innovation

This award is presented to the operator, service provider or supplier who has developed an innovative meeting, incentive, conference, exhibition or other event that has demonstrably increased the number of overseas business travellers to Ireland.

Judging Criteria:

- Strength and viability of the business and strategy (40%)
- Commitment to visitor/participant satisfaction (20%)
- Commitment to growth, innovation and product development (20%)
- Enhancement of Ireland's reputation as a business tourism destination (20%)

3. Best Environmental Tourism Innovation

This award is presented to the business or organisation that has demonstrated a commitment to the development, delivery, promotion and successful sales of a new and innovative tourism product or service that emphasises harmonious integration with the environment and maximises conservation of environmental resources.

Judging Criteria:

- Innovative use of green products or materials (20%)
- Positively impacts on natural habitats and bio-diversity (20%)
- Maximises energy / water efficiency and minimises use of vehicles (20%)
- Preserves and/or enhances the visual environment (20%)
- Provides social and economic benefits to the local community (20%)

4. Best Local Authority Tourism Innovation

This award is presented to the local authority that demonstrates excellence in tourism planning and execution, the provision of tourism facilities and services, marketing, event development and management – including cross county border initiatives and festivals, and the overall contribution made to the local tourism industry.

Judging Criteria:

- Tourism planning and execution (40%)
- Provision of tourism facilities (20%)
- Event development/management and marketing effectiveness (20%)
- Overall economic contribution and legacy benefits (20%)

TOURISM EXPERIENCES

1. Best Festival / Event Experience

This award is presented to the festival or event that exemplifies industry best practices in all aspects of its operations and which increases the number of international visitors to Ireland. It may be, but is not limited to being, of the following type: cultural, historical, musical, arts, sporting, culinary, literary, humorous, or of general interest.

Judging Criteria:

- Commitment to visitor/participant/spectator satisfaction (20%)
- Commitment to growth, innovation and product development (20%)
- Stimulates economic activity during the festival/event (20%)
- Promotes tourism and economic activity year-round in the community (20%)
- Social/cultural impact on Ireland and/or the host community (20%)

2. Best Adventure Experience

This award is presented to the business or organisation that has demonstrated a commitment to the development, delivery, promotion and successful sales of a new, creative, exciting outdoor tourism experience that is designed for the great escaper sector, and which showcases and promotes Ireland's spectacular scenery and the possibilities that it offers the overseas visitor.

Judging Criteria:

- Alignment with the needs and interests of great escapers (40%)
- Creation of something new and innovative (20%)
- Attraction of new visitors as a result of the initiative (20%)
- Commitment to growth and sustainability of the product/experience (20%)

3. Best Food Experience

This award is presented to the individual, company or organisation that has successfully developed and promoted an authentic, innovative and enriched tourism-related food offering for leisure and/or business visitors – including, but not limited to, carriers, dining venues, tourism attractions, and festivals/events – and which showcases and enhances Ireland's Food Story that sets Ireland's food experiences apart from other destinations and places us on the international food and drink stage.

Judging Criteria:

- Creation of an innovative food offering over the past three years by an existing or new operator, community group or destination (40%)
- Attraction of new visitors as a result of the initiative (20%)
- Provides value for money and improves margins, in accordance with Fáilte Ireland's Food Experience Delivery model (20%)
- Commitment to growth, a sustainable business model and environmental sustainability of the product/experience (20%)

4. Best Cultural Experience

This award is presented to an individual or organisation that has successfully developed and promoted an authentic, innovative and enriched cultural tourism experience – including, but not limited to, heritage, music, living history and genealogy – or to an organisation that has demonstrated a commitment to culture as a key aspect of encouraging and promoting tourism growth to Ireland and their region.

Judging Criteria:

- Alignment with the interests and needs of the culturally curious (40%)
- Promotion and advancement of culture in the community (20%)
- Stimulation of tourism and economic activity in the community (20%)
- Commitment to cultural sustainability (20%)

5. Best Urban Experience

This award is presented to a business or organisation that has successfully developed and promoted an innovative, creative and exciting urban tourism experience, including partnership clusters, that showcases and promotes the vibrancy and variety of Ireland's towns and cities and what they offer the overseas visitor.

Judging Criteria:

- Creation of something new and innovative (40%)
- Alignment with the interests and needs of social energisers (20%)
- Attraction of new visitors as a result of the initiative (20%)
- Commitment to growth and sustainability of the product / experience (20%)

2015 THEME AWARD



1. *Best Design in Tourism*

Design covers many disciplines and has a far reaching impact on business. Entrants are welcome from the following categories:

- Best use of interior design to create the visitor experience
- Most engaging brand identity
- Best designed creative campaign
- Connected communities – best user-centred network of products/experiences and services
- Most innovative architectural/built environment design
- Innovative design process to meet a business need (e.g. pop-up restaurant)

Judging criteria:

- Entrants will be able to demonstrate the contribution of design to their enterprise
- Creating of something new and innovative (20%)
- Attraction of new customers as a result of the initiative (40%)
- Demonstration of how design has supported business aims (40%)

December 9th 2014