



Farm Diversification and Tourism

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Foreword

Farm Diversification means something different to everyone. It reaches into every part of rural Ireland producing powerful and far-reaching economic and social benefits. Local tourism projects support pride and well-being within their communities. Many projects enhance the environment through their focus on regeneration and renewal, and all offer visitors unique opportunities for connection, learning and enjoyment. Research confirms the importance of grassroots projects, particularly farm experiences, in the development of Ireland's offerings to visitors. Farm Diversification tourism enterprises are also making outstanding contributions to their local economies, as well as creating vital employment opportunities.

There are many options to consider in terms of diversification, whether it's through a farm or food experience linked to the farmland. These opportunities can provide farms with additional income, thereby enabling the next generation to dream and hope to either remain on the land or return at a future time. We know there can be challenges in turning your vision into reality, attracting visitors, and maintaining momentum over time. However, supports and assistance are available. This guide is here to simplify the journey and give you the confidence to turn that idea into reality. The Key is to create a memorable experience, and this does not always mean you have to be in a location that is well known by visitors, sometimes the hidden gems are more interesting.

How to use the roadmap

Farming communities are at the heart of so many great visitor experiences in Ireland.

This roadmap will give you an insight into the process if you are considering diversification on your farmland. It will guide you through the initial steps to consider, provide an insight into experiences that have emerged through farm diversification, and detail the various agencies that can assist in the process.



Leader
Could you be eligible for funding?



Fáilte Ireland
Marketing
and tourism
upskilling



Teagasc
Discuss what Assistance they can provide





*Burren Farm Experience, Kylecreeen,
Boston, The Burren, Co Clare*

Burren Farm Experience

The Burren Farm Experience is located on a stunning 500-acre site right in the heart of the Burren. The farm has been under the custodianship of the O'Rourke family for five generations, and the Burren Farm Experience is run by husband-and-wife team Cathal and Bronagh. Their journey into farm diversification began in 2018 with Bronagh initially undertaking a national tour guiding course. With the farm set amongst a dramatic geological landscape, the family made strides towards telling the story of the history of the land, their family ties to it, and the uniqueness of the Burren and their place in the Burren Geopark. The Burren Farm Experience offers a personalised private tour in their own vintage Jeep right into the heart of the farm, exploring the historic buildings and the Shantaghpubble Chapel, the first thatched church in Clare! Visitors get a chance to explore the raw beauty of this spectacular landscape and historical points of interest as they hike through the land overlooking Lough Bunny, a mesmerising freshwater lake, and get a chance to experience the farming world by feeding the calves in the field, gaining hands-on experience with these beautiful animals. Since the initial setup, the business has adapted and developed its offering to include:

- Agri-camping experiences on the land.
- Premium experiences for the luxury market which culminate in a luxurious charcuterie picnic, filled with homemade and locally sourced ingredients.

CHALLENGES

- The business faced enormous challenges when COVID-19 hit, less than two years after opening, causing much uncertainty for the fledgling experience.
- Insurance and finance – it is critical to have your own funds and access to finance to develop the business, as well as a clear understanding of all your insurance needs.
- Cathal and Bronagh are involved in all aspects of the business and feel it would lack authenticity and integrity if they changed it, but this requires commitment.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Start with a Blank canvas.
- The O'Rourke's have managed to weather this storm utilising the time during COVID to reflect on what needed to be adapted, how they could add a luxury experience while also identifying a niche in the camping business.
- The uniqueness of their offering is the core of the business as people really appreciate the personal nature of the experience and therefore are willing to pay more for it. They are fortunate that they have been recognised and continue to gain a great reputation as an authentic experience with high-end tour operators who continue to support them year on year.
- Collaboration with tour operators as well as local networks and charities is imperative to their future.

Engaged and worked with Fáilte Ireland ensuring they took full advantage of all opportunities open to them e.g.:

- B2B Saleable Experience programme to develop sales pitch to operators.
- Digital that Delivers programme.
- Online training modules.
- Taking advantage of any opportunities with Fam Trips/ Media Opportunities presented by Fáilte Ireland or Tourism Ireland.

ADVICE

- Start small and test the market.
- Fail fast and fail cheap.

CONTACT

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Quick Fire Questions with Bronagh

Were you solely doing traditional farming before diversifying?

Yes.

When and Why did you diversify?

In 2019, to increase revenue for the business and to give myself a job on the Farm.

Was it you who diversified or parents before you? If parents, have you added to the business since you took over?

My husband and I diversified.

What is your offering and facilities on site – will you keep expanding and adding to your offering?

We offer farm tours, events, and glamping. Yes, it would be our plan to add and grow.

How did you go about the process?

I completed a tour guiding course, began to research other offerings in the area and approached Fáilte Ireland and LEO.

Did you find the process to diversify easy and did you find there were supports there to assist?

Relatively easy, but you need to have a clear idea of your business and where you want to take it.

How did you find going into the world of Tourism, being an employer, assistance in understanding Tourism and targeting tour operators?

It certainly is a learning curve, and I am always learning. This is where it is important to link with the tourism agencies, such as Fáilte Ireland. Knowing who and what you are is very important and to also be flexible!

What advice would you give to someone now or what would you do differently?

I would say go for it, perhaps not when there is a world pandemic!

Where is your location?

The Burren in County Clare.

How many people do you employ?

4.

Are you seasonal or all year round?

Predominantly seasonal. However, we are open to being all year round, but the reality is that the winter season can be slow.

Are you still farming and has diversification enabled you to keep farming and also sustain an income?

Yes, we are still farming and have diversified in our farming practices by finishing and selling our Beef direct to the market.

Any words of advice or wisdom you would give to others?

Perseverance and flexibility.



*Burren Farm Experience,
Kylecreen, Boston,
The Burren, Co Clare*



Highbank Orchard

*“Everything we grow we make,
everything we make we grow”*

The land and buildings at Highbank have been in the family for 5 generations, with Highbank Orchard and organic farm established for the past 2 generations when the apple orchards were planted in 1969. Currently under the custodianship of Rod and Julie, the farm is steeped in history, with the original farmyard built in the 17th century and the Calder-Potts family building the present farmyard in the 19th century. Throughout the past 50 years, the orchard has grown and evolved with changes in farming practices and has been a fully organic farm for the past 35 years. Being an organic farm has meant that they do not spray their orchard and let the apples grow naturally, which has meant that there is a variation each year in the size of the apples and the yield produced. The family has a great relationship with their neighbours, which is of great benefit to all parties, with the orchard getting access through neighbouring farms and with the leftover apples from the apple crush post-harvest being given to the neighbours for free to be used as cattle feed. Along with this, they are able to rely on two lakes on the farm to provide all the water needed, which means they do not have to use any mains water, reducing the impact of the

**Highbank Orchards Organic
Farm, Cuffsgrange, Co Kilkenny**

farm even further and earning them a title as a national ambassador for sustainable farming. Over the years they have expanded the products they offer to 16 including organic apple juices, organic apple cider and balsamic vinegar and alcohol drinks such as cider, gin, brandy and apple wine which has opened up markets with high end stores and restaurants.

Their onsite visitor experience is from apple to bottle, where you can partake in living organic farming with a tractor train tour through the organic orchards, a visit to the distillery ending in their stone built 17th century mill with a sampling of their delicious Single Estate organic ciders, syrups and apple spirits. Your Guide will explain the process that creates the distinctive flavours and character of their organic cider, apple gin and apple brandy, meeting the owners for a chat on local history, and of course, The Highbank Story of five generations. Steeped in medieval history the 17th century stonebuilt coachyard with its small distillery offers a backdrop to tasting the organic orchard syrup, juices, organic ciders and apple spirits all produces directly from the orchards. During blossom time in May, harvest time in October and November, through to Christmas, Highbank offers an insight into a small scale Irish food producer adding value to product.

The business has faced many challenges throughout the years as they continued to grow, including the constant need for investment to improve and expand facilities. Transport around the farm has also been an issue over the

years with the ground being affected with poor weather and in turn affecting their ability to carry out tours.

CHALLENGES

- Finance – Turnover is essential for survival and growth.
- Logistics – The challenges in getting the products from the orchard to suppliers and stores.
- Packaging – Sourcing suppliers for packaging, with many different products using various types of packaging, this can be an extremely challenging part of the business.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Expanding product range – With the benefit of producing the raw ingredient onsite, this gives a massive advantage when expanding the product range.
- Export Market – Some of the products produced at Highbank have a huge export market, with the long sell by dates on the products has opened up many new avenues of business.
- Tourism – The orchard has a tourism product that has the potential to grow even further in the future as it already adds value to the business.
- Wellness products also have huge potential going forward.

Supporting local businesses is essential to the long term future of the business and those in the area.

Engaged and worked with Fáilte Ireland ensuring they took full advantage of all opportunities open to them, e.g.:

- B2B Saleable Experience programme to develop sales pitch to operators.
- Digital that Delivers programme.
- Online training modules.
- Taking advantage of any opportunities with Fam Trips/ Media Opportunities presented by Fáilte Ireland or Tourism Ireland.

ADVICE

- Develop and expand the business a little at a time.
- Constant need of funding and investment – prepare for this.
- Maintenance and upkeep of soils to ensure maximum yields – constant planning to meet expectations and needs.
- Transportation around farm – determine what will work for you.
- Pricing – ensure you establish this accurately at the beginning – charged too little at the beginning.
- Weather can be a challenge if mainly outdoors so identify a few locations on the experience where you can adapt.



CONTACT

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**Sean Davoren, Caherconnell,
Stone Fort and Sheepdog
Demonstrations, Co. Clare**

Caherconnell Stone Fort and Sheep Dog Trials

The Davoren family has been based in Carron in a picturesque setting right in the heart of the Burren for generations. Beef and Dairy consider replacing (Changes highlighted below) Farmers, they took the step to diversify part of their landholding into a tourism offering in 2003, having realised the value and importance of the 10th century Caherconnell Stone Fort in their custodianship. This was in the form of guided tours of the fort and its history. This is a 3rd generation business, currently under the stewardship of Sean Davoren. Sean's Dad, John, established the business in early 2003. However, it was really Sean's grandmother, Mary, who initiated the hospitality at Caherconnell by offering tea and scones at her cottage to visitors who came to see the ringforts on their land!

In 2006 the business expanded with the opening of the visitor centre to include a retail outlet and café, employing 3 full time staff and 10 seasonal. Over the intervening years the Davoren family have been able to add to the visitor experience with sheepdog demonstrations, while remaining a working farm. A strong relationship was forged with the University of Galway several years back and this

was primarily due to the owners wanting to know more about the Fort and surrounding area. This partnership has flourished with an archaeological dig undertaken annually at the site which includes students from around the world, under the guidance of the University of Galway. The knowledge of the stone fort and its history together with significant discoveries on site have added to what the visitor can now see and learn. This collaboration has helped the family learn more of the history of the stone fort while also establishing an educational arm to their business. Having detailed information about his history of the stone fort allows the family to tell the story of the land and their place in it while protecting the legacy and valuing intergenerational custodianship.

CHALLENGES

- Struggled to accurately describe their tourism offering to potential visitors as they started out.
- Understanding the tourism industry and the relationships needed with others in the industry.
- Marketing – had no expertise in this and no real idea how to go about it when they started.
- Pricing – didn't really know how to price it or how to establish a trade initially.
- Understanding what customers were looking for – that is, how to frame the product to make it interesting to potential visitors.
- Left the marketing too long.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Being themselves – they didn't realise initially but the authenticity of the site and how it ties into their lives as local people was a huge opportunity.
- Engaging with Public and Local trade groups – there are huge wealth's of support and experience out there. They were so busy initially they didn't engage soon enough with these bodies.
- Recognising the need to create products which service customers across the economic spectrum.
- Knowledge built through years of digs – enhances the story told.

Engaged and worked with Fáilte Ireland ensuring they took full advantage of all opportunities open to them e.g.:

- B2B Saleable Experience programme to develop sales pitch to operators.
- Digital that Delivers programme.
- Online training modules.
- Taking advantage of any opportunities with Fam Trips/ Media Opportunities presented by Fáilte Ireland or Tourism Ireland.

ADVICE

- Develop and expand the business a little at a time.
- Intergenerational transition can be a challenge to navigate – planning is important – seek professional advice.
- Structure and communication are important
- Back office and employee-related overhead is much larger than you might initially estimate.
- Collaboration and networking are important – but it can sometimes take quite a time to see the impact of those efforts – stick with it.
- Take chances of an appropriate scale.
- Network with the Industry in your local area.



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Quickfire questions with Sean

Were you solely doing traditional farming before diversifying?

Yes mixed dairy and beef farm.

Why did you diversify?

Increased stability of the enterprise and a growing family.

When did you diversify?

2003.

Was it you who diversified or parents before you? If parents, have you added to the business since you took over?

It was my parents who diversified – we have attempted to scale things up since taking over. We've also added some new products.

What is your offering and facilities on site – will you keep expanding and adding to your offering?

We do fort tours and sheepdog demonstrations for the public – we do private tours of the fort, sheepdog demonstrations and farm tours for the trade. We feel it's always best to grow and we are planning to expand over the winter if circumstances remain favourable.

How did you go about the process?

Our site is near Poul nabrone Dolmen, so we did a little survey on visitor volume there to see what was around. We collaborated with Leader and GMIT to progress to the point where we had a saleable product.

Did you find the process to diversify easy and did you find there were supports there to assist?

here was a lot to learn about the trade. It was very different to anything we had done before as a family. I think because we weren't overly reliant on it, we could give ourselves time to learn. Capital supports were good but we found support for soft skills such as marketing and how to operate the ancillary businesses more of a challenge initially.

How did you find going into the world of tourism, being an employer, assistance in understanding tourism and targeting tour operators?

There was a huge amount to learn here. Some of the family had some experience in elements of business but we found things like understanding

how the markets worked and learning to work with tour operators a big challenge as we had no experience. This is where Fáilte Ireland assisted us.

What advice would you give to someone now or what would you do differently?

We did it a little at a time – I think that gave us time to learn and it meant the scale of the mistakes we made was less. It's an enormous family commitment in terms of time, so it's important everyone understands that from the outset. The intergenerational transition can be a challenge to navigate – planning is important and we found getting support from professionals experienced in that process was very helpful. Structure and communication are important – it's good to treat it like a business and work with all the family stakeholders as a unit – it's a bit of a different mindset from the sole trader outlook on the farm. The back office and employee-related overhead are much larger than you might initially estimate. Collaboration and networking are important – but it can

sometimes take quite a time to see the impact of those efforts – stick with it.

Where is your location?

The Burren, Co Clare.

How many people do you employ?

3 full-time.
10 seasonal.

Are you seasonal or all year round?

Seasonal.

Are you still farming and has diversification enabled you to keep farming and also sustain an income?

The family is still farming however the farm isn't reliant on the tourism business for any support.

Any words of advice or wisdom you would give to others?

Every day is a school day you've got to learn about the business incrementally – you will make mistakes, but you should only be disappointed on days when you don't learn anything. Persistence pays off you've just got to keep doing the correct things every day.

Café Linnalla, New Quay, Co. Clare

Café Linnalla located on the stunning Flaggy Shore in New Quay, County Clare has been open since 2006. Owned and run by Roger and Brid Fahy, themselves a farmer and nurse, who respectively decided to diversify their farm having come to the conclusion that for the farm to survive into the future they would need to expand into another area of business. With limited land to expand the farm, with the waters of Galway Bay on their doorstep, they decided to utilise what they had... which was lots of milk ! As dairy farmers, they investigated the possibility of creating an ice-cream parlour using their own fresh milk. This decision took them on a journey from the UK, to the Netherlands and finally Italy to learn the craft and what it takes to become a quality ice-cream producer. From 2006 to 2011 the business focused solely on producing ice-cream for the wholesale and retail markets but in 2011 they decided to take the bold step of opening Café Linnalla, selling their ice-cream products directly to customers along with coffee and cakes. This is now the sole focus of the family business with the remoteness of the location causing challenges in the distribution of the ice-cream to sellers around the country. Each year they utilise as many fresh seasonal berries and products to create flavours unique to their location and cafe, while also meeting public demands of



Linnalla Irish Ice Cream, New Quay, The Burren, Co Clare

the well-known and sought after flavours. This, alongside how and where their cattle graze, differentiates their ice-cream flavours from others.

Open from April to October and employing 6 part-time staff, the business in the picturesque location has gone from strength to strength through the years. This has enabled one of the sons to remain on the land as a full-time farmer working alongside Roger.

CHALLENGES

- Learning the art of making excellent ice-cream. This took a journey visiting many locations, but persevering until they met the right mentor in this field, which was in Italy.
- Insurance and finance – critical to have own funds and access to finance to develop the business and a clear understanding of all your insurance needs.
- Identifying the right niche to suit your needs, i.e. started with distribution, settling on Café and encouraging visitors to come and stop at their farm instead.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Enabled Roger and Brid to add to their existing farm a tourism offering that fitted into their everyday lifestyle.
- Farm has a new legacy and the addition of the ice-cream and café has enabled one of their sons to remain on the land as a full-time farmer working alongside Roger.
- The opening of Café Linnalla has offered both Roger and Brid (who retired from nursing and a daily commute)

the opportunity to enjoy a better work/life balance and secure the future of their family farm.

- The uniqueness of their ice-cream, the location and the story behind it has gathered an excellent reputation as an authentic experience.

Engaged and worked with Fáilte Ireland ensuring they took full advantage of all opportunities open to them.

- Taking advantage of any opportunities with Fam Trips/ Media Opportunities presented by Fáilte Ireland or Tourism Ireland.

ADVICE

- Start small and test the market.
- Persevere.
- Seek the right advice.
- Know your target market.
- Keep investment to a minimum.

CONTACT

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Quickfire Questions with Brid

Were you solely doing traditional farming before diversifying?

Yes, my husband was farming and I was working outside the home as a nurse.

Why did you diversify?

We had three young children and I had a long commute with no work-life balance. The Fishler report was published at this time advising that all farms need to get bigger or diversify. We could not get any bigger as we had the sea surrounding us and the buzz word at the time was diversification, not food production, so we took the leap and diversified into ice-cream after a lot of research.

When did you diversify?

2006.

Was it you who diversified or parents before you? If parents, have you added to the business since you took over?

It was myself and my husband Roger who diversified.

What is your offering and facilities on site – will you keep expanding and adding to your offering?

We have an ice-cream parlour here on the family farm where we make the ice-cream using our own farm fresh milk and cream and serve it in our cafe which has indoor and outdoor seating and a pathway to the Flaggy shore. We have no plans to develop beyond the cafe at present but we are continually developing our onsite facilities and product range.

How did you go about the process?

We did a lot of research, and I did numerous ice-cream making, business and marketing courses. We travelled to the UK, Netherlands and Italy to see and learn from other small ice-cream producers.

Did you find the process to diversify easy and did you find there were supports there to assist?

The process itself took a long time and we did get a good deal of support from the department of agriculture once we decided on an ice-cream business but no help to get us to that point. Once we knew our direction we got great support from Clare Local Development Company (leader) and the Enterprise Board along with the Department of Agriculture.



Linalla Irish Ice Cream,
New Quay, The Burren,
Co Clare

How did you find going into the world of Tourism, being an employer, assistance in understanding Tourism and targeting tour operators?

When we started trading in 2006 we were supplying our ice-cream both wholesale and retail. We did not open the cafe until 2011 and now only supply our own cafe. The retail and wholesale market were very difficult to manage and we were too remote. When we opened the cafe in 2011 I joined the Burren Ecotourism Network, my local Tourism Network in the Burren, where I got a lot of advice and support from other tourism operators. I also received great support from Bord Bia and Fáilte Ireland. I have not put any effort into working with tour operators, as my target audience is the independent traveller.

What advice would you give to someone now or what would you do differently?

I would put a lot more work into understanding my target market. I would advise anyone to start small and keep investment to a minimum

until you really know who your customer is.

Where is your location?

The Flaggy Shore, Burren, Co. Clare.

How many people do you employ?

6 part-time seasonal.

Are you seasonal or all year round?

Seasonal.

Are you still farming and has diversification enabled you to keep farming and also sustain an income?

Yes we are still farming and our son has now joined the farm as a full-time farmer in a farm partnership. Diversification has given us time and opportunity to develop the farm and make it more sustainable as food production is now valued more, with a better milk price paid. The farm is still the main income while the cafe supports the household expenses.

Any words of advice or wisdom you would give to others?

Start small with low investment, get to know your market and customer and know your story and tell it well.

*Linalla Irish Ice Cream, New Quay,
The Burren, Co Clare*



BE A HOST...

Open your own Bed and Breakfast

Have you ever thought about diversifying your farm into a Farm-stay experience Bed and Breakfast? Your property, alongside the stunning natural scenery could be the perfect location to welcome guests from all over the world. It also provides an opportunity to run a business from your home, allowing you to work around other commitments while generating additional income.



Operating a Farm-stay B&B allows you to:



Leverage the tourism sector: When travelling, many visitors seek out distinctive accommodation opportunities. With its attractive rural location, your farmhouse has the potential to attract tourists looking for a genuine and peaceful escape. Your farmhouse with its charming countryside setting has the potential to become a popular destination for travellers seeking an authentic and tranquil retreat.



Expand Your Services: You can offer farm tours, cooking classes, and even outdoor activities such as hiking, fishing, or horse riding. With guests spending more time and money on your property, you can increase your revenue.



Cater for experience-seekers: Your farmhouse can now cater for visitors such as families, couples and small groups that require several bedrooms. This increases your occupancy rates and income.



Begin Small: You can start with just a few rooms and add more rooms gradually as your business grows. This ensures your initial investment is not too great and you can grow the business over a period of time.

There are several advantages to transforming your farmhouse into a B&B. Take into account the consistent flow of revenue generated by your bookings, and any extra add-ons such as meals or tours. Your Farmhouse property offers a chance to highlight your lovely farm, offering a true agricultural experience that no hotel or city centre location can offer.

Examples of people who have diversified, opening up their Farm



DAN O'HARA'S B&B, CLIFDEN

- Owned and run by Martin.
- 5th generation Custodian of the land.
- Began diversification in 1990's establishing, the Heritage Centre on the Farm where guests can learn about the traditions, heritage and culture of farming in Connemara.
- Visitors can enjoy the cattle, sheep, Connemara Ponies and donkeys that live on the land.
- Home baking is a speciality here and from fresh scones to Poitin cake.



CASTLEVIEW B&B, KILDARE

- Established 20 years is owned and run by Liz and Ed.
- A working dairy farm, where guests can watch Ed while he is undertaking the twice daily milking process.
- Offers traditional home baking
- Grow their own herbs, which are used in the baking!
- Guests can enjoy fresh eggs at breakfast which are collected daily from the hens which roam outside, and if kids are visiting Liz is more than happy to let them assist.



SEACREAST B&B, CLARE

- Established 20 years is owned and run by Angela and Kevin.
- A working dairy farm, where Kevin is always happy to provide a tour of the farm to guests or chat to them while he is undertaking the daily milking routine.
- Offer home baking from scones to Angela's secret brown bread recipe.
- Guests can enjoy fresh eggs at breakfast which are collected daily from the hens or they can choose to collect their own!

Top Tips

1

Do you enjoy meeting people, chatting and having people visit your home... then you are almost there!

2

Look at your location, what is naturally around you that would peak the interest of the visitor, is it the tranquillity of your location, the history of your farm/property, dark sky opportunity where you could locate a telescope – think broad!

3

What do you offer, luxury accommodation (B&B's can be luxurious), home baking, that all important drop off down to the local pub, knowledge of your local area to retain the visitor, **we are all mini tourist offices in our own right!**

4

If you are in a naturally well serviced area for Walking and Hiking can you offer **drying facilities** – that could be an old disused shed where gear can be hung up or similar. Similarly for cyclists have you somewhere secure to lock up the bike... all small things to do but hugely valuable for the visitor.

5

If you establish, remember to become registered!

Mullaghmore loop, The Burren, Co Clare



Alternative Tourist Accommodation...

what do we mean ?

Alternative tourist accommodation refers to lodging options outside of traditional hosted accommodations like Guesthouses and B&Bs. These are usually outdoor-based and self-catering, including cabins, eco-lodges, shepherd's huts, yurts, geodomes, treehouses, cottages, and barns. This type of accommodation offers farmers a unique and flexible way to diversify into tourism, protecting and enhancing the environment while contributing to the local economy.



Top Tips:



Offer **pet-friendly** and **accessible** accommodations to increase booking potential.



Implement **flexible** and **simple booking** systems, including features like keyless access and online check-in/out.



Provide **high-quality** amenities such as comfortable bedding, clean facilities, and reliable Wi-Fi.



Use **eco-friendly** materials and practices to attract environmentally conscious travellers.



Adopt a **light service** model: With careful planning and execution, alternative accommodation can be very hands-off, reducing the need for in-person guest servicing and allowing for a more passive income stream.

- **Interesting article by the Farmers Journal...** worth a read [To Pod or Not to Pod](#)
- **Looking for some inspiration...** check out these two sites and see what they offer and how they have developed, and don't be afraid to visit, test them by staying over and reaching out to the owners to discuss their journey... [Beds of Silk](#) | [Castledarcy Glamping](#)
- **Or go one step further! Luxury Tree houses** [Take a look here](#)

INTERESTED AND WONDER WHAT WOULD BE A NEXT STEP ?

Clare County Council's Planning Department offer a pre planning enquiry service which gives an applicant the opportunity, to seek advice from the planning authority on the proposed development. [Check here](#)

Who can assist?

There are a number of agencies, with varying skillsets and advice available for you to contact. Ensure you check in with each that is relevant to you and your proposal.

TEAGASC

The Agriculture and Food Development Authority is the national body providing integrated research, advisory, and training services to the agriculture and food industry and rural communities.

Teagasc recognises that many farmers and rural dwellers are interested in enterprise diversification and that there are countless possibilities when trying to identify a realistic option for generating additional household income. Farm-Diversification is the establishment of a new enterprise on a farm. The term usually used when considering a non-agricultural or novel enterprise. Teagasc has produced a comprehensive body of information to help those interested, in trying to identify a realistic option that suits them, for generating additional household income.

Their fact sheets, webinar recordings and videos explore options on a range of ideas and possible diversification options. They aim to get you thinking!

Resources

- Steps when considering Farm-Diversification.
- A suite of 79 farm diversification fact sheets published on their website.
- A suite of videos from your peers, Farmers who have diversified.
- Rural development diversification.
- Rural Tourism Booklet.

Web: www.teagasc.ie

Email: info@teagasc.ie

LEADER

This is an EU wide rural development programme supporting the growth and development of rural communities and businesses and protecting the rural environment. In Clare it is managed and administered by CLDC – Clare Local Development Company. Funded by the EU and the Irish Government, LEADER provides funding, training, guidance to community groups and supports for rural business.

Under LEADER 23–27 programme the focus is on sustainable low impact, responsible tourism product development.

The following are eligible to be developed and supported:

- New niche eco and agri-tourism products, including accommodation
- Wellness Tourism Products
- Activity Tourism – Green (village, countryside and upland) & Blue (coastal and lake)
- Artisan food, arts, craft and design tourism

LEADER 23–27 is open for application enquires on an ongoing basis, for further details on eligibility contact LEADER directly.

Web: www.cldc.ie
Email: leader@cldc.ie

LEO

Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Clare is a first stop shop to provide support and services to help start, grow, and develop micro and small businesses. Part of a national network of LEOs, LEO Clare provides financial supports, management development, mentoring and business skills training for businesses in County Clare. They are also a single point of contact through which all information on State supports for small and micro business can be accessed. While tourism is not specifically within their remit, often in the startup phase of a business there are resources which someone can tap into:

- A range of **alternative funding options** available.
- Offer business information, advisory services and enterprise support.
- Deliver **high-quality training** to meet the needs of your business including; Start Your Own and Business Planning. (Check out current courses **HERE**)

Web: www.localenterprise.ie
Email: localenterprise@clarecoco.ie



LOCAL AUTHORITY

Clare County Council support business at a local level by providing support services in the following areas:

- Planning/Fire Safety.
- Tourism.
- Rural and Community Development Officers.

Web: www.clarecoco.ie

FÁILTE IRELAND

Fáilte Ireland is the National Tourism Development Authority. Their role is to support the tourism industry and work to sustain Ireland as a high-quality and competitive tourism destination. They provide a range of practical business supports to help tourism businesses better manage and market their products and services.

Fáilte Ireland also provides consumer and buyer insights, mentoring, business supports and training programmes and buyer platforms to help tourism businesses innovate and grow.

Business Support Hub

Fáilte Ireland's top priority is supporting Ireland's tourism and hospitality businesses. They have created an extensive range of 150+ online training modules to guide you through operating your business. These have been developed in consultation with industry experts to meet your recruitment, marketing and finance needs amongst other supports. These are available free of charge at [Learnifi.](#)

Fáilte Ireland's International B2B Sales Ready Programme is a series of steps delivered by subject matter experts with extensive tourism selling experience. The multi-modular programme will give you the foundation required to perfect your offer, pricing, and sales pitch. As well as some required self-directed learning, you will be supported through additional 1:1 meeting with a sales expert, to fine tune and practice your sales pitch.

Fáilte Ireland's Domestic and B2C Sales Ready Programme is a series of steps delivered by subject matter experts with extensive tourism selling experience. The multi-modular online programme will give you the foundation required to craft, price, and present your offers. In addition to some required self-directed learning, you will be supported by an additional 1:1 session with one of our sales experts to refine your sales offer.

Discover Ireland Website Listing

Get listed on a suite of domestic consumer websites and Tourism Ireland's international consumer website and start marketing your business to over 20 million consumers in the domestic and international markets. DiscoverIreland.ie is the primary call to action for all consumer marketing campaigns.

Trade Portal

Set up a trade portal on our Fáilte Ireland system. This is important in terms of accessing online training, upcoming workshops, trade shows, enterprise supports and more.

Newsletters

You should sign up to both Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland newsletters as a great source of information in terms of anything new happening:

- [Fáilte Ireland.](#)
- [Tourism Ireland.](#)

Web: www.Fáilteireland.ie and
www.discoverireland.ie

INITIAL STEPS

Contact your local Fáilte Ireland Representative: Clare

Siobhan King, Projects Officer WAW

Email: siobhan.king@Fáilteireland.ie

Mobile: 086 859 8184

What's a Business Plan

and links to resources

Business Plan

Creating your new business plan involves a detailed process with a number of stages, some of which can overlap. Whether you are writing your plan from scratch or from a simple business plan template or working with an experienced business plan writer or consultant, you will find the following five steps through the process.

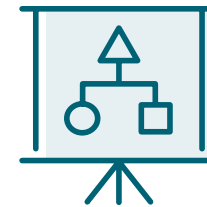
The business plan process includes 5 steps as follows:

- Research.
- Strategize.
- Calculate.
- Draft.
- Revise and Proofread.



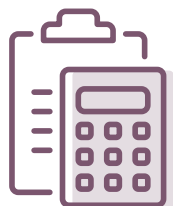
1. Research

Detailed research into the industry, customers, competitors, and costs of the business begins the process. A variety of resources can be used for research, ranging from databases and articles to direct interviews with other entrepreneurs or potential customers. Research should be documented and organized carefully with the information gathered and the source as there is a need to cite sources within the plan.



2. Strategise

Next, the information from the research should inform the strategy you choose for your business. Revisit the strategy you created, even before your research and dig deeper into decisions on appropriate marketing, operations, and hiring for the first five years of the company's life. Strategy generally pulls from the best practices of the industry but uses this only as a foundation on which to add very different activities that create a competitive advantage.



3. Calculate

All of the activities you choose for your strategy come at some cost and (hopefully) lead to some revenues. Sketch out the financial situation by looking at whether you can expect revenues to cover all costs and leave room for profit in the long run. Begin to insert your financial assumptions and start-up costs into a financial model, which can produce a first-year cash flow statement for you, giving you the best sense of the cash you will need on hand to fund your early operations.



4. Draft

With financials more or less settled and a strategy decided, it is time to draft through the narrative of each section and component of your business plan. With the background work you have completed, the drafting itself should be a relatively painless process. If you have trouble creating convincing prose, this is a time to seek the help of a business plan writer who can put together the plan from this point.



5. Revise and Proofread

Revisit the entire plan to look for any ideas or wording that is confusing, redundant, or irrelevant to the points you are making within the plan. Finally, proofread thoroughly for spelling, grammar, and formatting, enlisting the help of others to act as additional sets of eyes. You may begin to experience burnout working on the plan for so long and may need to set it aside for a bit to look at it again with fresh eyes.

Upon completion

Once your 5-step business plan is completed, you can then expand your plans in more detail to develop a comprehensive strategy to start/grow your business in your desired areas or aspects. Using detailed business plan guidelines, you can piece together everything you may need to kick-start your farm diversification.

Business Plan Templates

Fáilte Ireland
Teagasc
LEO Clare

