

Minister Gormley opens 'Tourism and the Environment' Conference

- Research findings presented on the DIT ACHIEV Model of Sustainable Tourism

Dublin, 11-12 October, 2007: Minister for the Environment, John Gormley TD attended a conference organised by DIT's School of Hospitality Management and Tourism and the Tourism Research Centre, where he officially launched the DIT ACHIEV Model of Sustainable Tourism. 'ACHIEV' stands for 'Administration, Community, Heritage, Infrastructure, Enterprise and Visitor' and the model was developed by a cross-disciplinary group of researchers to mitigate tourism impacts on destinations.

Dr. Sheila Flanagan, Head of School of Hospitality Management and Tourism, DIT; Elaine O'Halloran, Tourism Research Centre; and Kevin Griffin, School of Hospitality Management and Tourism, DIT presented the findings of the research project which was funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The research steering committee also included expert representatives from DIT, the EPA, the Department of Arts/Tourism, The Environmental Institute, University College Dublin, Fáilte Ireland and University of Strathclyde. Presenting a copy of the research findings to Minister Gormley, Dr. Flanagan emphasised the importance of ensuring that we develop our tourism in a sustainable manner and said the group proposed that the ACHIEV model can be used by destination areas to:

- Establish a base-line for the state of tourism in an area in an objective and robust manner.
- Develop a methodology for the identification of when carrying capacity is negatively impacted by tourism
- Assist in the development on an overall policy / plan for the management of sustainable tourism.

The two-day conference was sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency, Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland and the DIT Research Support Unit, and was attended by a mix of academics, members of tourism bodies, local authorities and networks, individual businesses and practitioners. The programme was designed to provide an opportunity for more than one hundred delegates to network and to share best practice through the range of papers and case studies which were presented. Topics on the programme included:

- Sustainable Tourism Implementation
- Maximising Resource Potential
- Assessing the Impact of Sustainable Tourism
- Festivals – A mechanism for Achieving Regional Spread
- Developing Sustainable Tourism Indicators
- The Importance of Research - Academic and Industry Perspectives
- Emerging issues in research
- Innovative approaches to implementation

- Regional Application Approaches.

Mr. Kevin Woods of the Environmental Protection Agency, which funded the research project, opened the conference. Guest speakers included Richard Butler from University of Strathclyde; Anthony Climpson from the New Forest District Council; Mary Stack from Fáilte Ireland; Sharon Leverett from Tourism Ireland and Michael Mulvey from DIT. Throughout the two days there were fascinating contributions from a range of academic and industry speakers from all over Ireland as well as from Britain, Hungary and Catalonia.

For further information on this event or on the research presented, please contact Elaine O'Halloran in the DIT Tourism Research Centre at +353 1 814 6094, or by email at Elaine.ohalloran@dit.ie