

For release May 18th 2022

Industry body's monthly dashboard of tourism industry performance in association with AIB

- April data shows total arrivals down 21% and year-to-date down 35% compared to 2019
 - 140,000 North American visitors came to Ireland in April while Continental European market was strongest performer
 - ITIC revised growth scenario estimate recovery in inbound tourism of 67% this year compared to peak
 - Inflation 4 times higher than same month in 2019 and ITIC warn *"Competitiveness is critical to the success of Ireland's tourism industry"*

Ireland – May 18th, 2022: The Irish Tourism Industry Confederation (ITIC) has today issued its monthly tourism dashboard for April which shows that the sector's recovery continues to grow strength.

The Tourism Dashboard is published in association with AIB and compares each month to the same month in 2019, the last normal year for the Irish tourism industry. Using carrier and port data ITIC extrapolates inbound visitor numbers by market based on past performance.

April data shows total arrivals were down 21% compared to the same month in 2019, an improving trajectory with a 35% lag year to date. Last month, which included the Easter period, business from Continental Europe performed most strongly down 15% on 2019 while the key North American market showed improvement with 140,000 arrivals. Shannon Airport had a particularly strong month down just 4% on the same period in 2019 thanks in part to the reinstatement of key transatlantic services.

With the Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme winding down, data shows that tourism and hospitality has been the largest recipient with 29% of the scheme's total paid to businesses in the sector. Compared to the same period in 2019, inflation is 4 times higher and - with oil prices soaring 47% higher - this is putting significant cost pressure on Irish tourism just as the wage subsidy scheme ends.

Ruth Andrews, Chairperson of ITIC, said *"Comparing tourism monthly data to 2019 we feel is the best comparison and will help track recovery. Pre-pandemic tourism was the country's largest indigenous industry, its biggest regional employer and a massive net contributor to the exchequer and it is vital that the sector returns to growth"*.

Eoghan O'Mara Walsh, CEO of ITIC, said *"The April data shows momentum building in terms of tourism's recovery. With air access from key source markets looking positive for the summer we are hoping for a 67% recovery in inbound tourism numbers compared to 2019 which would be no mean feat considering the mauling the industry has had over the last 2 years."*

O'Mara Walsh noted that that ITIC estimates show full recovery won't be achieved until 2026 and he warned that the war in Ukraine, inflation and labour shortages risk putting a handbrake on the industry's performance. He welcomed the Government's recent tourism Vat extension to February of next year but

Irish Tourism Industry Confederation

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argued that it needed to be in place right through to the sector's full recovery adding *"Competitiveness will be key for tourism businesses in the months ahead and Government needs to stay the course in terms of supporting the tourism industry which was the hardest hit economic sector by the pandemic."*

Mary Mackin, Hospitality Sector Strategist for AIB, said *"April data continues to show strong visitor numbers coming to Ireland, with Shannon Airport total traffic down just 4%. It's great to see positive numbers coming from our key North American market which bodes well for a strong summer, notwithstanding the labour and inflationary challenges the industry is facing. AIB as ever will continue to support the sector as it recovers from the effects of the pandemic."*

ITIC's recent flagship tourism conference held at Croke Park included the publication of a key tourism industry sustainability report, in association with AIB, which can be accessed at www.itic.ie.

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Notes to Editor

About the Irish Tourism Industry Confederation:

The Irish Tourism Industry Confederation was founded in 1984 and is the umbrella group representing the leading tourism interests in Ireland. Its members come from key tourism stakeholders across the public and private sector and include Aer Lingus, Irish Ferries, daa, Shannon Group, Irish Hotels Federation, Incoming Tour Operators Association, Guinness Storehouse, Restaurants Association of Ireland, Vintners Federation of Ireland and Association of Visitor Experiences & Attractions amongst others. A full list of member organizations can be seen on www.itic.ie.

Tourism is Ireland's largest indigenous industries and is a critical component of the export economy. Key tourism facts in 2019:

- Worth €9.2 billion annually
- 9.68 million international staying visitors in 2019
- Tourism employed 265,000 nationally in 2019
- 1 in 9 jobs nationally are in tourism & hospitality sector
- According to Fáilte Ireland, for every euro spent by tourists 23c is generated in tax