



**An evidence informed approach to planning for event
management in Ireland:
An examination of the European Tourism Indicator System**

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Purpose

Events are a significant component of Ireland’s tourism offering. They are an important source of economic activity and an incremental driver of social change and development throughout the country. However, the visual and physical impacts often created by event activities to the environmental and social resource base upon which, events depend, have begun to draw attention to the way events are planned and managed. Although the concept of sustainability has become the topic of much discussion and debate in event management literature, there exist many gaps in relation to its practical application in event management planning in Ireland. This is despite the statutory obligation of Local Authorities in Ireland to license events and to facilitate the process of planning for large-scale outdoor public events in Ireland. Yet, with the continued expansion of Ireland’s event industry, there is a fundamental need for an evidence-informed approach to planning for event management. Through the application of the European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS), the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of the national event industry in Ireland could be secured. This paper will examine and discuss the application of the European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS) as a possible tool to facilitate greater levels of sustainability and accountability within the events industry in Ireland.

Design/Methodology/approach

This study employed a quantitative content analysis approach involving a complete population sample of Local Authorities in the Republic of Ireland to determine the application of the ETIS within the legal process of planning for event management in Ireland.

Findings

While the findings have identified a basic provision for event management within a number of Local Authority legally required County Development Plans, none however, were utilising the ETIS to monitor the impacts of events at local level. This lack of data collection and benchmarking highlights the need for greater levels of sustainability and accountability within the legal process of planning for event management in Ireland.

Originality/value/implications

This study suggests the ETIS as an easy, cost effective and viable solution to facilitate an evidence-informed approach to planning for event management at local level. However, the lessons learned from this study may also have implications for destination planners and event managers outside of Ireland.

Keywords: *Sustainable Planning, Event Management, Local Authorities, European Tourism Indicator System, Ireland.*

Introduction: The live entertainment and events industry in Ireland is experiencing significant exponential growth, generating over €1.7 billion in economic activity and attracting over 4 million holidaymakers each year (Green, 2017; Fáilte Ireland, 2019). As such, events have become a lucrative and integral component of Ireland's tourism offering and are critically important to Ireland's economic health (Department of Transport Tourism and Sport, 2015). Fáilte Ireland (2018) remarked that events offer the perfect opportunity to showcase all that Ireland has to offer, its culture, its people and its place. Their ability to revitalise tourism destinations and to enhance the competitiveness of tourism destinations has resulted in events often being referred to as the "lifeblood of Irish Tourism" (Fáilte Ireland, 2016). Because of this, events have become central to the Governments plans to develop the tourism industry offering at a national and local level in Ireland. A number of Government initiatives have subsequently been developed to support the growth and competitiveness of the event industry. One such initiative was the 'Gathering', an event based tourism initiative aimed to mobilise Irish Diaspora to return to Ireland through organised local gatherings and events. This initiative attracted over 275,000 visitors and generated €170 million in tourism revenue, thereby helping the Government to achieve their economic and social objectives. Therefore, the reputation of events as a major direct contributor of economic activity is a testament to Ireland's unique tourism offering and the efforts of Government in supporting event developments. However, a challenge for Local Authorities is how best to manage and sustain this growth moving into the future (Maguire and Hanrahan, 2017; Maguire, 2018). While a number of events are financially supported by Local Authorities in an effort to support tourism and event growth (Wood, 2006; Maguire, 2018), it is essential that Local Authorities take action to secure the economic benefits of events and the future competitiveness and sustainability of the industry.

Local Authorities have a long running commitment to achieve sustainable development at local level in Ireland (Local Agenda 21 (1992); Our Sustainable Future (2012); Planning and Development Act 2000-2015; Project Ireland 2040 the National Planning Framework (NPF) for Ireland (2018); and the National Development Plan (NDP) 2018-2027). Through these important legal frameworks and documents, Local Authorities have an obligation to plan for and manage future growth and development in a sustainable way. While Agenda 21 (1992) intended to set out an international programme of action for achieving sustainable development for the twenty-first century (DoEHLG, 1997), over two decades on, more efforts are being made at a national level to achieve greater levels of sustainable development. The Government of Ireland launched Project Ireland 2040, the National Planning Framework for Ireland (2018).

This further articulated the Government's commitment to achieving sustainable development through planning for our social, economic and cultural development (NPF, 2018). Aligned to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the vision of the NPF is to shape the future growth and development of the country:

"We have a responsibility to plan for the changes that we face, to manage our future growth in a planned, productive and sustainable way. If we fail to plan for growth and for the demand it will place on our built and natural environment as well as on our social and economic fabric, then we will certainly fail in our responsibility to future generations of Irish men and women" (NPF, 2018: 10).

To support this vision, there is a need to develop new approaches to anticipate and prepare for the future. As such, Local Authorities are tasked with strengthening more environmentally focused planning at local level. In line with the climate change mitigation plan for Ireland (Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, 2017), the NPF (2018) outlines a clear focus on transitioning to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. To implement this strategy, Local Authorities are required to appoint climate action officers. There is also a clear emphasis on the sustainable management of water and waste, the protection of biodiversity, cultural heritage, and landscapes as well as air quality and noise management (NPF, 2018). Raj and Musgrave (2009); Hall (2012); Holmes, Hughes, Mair and Carlsen (2015) and later Jones (2017) advocate that planning is crucial to minimising the negative impacts of events and achieving a path towards sustainable development. Given the legal remit of Local Authorities to license events; and to facilitate and regulate the process of planning for large-scale outdoor public events in Ireland, they are in an ideal position to ensure its future sustainability. However, the changing and litigious environments in which events operate add to the complexity of planning for event management. In particular, the reputation of events to heavily impact on host communities (Ritchie, 1984; Hall, 1997; Deery and Jago, 2010; Stone and Sharpley, 2011) and the natural environment (Collins, Jones and Munday, 2009; Case, 2013; Jones, 2014) together with the risks and issues of events to health and safety (Bowdin, Allen, Harris, O'Toole and McDonnell, 2012; Silvers, 2015; Van der Wagen and White, 2018) has created a fundamental need to ensure events are planned in an effectively more safe and sustainable manner. Thus, given this Government commitment and the legal remit of Government Authorities, there is a fundamental need for Local Authorities to plan for, monitor and manage such issues in the context of planning for event management, considering that such issues are pertinent within the events industry (Raj and

Musgrave 2009; Hall, 2012; Holmes, Hughes, Mair and Carlsen, 2015; Jones, 2017). Hence, adherence to such tenets is essential to ensure event development occurs within environmental limits, having regard to host communities and to the requirements of national legislation.

Through an evidence informed approach to planning for event management Local Authorities can facilitate greater levels of sustainability within the industry and secure its long term competitiveness. This can ultimately help to ensure the ‘lifeblood of Irish tourism’ remains healthy, revitalised and competitive. The ETIS is a free indicator system developed by the European Commission with the aim of helping destinations to monitor and measure their sustainable performance by using a common comparable approach. Therefore, its importance in helping to ensure the future sustainability of the events sector should not be taken for granted by policy makers and event planners. While limited research has been dedicated to examining the ETIS, particularly in Ireland (McLoughlin, 2017, McLoughlin, Hanrahan and Duddy, 2018), there is even less research pertaining to the ETIS in the context of the events industry (Maguire, 2018). This study sets forth to bridge this gap in research by examining the ETIS as a possible tool to facilitate greater levels of sustainability and accountability within the events industry. This will be beneficial when it comes to planning for event management and generating policies, guidelines and strategies by policy makers in Local Authorities due to the incremental need for careful consideration of effective evidence informed solutions to achieve a long-term sustainable and competitive industry. This paper will discuss the importance of planning for event management together with the need for evidence informed planning for events through the ETIS. The authors then present and discuss the methodological approach behind this study. The application and utilisation of a content analysis approach allowed the authors to clearly illustrate which of the 32 Local Authorities and City Councils assessed prioritised the sustainable indicators within the ETIS within the legal process of planning for event management in Ireland. The authors then conclude by discussing opportunities for future research.

The importance of Planning for Event Management in Ireland

Several authors have discussed how events are an important source of economic activity and growth in a host destination (Ritchie, 1984; Crompton, 1999; Dwyer, Forsyth, Madden and Spurr, 2000; Janeczko, Mules and Ritchie, 2002; Ki-Lee and Taylor, 2005; Arcodia and Reid,

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2007; Deery and Jago, 2010; Mair and Whitford, 2013; Maguire and Hanrahan, 2017). However, the economic development opportunities created by event activities has been noted to vary significantly from one place to another (Irshad, 2011). In particular, the distribution of event benefits and the generation of event impacts have all been put down to effective event planning, which, according to Hall (2012) has a significant influence on how events are developed and managed. Higgings-Desbiolles (2018) discussed that event tourism should be examined through a political lens to answer the question of who benefits, how power is assessed and what risks communities have when their landscapes are designed as event tourism destinations. Although, such questions may pertain to political will and adequate resources at local level in Ireland when it comes to event management planning (Maguire, 2018). To ensure an equal distribution of benefits to host destinations while controlling and managing both the positive and negative outcomes of events, effective planning is required by Local Government Authorities given their statutory role in Ireland to license events and to facilitate the process of planning for large-scale outdoor public events in Ireland.

As the second layer of democratic government Local Authorities in Ireland play a significant role in planning for event management. Planning events at local level in Ireland is predominantly determined by the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2015 (licensing of outdoor events). This legislation places a fundamental and statutory onus on Local Authorities throughout Ireland to play a key role in the approval or disapproval of large-scale outdoor events through event licensing (Maguire, 2017). Through the authorisation of events Local Authorities have the ability to control the process of planning for event management in Ireland. This role also requires Local Authorities to oversee the application of state laws through event licensing which governs the preparation and sale of food, street closures, environmental protection, water supply and sewage, waste management, road closures, health and welfare and erection of temporary structures at local level (LGMA, 2012). The responsibility of such functions falls to a number of departments within Local Authorities. Thus, given the functions of Local Authorities, the role they play in licensing events together with their statutory commitment towards achieving sustainable development places them in an ideal position to implement sustainability in planning regimes for event management (Maguire, 2018).

The need to plan for events has become an increasingly complex task given the broad impacts and issues that can face the industry. Holmes et al (2015) noted a lack of understanding of

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3 associated event impacts and confusion in relation to what sustainability is or should be could
4 potentially impede the process of planning for event sustainability. As such, a number of
5 discussions (Raj and Musgrave, 2009; Jones, 2014; Getz and Page, 2016a) have pointed to the
6 need for greater understanding of event impacts and how to achieve event sustainability.
7 Furthermore, it requires appropriate tools (UNEP, 2012; EC, 2016) that can be adopted and
8 utilised by Local Authorities and event managers to ensure tourism activities such as events
9 are planned and managed sustainably. Such tools can address and fulfill the fundamental need
10 for an evidence informed approach to planning for event management by Local Authorities
11 given the diverse range of impacts created by event activities.
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20 All events, irrespective of size and type are susceptible to impacts, both positive and negative
21 (Liu and Wilson, 2014) particularly to the environmental and socio-cultural resource base upon
22 which they ultimately depend (Maguire, 2018). As a result, increased pressure has been placed
23 on governments to formulate and adopt sustainable policies, plans, tools and guidelines to
24 manage event impacts (Bowdin et al, 2012). There is a continued need to monitor and evaluate
25 the impacts of events in order to guarantee long-term sustainability of the industry and to render
26 ongoing socio-cultural benefits that can be obtained through effective planning. O'Brien and
27 Chalip (2008) discussed how events can be treated as a leverage resource to create opportunity
28 for social change in host communities. However, with the expansion of events comes a greater
29 cost to host destinations, residents and cultures (Sharpley and Stone, 2011). Even though events
30 have a renowned ability to leverage many benefits and enhance local community image,
31 promote community values and act as a vehicle for improving social relationships as well as a
32 valuable source of income generation and employment for host residents (Wood, 2006; Nunkoo
33 and Ramkissoon, 2011; Gursoy, Kim and Uysal, 2004), the quality of life of host residents can
34 also become greatly diminished through hosting events. The socio-cultural costs of events have
35 as such accentuated the need to pay greater attention to plan for event impacts (Delamere,
36 Wankel and Hinch, 2001; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2011; Maguire and Hanrahan, 2016). The
37 issues of traffic disruption and congestion, crime, vandalism, property damage, overcrowding,
38 littering, and noise for example can adversely affect community quality of life, lead to a loss
39 of cultural values and identity, create impediments to access, disruption to lifestyle and can
40 create a negative image which can ultimately have a knock on effect on social cohesion and
41 local community support for event developments (Weaver and Opperman, 2000; Fredline,
42 Deery and Jago, 2006; O'Brien and Chalip, 2008; Peric, Durkin and Wise, 2016; Maguire and
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Hanrahan, 2016). However, event developments are dependent of host community support and engagement at local level (Maguire and Hanrahan, 2016).

Despite strategic leveraging programs for events in Ireland to enhance community quality of life, foster tourism, and boost economic development, it appears socio-cultural issues are profound at national level in Ireland. Reports have shown that regardless of objections from local residents to Local Authorities based on the perceived socio-cultural impacts of five nights of sold out concerts on consecutive evenings for an audience of 80,000 per night (Maguire and Hanrahan 2016). Local Authorities appear to not be paying adequate attention to the socio-cultural consequences events can often create. While this particular case resulted in a long drawn out event licensing process, Local Authorities subsequently granted permission for three of the five concerts which, in turn, resulted in the artist cancelling all five concerts. This was estimated to have a loss of earnings worth €50m to the local economy. Yet, through appropriate leveraging events can stimulate not only economic development but stimulate change in regional and local social agendas (Peric et al, 2016). However, there is a need to learn from past failures in order to improve future attempts to leverage. Thus through an effective, consistent and strategic approach to planning, host communities can derive substantial benefits from events and long-term outcomes such as repeat visitation, re-imaging host communities, increased tourism activity and inward investment and employment (O'Brien, 2007). O'Brien and Chalip (2008) therefore advocate that the triple bottom line can be applied strategically to event planning and implementation. With this in mind, the ETIS offers an opportunity to apply a triple bottom line approach to maximizing the benefits of events in Ireland while minimizing the negative consequences that can be created

Similarly, experience has also shown that it has become visually evident that event activities create negative impacts to the environment (Gursoy and Kendall, 2006; Collins, Jones and Munday, 2009; Jones, 2010; Case, 2013). As a consequence, it is essential that event impacts are managed to preserve the quality of the environmental resource base upon which events depend. The implications caused to the environment can cause long-term extensive damage and degradation (Jones, 2008) and are a significant cause for concern for policy makers, event managers and Local Authorities. In particular, the areas of waste, water, air, transport, food and energy can effectively impact the use of resources, cause pollution and land degradation, and contribute to carbon emissions which can in turn ultimately affect the longevity and quality of events (David, 2009a; Jones, 2010; Collins and Cooper, 2016; Maguire, 2018). The

importance of planning for carbon issues, pollution and the sustainable management of resources for example, is reflected in the way they are integrated in the National Planning Framework for Ireland (2018), which has been developed in an effort to shape the future growth and development of the country. Litter generation and the mismanagement of water and energy resources at events have been reported to contribute to the creation of pollution (UNEP, 2012). These issues have therefore become a primary environmental concern that warrants a sustainable approach to planning for events as it not only creates visual impacts but also physical impacts (David, 2009b), which can be detrimental and irreversible to the environment and also the reputation of the national event industry.

In line with this, events of all type and size generate economic activity; although, this has been noted to differ depending on the type and the longevity of each event (Crompton, 1999; Janeczko, Mules and Ritchie, 2002). Research has acknowledged that event stakeholders often tend to focus purely on economic benefits and overlook the important social and environmental issues of events (Deery and Jago, 2010). Ki-Lee and Taylor (2005) put this down to events generating significant revenues and economic benefits to host cities, regions and countries. Given the economic significance of events in Ireland to attract over 4m visitors and equating to a net worth of €1.7bn; using events can increase destination competitiveness (Konstantaki and Wickens, 2010) and leverage opportunities for further economic growth. Although there is also the potential for the creation of increased leakages (Janeczko, Mules and Ritchie, 2002), which occur through taxation, foreign ownership and investment, savings and spending on non-locally sourced products and have been regarded as decreasing the economic impact of events to host regions (Andersson and Lundberg, 2013). Therefore, despite the benefits of events to raise destination profiles and attract capital and inward investment, improve destination awareness and encourage long-term promotional benefits and additional trade (Janeczko, Mules and Ritchie, 2002), the economic costs associated with price inflation, resident exodus and hostility and interruption to normal businesses (Dwyer, Mellor, Mistilis and Mules, 2000), which ultimately has a knock on effect on host community quality of life and standard of living require much needed attention. Therefore, for events to be economically sustainable requires Local Authorities to monitor the economic impacts of events.

Given the legal obligation of Local Authorities in Ireland to license large-scale public outdoor events under the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2015 and the complex issues facing the industry, the importance and need to plan sustainably for event management cannot

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be underestimated. Damster and Tassiopoulos (2005) acknowledged how the demand for government intervention in the event planning process is a response to the unwanted effects of event developments, particularly at local level. Hall (2008) however, detailed that planning is not a cure-all, yet it may in its fullest process-orientated sense be able to minimise potential negative impacts and maximise economic returns to the destination and bring greater levels of sustainability and accountability within the industry. Through an effective evidence based event planning process, Raj, Walters and Rashid (2013) believe that events could be planned in a way that is effectively more sustainable. An effective event planning process could put Local Authorities in a more informed position to plan for and manage events sustainably. Without effective event management planning, events can cause various economic, social and environmental changes upon host destinations (Holmes et al, 2015; Maguire and Hanrahan, 2016; Maguire and Hanrahan, 2017; Maguire, 2018). It is important to draw attention to the ETIS, developed by the European Commission in 2013 and updated in 2016 to aid the sustainable development of tourism and its activities.

The European Tourism Indicator System and Evidence Informed Planning for Events

Tourism and its activities have become valuable assets of European Union economies and societies. It supports economic growth and activity to ensure the long-term competitiveness of the industry (UNCTAD, 2013). The European Commission has therefore committed itself to promoting the sustainable development of tourism across Europe. This has been prioritised through the introduction of a number of policy tools and legislative documents to facilitate sustainable planning and management practices by national and local governments. The European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS) is the European Commission’s most recent development, designed specifically for destinations to monitor performance and help destinations to develop and carry out their plan for greater sustainability with long-term vision (EC, 2016). Therefore it acts to enhance sustainable performance at destination level through the promotion of economic prosperity, social equality and environmental protection (Table 1).

Table 1 Core Indicators of the ETIS

Destination Management	
A.1. Sustainable Tourism Public Policy	A.2. Customer Satisfaction
Economic Value	
B.1. Tourism flow (volume and value) at destination	B.2. Tourism enterprise(s) performance
B.3. Quantity and quality of employment	B.4. Tourism supply chain
Social and Cultural Impact	
C.1. Community/social Impact	C.4. Inclusion/accessibility
C.2. Health and Safety	C.5. Protecting and enhancing cultural heritage, local identity and assets
C.3. Gender equality	
Environmental Impact	
D.1. Reducing transport impact	D.4. Sewage Treatment
D.2. Climate Change	D.5. Waste Management
D.3. Solid Waste Management	D.6. Energy Usage
	D.7. Landscape and biodiversity protection

The ETIS was developed to tackle social, cultural, economic and environmental key challenges. They have been referred to as an effective measure of sustainability performance as it can facilitate informed policy decision making and create benchmarks of performance (EC, 2015; Maguire and Hanrahan, 2017). Several studies have in recent years examined the concept of evidence informed policy-making (Godfrey, 2006; Johnston, 2006; Minogue, 2008; Head, 2008; Nilsson et al, 2008) and in particular the ETIS as a tool for evidence based planning and decision making (McLoughlin, 2017; McLoughlin et al, 2018). The ETIS, which was developed and informed through lessons learned from previous indicator systems (UNWTO, 2005; UNEP/UNWTO, 2005; GSTC, 2013) is said to be a useful and reliable tool for policy maker's in developing socially, economically and environmentally sustainable planning tools for tourism and its activities. This indicator system offer an opportunity to apply sustainable indicators to measure, monitor and assess the impacts tourism activities can create. Therefore this system, if applied to the context of events may prove useful in facilitating an evidence informed approach to planning for the events industry.

While the use of tourism indicators continues to be advocated and discussed (Griffin, Morrissey and Flanagan, 2010; Torres Delgado and Palomeque, 2014; McLoughlin and Hanrahan, 2019), their presence and application in the tourism and event planning process is an important factor when assessing a destinations progress towards not only sustainability (McLoughlin, 2018) but also event management (Griffin, 2009; Maguire, 2018) and destination competitiveness (Dupeyras and MacCallum, 2013). However, despite their importance in assessing destinations (Pérez et al, 2013) and in measuring responsible behaviour (Blackstock et al, 2008) and measuring competitiveness (Dupeyras and MacCallum, 2013), their application in Ireland continues to be overlooked in both tourism planning (McLoughlin and Hanrahan, 2019) and

event management (Maguire, 2018), with little research pertaining to its use in contributing to the competitiveness and revitalisation of the events industry in Ireland to date.

The need for evidence informed planning for events

The National Planning framework for Ireland outlines the importance of planning for “changes that we face, to manage future growth in a planned, productive and sustainable way” while highlighting the role Local Authorities play in this regard (NPF, 2018: 2). The reputation of events to impact negatively upon the social and environmental dimensions of host destinations has been well documented (Case, 2013; Fredline, Deery and Jago, 2006; Holmes et al, 2015, Maguire and Hanrahan, 2016; Maguire and Hanrahan, 2017). Through the collection of data on the issues and impacts of events, Local Authorities can monitor and manage the process of planning for event management more effectively. This can provide a more holistic picture of the event industry at local level and assist Local Authorities in developing plans and guidelines that are based on evidence to ultimately preserve the quality and competitiveness of the industry. The ETIS, which enables planners to benchmark performance and progress to make better more informed management decisions (EC, 2016) can facilitate greater levels of sustainability within the events industry.

This is significant since events at European level are proliferating, frequently viewed as an important driver of economic development and growth (European Commission, 2008). In while Ireland is subjected to a number of EU directives and guidelines, which are capable of influencing the sustainability of Local Authority planning for event management in Ireland. When it comes to the tourism industry, there appears to be more EU directives and guidelines pertaining to the tourism industry in comparison to the event industry. However, it is important to remark that events are recognised as a core component of tourism industries worldwide (Getz, 2008; Quinn, 2009; Getz and Page, 2016a). As Pugh and Wood (2004) observed, the close relationship between tourism and events is reflected in the way they are commonly discussed as one issue within policies, plans and guidelines. Nevertheless, a key priority of the EU is to promote the development of a sustainable, responsible and high quality tourism offering (EC, 2013a). Through a sustainable approach to planning, the EU can improve the range of tourism products and services on offer and ultimately make European destinations more attractive and competitive (EC, 2014). In fact, the EU has long recognised that long-term sustainability requires a balance between economic, socio-cultural and environmental

sustainability. As such, the European Commission established the Tourism Sustainability Group (TSG), which in 2007 reported a number of challenges facing national and local Government when improving actions for more sustainable tourism:

“Many national governments and local authorities across Europe have paid attention to sustainability issues in the development of tourism strategies and actions, yet there is a feeling that such awareness is not necessarily translated into concrete practical actions and that some of the key challenges and opportunities presented by the sustainable development of tourism are not being met” (EC, 2007: 4).

Since then, according to the European Commission (2013a), tourism destinations are increasingly being called upon to tackle a varied range of social, cultural, economic and environmental challenges. However, the challenge facing Local Authorities in sustainable planning for event management lies in its practical application. To help measure performance in relation to sustainability, the European Commission developed the European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS), a system of indicators suitable for all tourist destinations, to adopt a more sustainable approach to planning (EC, 2013). However, in order for guidelines or tools to have any influence on the tourism and event industry they need to be applied in practice by Government. If Local Authorities are to sustain the growth and competitiveness of the national event industry in Ireland, they cannot afford to overlook this practical tool and its use in facilitating evidence informed planning, especially in light of the ever-changing and rapidly growing environment in which events operate.

While it is generally agreed that sustainability is the only long-term path for activities such as events, there does however remain an issue as to how it should be measured and implemented (Griffin, 2009). The complexity of the concept of sustainability itself makes it difficult to develop a method for measuring it, thus there is no consensus on how to construct and apply such a method (Torres Delgado and Palomeque, 2014). McLoughlin and Hanrahan (2019) discussed how there exists a fundamental gap in knowledge concerning which body is responsible for implementing sustainability indicators at destination level. While events can play a significant role in raising destination profiles and attracting capital and inward investment (Maguire, 2018), the complex issues within the events industry in Ireland, continue to highlight the need for improved management and safety procedures. This can be aided through the collection and benchmarking of specific indicator data. Policy makers too, when it comes to granting licences to ensure events are planned appropriately and in a manner that protects the concerns of the local community, could also use quantitative data. This data could

help destinations maintain the revitalisation and continuing competitiveness at European level, national level and local level.

Events are useful tourism activities to enhance local community image, promote community values and act as a vehicle for improving social relationships (Waite, 2003; Gursoy, Kim and Uysal, 2004; Wood, 2006). However, it is the economic costs associated with price inflation, resident exodus and hostility and interruption to normal businesses (Dwyer, Mellor, Mistilis and Mules, 2000), which ultimately has a knock on effect on host communities and destinations. This together with issues relating to waste, water, transport, and energy can effectively impact the use of resources, cause pollution and land degradation, and contribute to carbon emissions (David, 2009; Jones, 2010; Collins and Cooper, 2016). Therefore, the ongoing monitoring of events through the ETIS is crucial to minimising the consequences and maximising the positive role events play in host communities. Head (2008) argues that evidence has become central to the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes. By adopting and implementing such indicators, Local Authorities in Ireland can establish an evidence informed approach to event management planning whereby they can collect data and monitor and control event issues and impacts. Having recognised the ETIS as a useful tool for policy and decision makers at destination level, the application of this tool may prove invaluable for not only facilitating greater levels of sustainability but also contributing to the future competitiveness and continued revitalisation of the events industry throughout Ireland.

Methodology

This research sets forth to examine and determine the application of the European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS) within the Local Authority legal process of planning for event management in Ireland. Local Authorities have long used events to achieve a diverse range of economic and social objectives (Wood, 2005). However, if Local Authorities are to continue to benefit from tourism events going into the future, they need to begin to realise the importance of monitoring, measuring and managing the impacts events can generate. Given the reputation of events to create visual and physical impacts to the socio-cultural and environmental resource base upon which they depend, it is important that tools and guidelines be adopted and utilised to manage the impacts that tourism events can create. Through an evidence informed approach to planning for event management, Local Authorities would be in a better position to facilitate best practice in sustainably planning for event management and to manage more effectively the

process of planning for large scale public events. This may be achievable through the provision of comprehensive sustainable strategies, guidelines and policies for event management which can be adopted by event organisers to help guide them in the process of planning for event management in Ireland. This may ultimately help Local Authorities to ensure events are planned in a way that would maximise positive economic and social benefits while minimising the potential for environmental and socio-cultural issues.

Given the legal obligation of Local Authorities to license events under the Planning and Development Act 2000 and 2015 and to plan for the economic, social and environmental development in their respective regions (DEHLG, 2010), Local Authorities could take greater responsibility when it comes to planning for event management through an evidence informed approach to planning. This study sets out to determine the extent of evidence informed planning by Local Authorities for event management in Ireland, in particular for the social, environmental and economic impacts of tourism activities such as events according to the criteria outlined in the ETIS. The ETIS will be explored as a possible tool to facilitate greater levels of sustainability and accountability within the events industry in Ireland.

Research Method

In order to facilitate an examination of the application of the European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS) within the legal process of planning for event management in Ireland, a content analysis of Local Authority event management planning guidelines was adopted and utilised. The adoption and utilisation of the content analysis approach allowed for the constant comparison of results throughout the research process, which enabled the identification of variations and gaps in respect of the application of the ETIS within the process of planning for event management in Ireland. The ETIS developed by the European Commission could permit Local Authorities to manage the impacts of tourism events in Ireland through the continuous process of measuring and monitoring. The authors identified and analysed event management planning guidelines according to the indicators outlined in the ETIS given the indicators contained within this indicator system are developed to help improve sustainability performance in respect of tourism related activities. The content analysis framework that was developed helped to facilitate a comparable examination. This enabled the authors to clearly determine the application of the ETIS by Local Authorities within the legal process of planning for event management in Ireland. The content analysis approach was the primary quantitative

analysis tool which is noted to represent quantification of a limited scale, yet it is still anchored in the quantitative research paradigm. Sellitz, Jahoda, Deutsch and Cook (1967) considers it a kind of reliability of the measures and a validation of eventual findings, viewing it as an instrument for making replicable and valid inferences from texts and other meaningful matter in the context of their use. Neuendorf (2016) discussed how it takes on an analytical approach to understand a number of controlled variables. Therefore, quantification in content analysis tends to emphasise the procedures of analysis (Berg, 2007) while enhancing the validity of research by minimising biases (Hall and Valentin, 2005). Tourism and event researchers are increasingly using content analysis as a means of critical investigation when faced with textual forms of data such as written documents including tourism strategies and guidelines (Maguire, 2016; Maguire, 2017; McLoughlin and Hanrahan, 2019).

This approach allowed for a valuable cross representation of results in relation to the application of the ETIS criteria by Local Authorities in Ireland within the legal process of planning for event management. This provides an indication of the economic, socio-cultural and economic planning priorities implemented for event management by Local Authorities in Ireland. Analysis centred on criteria outlined in the ETIS developed by the European Commission. The variables assessed are illustrated in (Table 1). The indicators contained within the ETIS are capable of developing and initiating greater levels of sustainability in the process of planning for tourism therefore would be a beneficial system to the events industry although it has not been examined thoroughly in this context. The criteria were incorporated into a content analysis framework and the assessment is discussed in light of current relevant theory.

Sampling and Selection

This study employed a quantitative content analysis involved a complete population sample of Local Authorities in the Republic of Ireland to determine the application of the ETIS within the legal process of planning for event management in Ireland. To provide a nationwide comparative examination of the application of the European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS) by local authorities for event management in Ireland, 32 Local Authorities and City Councils were examined according to the indicators outlined in the ETIS.

The sample was chosen to allow for a constant comparison and analysis of research. The current system of Local Government in Ireland comprises 31 Local Authorities. There are 26 Local Authorities responsible for Local Government in 24 Geographical Counties including Dublin. County Dublin has 3 Local Authorities – South Dublin County Council, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and Fingal County Council. There are two City and County Councils who are responsible for Local Government in Limerick and Waterford. Also, there are three Local Authorities who are responsible for Local Government in the cities Dublin, Cork and Galway. As such, this study focuses on 31 Local Authorities, however, one Local Authority “Tipperary” is separated into ‘Tipperary North’ and ‘Tipperary South’. Therefore, 32 Local Authorities are assessed in total giving a complete population sample of Local Government in Ireland.

Data Analysis

To facilitate the continual comparison of results throughout the research process and to highlight any variations and gaps between each Local Authority data was inputted into a content analysis matrix. This procedure allowed the authors to identify clearly the application of the ETIS within the legal process of planning for event management by Local authorities in Ireland. Although a time consuming process, the content analysis approach within this study offered a fitting way to accumulate the necessary data and provides an opportunity for future longitudinal research, enabling researchers to apply the same techniques to the same problems at different points of time. The findings provided a useful insight into the provision of guidelines by Local Authorities for the impacts tourism events can create based on the economic, social and environmental indicators contained within the ETIS.

Table 2 Example Matrix of the Content Analysis Framework is outlined:

Criteria to assess the application of the ETIS by Local Authorities in Ireland	Local authorities in Ireland (abbreviated by first and last letter DL = Donegal)																									
	CW	CN	CE	CK	CD	CD	DD	DD	DF	FG	GG	KK	KK	KL	LS	LM	LL	LD	LM	MM	MO	OR	ST	TW	WW	WW
Provision of Planning Guidelines for Event Management						X											X	X		X						X
Provision of Sustainable Planning Guidelines for Event Management																										
Planning guidelines for Community and Social Impact																										
Planning Guidelines for protecting and enhancing cultural heritage, local identity and assets																										

As evident from (Table 2), the first and last letter of the county they represent abbreviates the Local Authorities displayed in the matrix. For example “DL” abbreviates the first and last letter

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of County Donegal. This table illustrates clearly how each Local Authority varies according to each of the indicators assessed. For example, just 5 (16%) Local Authorities provided planning guidelines for event management although no Local Authorities provided specific sustainable planning guidelines for event management. Furthermore, there was a lack of integration of sustainability indicators relation community and social impact within the planning guidelines provided for event management by the Local Authorities, despite the fact that events have been noted to often create disastrous effects of host community and their quality of life (Deery and Jago, 2010; Kim, Jun, Walker and Drane, 2015; Maguire and Hanrahan, 2016). Similarly, no Local Authority has provided guidelines for protecting and enhancing cultural heritage, local identity and assets even though events can also impact upon host destinations identity, effect reputation and are used as tools to enhance local traditions and cultures (Fredline, Jago and Deery, 2003; Gursoy, Kim and Uysal, 2004). The comparison of results will be discussed further in the context of current theory.

Results and Discussion

The research approach employed by this study allowed for the provision of nationwide perspectives on the application of indicators from the ETIS within the legal process of planning for event management in Ireland. In light of tourism destinations increasingly being called upon to tackle social, cultural, economic and environmental challenges (EC, 2016) in order to ensure the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of the industry, the ETIS would be a fitting tool to be adapted for use in the events industry. It could act as a guide for Local Authorities and indeed event organisers to measure performance in relation to event sustainability, which is essential in the current event environment given the complexity of the potential impacts that can now be generated by tourism event activities. It would also encourage Local Authorities and event organisers to adopt a more intelligent approach to tourism event planning; acting a management tool to support destinations and organisations towards greater levels of sustainability. McLoughlin (2017) and Maguire (2018) discussed the significance of the ETIS within the tourism industry and the events industry and outlined how the ETIS can be utilised as a monitoring tool to encourage the collection of data by policy makers in order to monitor performance and benchmark success year or year within tourism and event sectors. As such, the methodological decision to employ a content analysis enabled the authors to focus on 32 Local Authorities to examine the integration of sustainability indicators from the ETIS within Local Authority event management planning guideline documents. This also allowed the

authors to examine the relationship between Local Authorities in Ireland and managing the social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts of events in an effort to transition towards greater sustainability.

Despite the fact that Local Authorities strategically use events to achieve a diverse range of economic and social objectives and to aid urban regeneration, city imaging and job creation in host destinations (Maguire and Hanrahan, 2017). It is evident from (Table 3, 4, 5 and 6) that there is a need to facilitate greater levels of sustainability within the legal process of planning for event management in Ireland. Analysis revealed a dearth of planning for each of the indicators outlined in the ETIS. The variation of results illustrates that efforts towards achieving economic, environmental and socio-cultural sustainability appears to not be a priority of Local Government when planning for event management; nor is it being embraced by Local Authorities at a national level in Ireland.

Table 3 Assessment Matrix for examining the application of sustainability indicators from the ETIS within the process of planning for event management in Ireland.

Criteria to assess the application of the ETIS by Local Authorities in Ireland	Local authorities in Ireland (abbreviated by first and last letter DL = Donegal)																												
	CW	CN	CE	CK	CL	CD	DL	DR	DS	FL	GY	GE	KE	KY	LS	LM	KL	HL	LD	LM	HM	MO	NO	RY	SO	TO	WD	WH	WW
Provision of Planning Guidelines for Event Management						X											X	X	X									X	
Provision of Sustainable Planning Guidelines for Event Management																													
Data Collection on Events		X		X					X	X			X						X	X						X		X	
Sustainable Tourism Public Policy																													
Customer satisfaction																													

Following a review of 32 Local Authority event management planning guidelines in Ireland, analysis revealed that just 5 (16%) of Local Authorities provided planning guidelines for event management as part of the process of planning for event management in Ireland. Planning guidelines for event management have been noted to provide clarity on a range of planning issues (Raj and Musgrave, 2009) while supporting event organisers in their quest to safely and sustainably plan for and manage events. Therefore, the low level of guideline adoption by Local Authorities is concerning given the fundamental role of events in Ireland to showcase all that Ireland has to offer and to contribute to economic growth (Fáilte Ireland, 2016). Even though the provision of planning guidelines for the event industry is not a mandatory requirement of Local Authorities in Ireland. There is a fundamental need for Local Authorities to provide event management planning guidelines to event practitioners nationwide to ensure events will be

planned in a way that is safe, minimising the exposure of events to potential impacts and risks on the environmental and social resource in which events are held.

The provision for sustainable planning guidelines for event management have been noted to provide valuable information and support to event organisers (UNEP, 2012; Maguire, 2018). Holmes et al (2015) discussed the influence of sustainable planning guidelines in maximizing the economic and social benefits to host destinations while minimizing the environmental consequences created by event activities. However, analysis found no Local Authority in Ireland implemented in practice, guidelines for sustainable event management. Yet, according to Andrades and Dimanche (2017), for any destination to be competitive, there are prerequisites that should be both provided and addressed when establishing and implementing guidelines and strategies. Without the provision of sustainable planning guidelines for event management going in to the future, it will inevitably be more difficult for destinations across Ireland to not only guide appropriate developments in the event industry but to also manage the diverse range of potential impacts often created by event activities. As noted by Dupeyras and MacCallum (2013) maintaining a detailed knowledge of trends and how they affect competitiveness requires dedicated resources and knowledge informed policy decision making.

The ETIS helps to identify areas of improvement while managing risks effectively and creates benchmarks for future performance. It can be used by Local Authorities to obtain improved data for informed policy decision making (EC, 2016). This tool has been created as a result of lessons learned from previous indicator systems and offers an opportunity to maximise social, economic, cultural and environmental benefits that can result from better management while minimising the potential of negative impacts. This study subsequently examined the application of indicators from the ETIS within the process of planning for event management in Ireland.

The use of sustainable indicators which is critical in supporting tourism development and management has been well discussed (Oliveira, 2013; Maguire and Hanrahan, 2017). This tool has been noted to be an effective, reliable and flexible tool when applied in policy and can facilitate the collection of data by policy makers that can be used to inform planning decisions in future and identify area for improvement and benchmark success. Therefore it may be beneficial for Local Authorities to incorporate such indicators within planning processes and approaches for event management. However, only 9 (28%) of Irelands Local Authorities were found to be collecting data on events. Yet, when it comes to increasing the competitiveness of

event destinations and encouraging the revitalisation of the local events industry, monitoring the impacts of events through data collection is increasingly important and should be a fundamental consideration of Local Authorities when it comes to the process of planning for event management.

As highlighted by Griffin (2009) the collection of such data can influence the future development of event activities at local level and identify the needs of the industry and areas of improvement. While Maguire (2018) discussed how Local Authority event personal consider event managers and organisers as having the most prominent role in managing the impacts from events. Evidence informed planning must be led by policy makers who have the legal power to grant or refuse event licenses based on developed regulations. The ETIS allows policy makers to monitor the main elements that determine the destination attractiveness and competitiveness so they can enhance the visitor experience and ensure customer satisfaction (EC, 2016). Although results revealed that no Local Authority prioritised customer satisfaction within the process of planning for event management despite a number of authors having discussed how visitor satisfaction of event experiences is perhaps the most central outcome that event organisers should seek to evaluate (Bauer, Law, Tse and Weber, 2008; Wale, Robinson and Dickson, 2010; Ferdinand and Kitchin, 2016). However, evidence informed planning, facilitated through the ETIS can be an effective way for Local Authorities to evaluate and measure their competitiveness and help ensure events are playing a key role in revitalising destinations and communities around Ireland. Furthermore, no Local Authority had developed a sustainable tourism public policy. Yet, this can question the ability of Local Authorities in Ireland to encourage responsible policies that can both enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of both the tourism and event sector going forward.

The continued national growth of the event industry in Ireland has resulted in a growing need for the economic impacts of events to be monitored and managed. As noted by Dupeyras and MacCallum (2013) enhancing the economic value of tourism is an important concern for advanced tourism economies to remain competitive in the global tourism market place. However, Local Authorities continue to ignore the importance of making provisions for monitoring the economic impacts of events (Table 4), in particular for monitoring tourism flows, the quality and quantity of employment opportunities for local residents, enterprise performance from tourism activities and the wider tourism supply chain.

Table 4 Assessment Matrix for examining the Economic indicators from the ETIS within the process of planning for event management in Ireland

Criteria to assess the application of the ETIS by Local Authorities in Ireland	Local authorities in Ireland (abbreviated by first and last letter DL = Donegal)																															
	C	C	C	C	D	D	D	D	F	G	G	K	K	K	L	L	L	L	M	M	M	O	R	S	T	W	W	W				
	W	N	E	K	C	L	C	r	s	L	Y	C	E	K	Y	L	S	M	K	H	D	H	O	N	Y	N	O	Y	D	H	X	W
Provisions for Monitoring the Economic Impacts of Events																																
Tourism Flows																																
Quality and Quantity of employment																																
Tourism enterprise performance																																
Tourism supply chain																																

Yet, it is important to establish how significant tourism and event related spending is to destination economies (McLoughlin, 2017; Maguire, 2018) as it can allow destinations to determine their dependency on the events sector and to develop future polices and strategies to effectively guide destination towards economic sustainability. An evidence informed approach to event management through the application of the ETIS can provide a comprehensive overview of the performance of the local event sector. This according to Wood (2005) it is then easier to justify expenditure on events. Therefore, in light of the strategic use of events by Local Authorities, measuring and monitoring economic impacts of events should form a core component of Local Authority strategic planning for event management.

Cultural and creative resources are not only key drivers of attractiveness (Dupeyras and MacCallum, 2013) but as discussed by Whitford (2009) the primary focus of events organised by Local Authorities. However, as evident from Table 5, Local Authorities in Ireland are overlooking the importance of monitoring the socio-cultural impacts of events. This may be down to a lack of understanding of event impacts and how to sustainably plan for such impacts. However, without an accurate understanding, Local Authorities cannot sufficiently advance the event industry towards more sustainable thresholds nor can they control the impacts event activities create (Maguire, 2018). Moreover, it could be down to a lack of qualified and trained event personnel employed within the Local Government System (Maguire, 2018). While some Local Authorities were found to have made provisions for access for people with disabilities none made provisions to ensure inclusion and access for local residents. This needs to be regularly monitored as Maguire (2018) argues that if Local Authorities wish to maintain the competitiveness of the event industry and sustainably plan for event management, detailed guidelines are needed in relation to planning for access not only people with disabilities but also host residents.

Table 5 Assessment Matrix for examining the Socio-Cultural indicators from the ETIS within the process of planning for event management in Ireland

Criteria to assess the application of the ETIS by Local Authorities in Ireland	Local authorities in Ireland (abbreviated by first and last letter DL = Donegal)																										
	CW	CE	CK	CC	CD	DD	DD	DF	GG	GG	KK	KK	KL	LS	LM	LL	LD	LM	MM	MM	OR	OR	ST	ST	WW	WW	WW
Provisions for Monitoring Socio-Cultural Impacts of Events																											
Community and social impact																											
Health and safety						X											X										
Gender equality																											
Inclusion/accessibility																											
Protecting/enhancing cultural heritage, local identity and assets																											

However, a number of the core social cultural indicators of the ETIS such as protecting community quality of life through inclusion, accessibility and equality, and enhancing cultural heritage, local identity and assets are not being monitored by Local Authority event personnel. Findings illustrated an overall lack of planning for health and safety despite this being identified as the “central domain” in event management planning (Silvers, 2010; Raj, Walters and Rashid, 2013). This result was worrying considering the Local Authority process of planning for events prioritises health and safety and ensures the welfare of all personnel attending and affected by events (Bladen et al, 2012). However, ongoing monitoring through the application of the social cultural indicators of the ETIS is required if the event industry is to be sustained. This evidence informed approach could help avoid implications to the way events could be planned in future, with more regard given to the socio-cultural aspects of host communities and destinations. Thus, facilitating greater levels of sustainability and in turn contributing to the competitiveness of the sector.

While the economic impact from events is often felt in employment, increased tax revenues, and successful business growth, it is important to not overlook the generation of impacts to the environmental resource base that events depend on. It has been noted that every event attendee also generate increased waste and consumes excessive water and energy resources. This is of particular importance at a time when the national event industry is increasingly growing in size, attracting record numbers of international and domestic visitors (Green, 2017).

Table 6 Assessment Matrix for examining the Environmental indicators from the ETIS within the process of planning for event management in Ireland

Criteria to assess the application of the ETIS by Local Authorities in Ireland	Local authorities in Ireland (abbreviated by first and last letter DL = Donegal)																														
	C	C	C	C	D	D	D	D	F	G	G	K	K	K	L	L	L	L	M	M	M	O	R	S	T	W	W	W	W		
	W	N	E	K	c	L	c	r	s	L	Y	C	E	K	Y	L	S	M	K	H	D	H	O	N	Y	N	O	Y	D	H	X

[illegible]

Yet as evident from Table 6 above, there is little emphasis placed on monitoring the environmental impacts of events by Local Authorities, despite the legal requirement of Local Authorities to request an environmental monitoring programme as part of the event management planning process in Ireland (Maguire, 2018). There is an overall absence of several core environmental indicators of the ETIS such as climate change responsiveness, treatment of wastewater and sewage, energy usage, and protecting landscape and biodiversity. While 3 Local Authorities made provisions for waste management (9%) and 4 for reducing the impact of travel and transport (12%). Yet, protecting these natural resources is paramount considering these are key drivers of attractiveness and offer countries a competitive advantage (Dupeyras and MacCallum, 2013). However, by employing the ETIS, policy makers would be in a position to identify unusual or emerging environmental trends that have the potential to significantly affect the competitiveness and sustainability of the destination. It is therefore essential that Local Authorities move towards an evidence informed approach when planning for event management to help ensure the long-term success of the event industry.

Maguire (2018) discusses how without an efficient level of resourcing within Local Authorities in Ireland, the long term sustainability of events is not feasible, their ability to contribute to the competitiveness and revitalisation of the industry is questionable. As highlighted by McLoughlin (2017), funding is also needed to effectively monitor and measure the various impacts at local level. However, the ETIS is a free indicator system that can simply be downloaded and applied by policy makers in Ireland to facilitate greater levels of sustainability in the events tourism industry.

In essence, the analysis revealed widespread disparity of the application of indicators from the ETIS to monitor and manage the economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts associated with tourism activities such as events by Local Authorities. However, if Local Authorities do not begin to realise the importance of planning for such impacts that tourism activities and events can create in an effectively more sustainable manner; then the future

competitiveness of the events industry in Ireland may become increasingly more difficult to secure. Nationwide improvements at a national level in Ireland are needed. There is a fundamental need for an evidence informed approach to planning for the issues events can create which cannot be underestimated as the future longevity of the industry depends on greater efforts being made towards sustainable planning. The adaption of the ETIS may offer the starting point to moving the industry towards greater levels of sustainability in the process of planning for event management in Ireland but the authors recognise that this system needs to be adapted to be better aligned specifically to the context of events.

Conclusion

This article has examined and discussed the application of the ETIS within the process of planning for event management in Ireland. The research focused on examining 32 Local Authorities and City Councils in Ireland and employed a content analysis approach to examine each Local Authority event management planning guideline document; as part of the process of planning for event management. The importance of planning for event management has been well discusses in the review of academic literature as has the application of the ETIS in the context of events and the need for evidence informed planning for events by Local Authorities. Having identified the critical value of the event industry to the Irish economy and the impacts these valuable activities can create to host localities and destinations, the need to preserve the popularity and character of the events industry is evident. This is essential in order to secure the future longevity and competitiveness of the industry through an effectively more sustainable manner.

Analysis has revealed an overall dearth of planning for the economic, social, cultural and environmental indicators outlined in in the ETIS by Local Authorities. The low level of guideline provision for such issues in increasingly concerning in light of the value of events in Ireland which are often referred to as the 'lifeblood of Irish tourism' (Fáilte Ireland, 2016). While the majority of ETIS categories are not currently being measured or monitored in the context of events in Ireland, future indicator specific refinements to the ETIS tool could acknowledge issues pertaining to their adoption by Local Authorities. However, it would be highly beneficial for Local Authority planning processes and guidelines to be reflective of such indicator systems. Such tools can facilitate the maximisation of benefits while minimising the potential for any costs and consequences that events can create through improved decision

making and planning processes, which could be facilitated through evidenced planning. The lack of planning for the environmental, economic and socio-cultural issues may have long term implications for event practitioners and policy makers in safeguarding the longevity, sustainability and competitiveness of the national events industry.

Maguire and Hanrahan (2016, 2017) discussed that the lack of planning guideline provision makes it difficult for event practitioners to plan for and manage the impacts of events. Therefore, without an effective evidence informed approach to planning for event management there is no way to secure the longevity and future competitiveness and sustainability of the industry. In essence, the analysis revealed a clear need for effective solutions in respect of an evidence informed approach to planning for event management. The process of planning for event management sustainably may be compromised due to the well documented challenges Local Authorities face with regards to staffing and funding. A lack of appropriate knowledge and training in relation to what sustainability is or should be and how to plan and manage the impacts events create can also impede the process. Stettler (2011) noted a lack of political will as a barrier to achieving sustainability within the industry. Furthermore, Quinn (2017) reported that the Local Government system in Ireland is inherently flawed. It is widely acknowledged that Local Authorities in Ireland are under resourced, in debt, lacking trust from the citizenry and in need of major reform (Hogan, 2017; Quinn, 2017) despite undergoing reform in 2014. In recognizing this, Quinn (2017) states that reform needs to begin with clarifications of the purpose, roles and functions of Local Government noting that the current opacity is part of the problem.

Nevertheless, this research offers an opportunity for current practice to be improved upon through the adoption and utilisation of best practice industry event management planning guidelines and policies that integrate best practice indicators from the ETIS. This research also offers an opportunity for future research to examine the application of the ETIS within the Local Authority process of planning for event management in Ireland, thus facilitating a longitudinal analysis. The exploration of the ETIS in this case could also hold valuable lessons for the utility of the tool elsewhere in event management planning and policymaking.

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