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### Article

**Citation** (please note it is advisable to refer to the publisher's version if you intend to cite from this work)

**Maguire, K and Hanrahan, J (2017) Assessing the Economic Impact of Event Management in Ireland: A Local Authority Perspective. Event Management: an international journal, 21 (3). pp. 333-346. ISSN 1525-9951**

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## ASSESSING THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF EVENT MANAGEMENT IN IRELAND: A LOCAL AUTHORITY PLANNING PERSPECTIVE

KELLY MAGUIRE AND JAMES HANRAHAN

School of Business and Social Sciences, Department of Marketing, Tourism and Sport,  
Institute of Technology, Sligo, Ireland

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The purpose of this article is to examine the extent of local authority economic planning for event management in Ireland. Local authorities are increasingly using events to achieve a diverse range of economic objectives. However, achieving economic objectives can come at an expense to host communities and affect a societies social capital. Therefore, the need to plan for and manage the economic impact of events needs to be acknowledged. This study assessed 32 local authorities and city councils utilizing a content analysis approach. This methodological approach provided nationwide perspectives in relation to local authority planning for the economic impact of event management. Analysis has found that few local authorities recognized the need to provide planning guidelines and policies to manage the economic impact of event management. Therefore, support for the economic development of regions and counties in Ireland has not been realized. Further analysis revealed the necessity of providing effective policies and guidelines with the incorporation of best practice indicators to sustainably plan, manage and monitor the economic impact of event management. The findings from this article highlight the need for nationwide improvements to effectively plan for and evaluate the economic activity of event management by local authorities.

**Key words: Event planning; Event management; Economic impacts; Local authority; Ireland**

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### Introduction

Festivals and events are an important source of economic activity and growth in a host region or destination (Cibinskiene, 2012; Della Lucia, 2013; Etiosa, 2012; Janeczko, Mules, & Ritchie, 2002; Kim, Jun, Walker, & Drane, 2015). In Ireland, the economic activity from the event industry generates

over €450m in tourism revenue per annum to the Irish economy [Department of Transport Tourism and Sport (DTTAS), 2012]. As well as this, their popularity attracts over 300,000 overseas holiday-makers to Ireland each year (Fáilte Ireland, 2014a; Ring, 2012), thus increasing the generation of visitor expenditure and net benefits in local economies. In conjunction with this, the tourism and

Address correspondence to Kelly Maguire, School of Business and Social Sciences, Department of Marketing, Tourism and Sport, Institute of Technology, Sligo, Ireland. Tel: +353 87 915 5226; E-mail: [kelly.maguire@mail.itsligo.ie](mailto:kelly.maguire@mail.itsligo.ie)

hospitality industry in Ireland provides employment to over 180,000 people (Fáilte Ireland, 2014a; Ring, 2012). However, according to the National Tourism Development Authority of Ireland (Fáilte Ireland, 2014a), the total employment (when other parts of the sector such as conferencing, attractions, and festivals are included) is increasing and is now approaching 200,000. These figures highlight the positivity of an increasingly developing industry. Similarly, more data from Fáilte Ireland (2014b) indicates that 11,000 people in Ireland are in paid employment in festivals alone, and almost 50,000 people around Ireland are engaging with festivals on a voluntary basis. As a result of this exponential growth, events have become an important motivator of tourism and now figure prominently in the development and marketing plans of most destinations (Getz, 2008). In fact, most governments and policy makers are using events within their region to achieve a diverse range of economic and social objectives (Pugh & Wood, 2004; Wood, 2005). As such it seems local authorities are realizing the potential benefits of the event sector in Ireland to raise its national profile, thus resulting in a leading industry for the Irish economy. However, for the growth of the event sector to be sustained and the longevity of the event sector secured, planning and management to ensure the economic viability of the event industry in Ireland is required. Moreover, it also requires monitoring and managing the potential economic impacts created by events.

A substantial amount of research has focused on the economic impacts generated by tourist events (Baade, Baumann, & Matheson, 2005; Gursoy, Kim, & Uysal, 2004; Holmes, Hughes, Mair, & Carlsen, 2015; Janeczko et al., 2002; Liu, 2013; Mair & Whitford, 2013; Miller, 2007). Subsequently, more research seems to have been centered on the need to manage the economic impact of events, which is widely recognized in academic literature (Andersson & Lundberg, 2013; Kim et al., 2015; Wood, 2005). This is not surprising considering events are an important mechanism for enhancing tourism and economic development in their respective regions (Arcodia & Whitford, 2008; Dwyer & Spurr, 2011; Fredline, Deery, & Jago, 2006; Getz, 2008; Quinn, 2009). However, little research has been dedicated to the economic sustainability of event management

in Ireland and the provision of economic guidelines and tools by local authorities to aid economic sustainability in event management. Therefore, this study aims to bridge this gap in research. Yet, despite the overall popularity of the event industry in Ireland, host communities can be quite apprehensive towards this type of economic development. As such, a balance between economic and social goals is important (Delamere, 2001) when planning for the economic impacts of event management. This is significant when it comes to the generation of policies, guidelines, and strategies by policy makers in local authorities because the economic impacts of events require careful consideration of effective sustainable solutions to achieve a sustainably viable industry.

Thus, in essence, this research sets forth to assess the level of local authority planning provision of guidelines and policies for the economic impacts of event management in the Republic of Ireland. This Irish study is discussed in the context of current theory to provide an up to date assessment on the economic planning priorities of local authority planning for event management in Ireland. The application of a content analysis approach allowed the authors to clearly illustrate which of the 32 local authorities and city councils assessed provided economic planning strategies and sustainable indicators for event management. This up to date assessment facilitates an opportunity for possible future longitudinal research in the area.

### Literature Review

The economic impacts of events have long been the topic of much discussion and debate in event management literature (Baade et al., 2005; Bond, 2008; Gursoy et al., 2004; Holmes et al., 2015; Janeczko et al., 2002; Liu, 2013; Maennig & Zimbalist, 2012; Mair & Whitford, 2013; Miller, 2007). It seems the majority of research surrounding event management impacts has substantially focused on the economic benefits that events bring to a community, a region, or a nation (Deery & Jago, 2010). This may be partially or wholly related to the economic reliance on tourism activities such as events. In Ireland events of various proportion and type are increasing year on year. They have

always existed but the extent of their growth in recent years has been expedient (Parker & Whaples, 2013). As a result, every event regardless of type, size, or scale has some degree of economic impact (Ali-Knight, Robertson, Fyall, & Ladkin, 2008; Janeczko et al., 2002). These economic impacts may differ depending on each event and the longevity of each event. Subsequent to this, hosting such events of varying scale falls to stakeholders such as local authorities and event organizers. These stakeholders tend to focus purely on economic impacts and often overlook important social and environmental issues (Deery & Jago, 2010). This may be as a result of events generating significant revenues and major economic benefits to host cities, regions, and countries (Ki-Lee & Taylor, 2005). Also, using events can increase destination competitiveness and leverage opportunities for economic growth (Konstantaki & Wickens, 2010). This supports local authority's adoption of events to achieve economic objectives. Other primary economic motives for using and hosting events include employment generation, increased exposure, marketing opportunities, improved destination awareness, long-term promotional benefits, additional trade, and potential multiplier effects (Dwyer, Forsyth, Madden, & Spurr, 2000; Dwyer, Forsyth, Spurr, & Van Ho, 2003; Janeczko et al., 2002). However, despite this, economic issues may arise, which are associated with price inflation, resident exodus and hostility, interruption to normal businesses (Dwyer, Mellor, Mistilis, & Mules, 2000), and increased leakages (Janeczko et al., 2002). Hence, it is a necessity to plan sustainably for such economic benefits and costs of event management and develop tools and solutions to effectively facilitate economic planning, management, and monitoring of event management impacts.

In particular, events have the potential to generate substantial increased revenue both locally and nationally by attracting as many visitors as possible, thus increasing financial performance (Etiosa, 2012; Janeczko et al., 2002). As such there can be greater multiplier effects within a region, which suggests greater levels of economic activity as a result of direct tourist expenditure [Jamal & Robinson, 2009; Wall & Mathieson, 2006; World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), 2014]. In

conjunction with this, events also yield economic benefits by raising the profile of places, products, and institutions and attracting flows of tourists, capital, and inward investment (Janeczko et al., 2002). However, hosting an event can also produce increased leakages in a region or nation. These leakages occur through taxation, foreign ownership and investment, savings, and spending on non-locally sourced products (Janeczko et al., 2002). Such leakages can decrease the economic impact of event management in a region. For this reason, a balanced sustainable approach to event growth is essential and cannot be underestimated. Consequently, prioritizing and managing the economic growth and negative dimensions of events can come at an expense to host communities. Such growth can lead to increased costs for host communities, which will lead to resident exodus and hostility, thus affecting the social capital of a community. Andersson and Lundberg (2013) specified that to achieve the maximization of benefits and minimize costs, regard should be given to the economic impact on the local community. Therefore, if the event sector impacts are to be managed, local authorities and organizers should not lose sight of community interests in their right to meet the demands of visitors (Delamere, 2001) and primarily prioritize and plan for the economic aspects of event management rather than social, cultural, and environmental issues.

Furthermore, an understanding of the economic costs and benefits of events is critical in addressing the level of economic planning by local authorities for event management. It is also necessary in developing planning tools to deal with the economic impacts of events to enhance the quality of the event industry in Ireland. The need to efficiently plan for the economic benefits and costs of event management lies in a functional planning system within local authorities. Local authorities play a key role in supporting economic development at a local level in Ireland [Department of the Environment Community and Local Government (DECLG), 2012]. They also play a fundamental role in licensing events under the Planning and Development Act 2000 and 2010. The role of local authorities in the provision of planning for economic event impacts is essential to achieve economic sustainability in event

industry in Ireland. In fact, it has been noted that a key objective of local government unification is to increase the capacity of local government to promote economic and social development (DECLG, 2012). However, to attain economic sustainability requires a careful approach to the management of economic benefits and costs through government at national and local level.

Planning for economic sustainability in event management has become a primary concern for policy makers and government at local and national level in recent years. As such the development of a number of sustainable planning tools, guidelines, aims, and indicators have been devised. These instruments include the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria [GSTC] (2013), the European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS), and the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) together with the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) aims of sustainable tourism (UNEP/UNWTO, 2005). Sustainability is an imperative element in all these tools. The aims of sustainable tourism were developed to provide government with guidance and a framework for the development of policies for sustainable tourism (UNEP/UNWTO, 2005). It is based around two principles. The first principle minimizes the negative impact of tourism while the second maximizes tourism's positive and creative contribution to local economies. The guiding principles of this tool are important for economic sustainability (UNEP/UNWTO, 2005). More specifically, they can be applied for decision makers who are encouraged to be actively involved in the decisions of environmentally and socially responsible tourism, which creates important long-term economic benefits for the business and destination (Yunis, 2006). The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria are guiding principles to achieve sustainability in tourism. This approach integrates performance indicators to measure and monitor the social, environmental, and importantly economic sustainability at destination level. The European Tourism Indicator System was developed to tackle social, cultural, economic, and environmental key challenges. They are an effective measure of sustainability performance. This tool can facilitate informed policy decision making and create benchmarks of performance (EC, 2015). As such this study incorporated the above sustainable planning

tools within the content analysis framework to assess which local authorities, if any, were integrating, utilizing, or compliant with such indicator and management systems. Crucially, these instruments are useful and reliable tools for policy makers in developing economically sustainable planning tools for event management as they offer an opportunity to apply sustainable indicators to measure, monitor, and assess the economic impacts and economic sustainability of event management. The consideration of these tools can facilitate a balance between the economic costs and benefits of event management and aid in the economic longevity of the event sector in Ireland. Hence, the incorporation of such tools in legislative planning policies and guidelines can enable the adoption, implementation, and utilization of such tools and indicator systems within local authority planning. This can facilitate the regulation of sustainable planning for economic impacts of events. Fundamentally, the integration of indicators from these tools can enable policy makers to make informed comprehensive decisions in relation to local authority economic planning for event management.

### Methodology

The primary focus of this study was to assess the level of economic planning by local authorities for event management in the Republic of Ireland. Local authorities use events to maximize the economic benefits to local regions (Wood, 2005). However, events can also create resident exodus, inflation, and interruption to normal business practice (Dwyer et al., 2000). Therefore, planning for the economic impacts of events facilitated through local authorities has the ability to encourage best practice in planning. This process can be achieved through the provision of guidelines and policies outlining strategies to accomplish the maximization of positive economic benefits and the minimization of negative economic impacts. This is significant because local authorities in Ireland have a legal obligation under the Planning and Development Act 2000 and 2010 to plan for the economic development in their respective regions [Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG), 2007]. As such, it was necessary that this study examine

the extent of planning by local authorities for the economic impacts generated from hosting events in Ireland.

### *Method*

To assess the level of economic planning by local authorities for event management in Ireland, a content analysis approach was utilized. The application of this methodological approach facilitated the constant comparison of results, which highlighted the variations and gaps in relation to the level of local authority economic planning for event management in Ireland. The authors identified, incorporated, and analyzed the principle guidelines, tools, and indicators from theory and international best practice within the content analysis framework. This determined and illustrated the overall degree of planning by local authorities for the economic impacts of events.

The content analysis approach was the primary quantitative analysis tool as it represents quantification on a limited scale and is still anchored in the quantitative research paradigm. This approach may be considered a kind of reliability of the measures and a validation of eventual findings (Sellitz, Jahoda, Deutsch, & Cook, 1967). Therefore, quantification in content analysis tends to emphasize the procedures of analysis (Berg, 2007). Additionally, quantitative research tools take an analytical approach to understand a number of controlled variables. Therefore, tourism researchers are increasingly using content analysis as a means of critical investigation when faced with textual forms of data like written documents such as tourism strategies, policies, and guidelines. In particular, this approach allowed for a valuable cross-representation of results in relation to the provision of economic planning for event management by local authorities in Ireland. Moreover, it highlighted the economic planning priorities implemented for event management by local authorities. Analysis centered on 33 criteria based on existing theory, aims, guidelines, and indicator systems developed by industry such as the UNEP/UNWTO aims of sustainable tourism (2005), the European Tourism Indicator System (2013), and the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (2013). The variables assessed are shown in Table 1.

### *Summary of Criteria for Assessing the Economic Sustainability of Event Management by Local Authorities*

The above criteria are essential variables necessary in the integration of local authority planning processes. These variables were incorporated into the content analysis framework and the assessment of variables is discussed in light of relevant theory. Adopting and utilizing this approach allowed for the constant comparison of results throughout the research process.

### *Sampling and Selection*

To achieve nationwide perspectives on the levels of economic planning for event management by local authorities, the authors identified and analyzed 32 local authorities and city councils using the above criteria. The sample was chosen carefully to allow for a constant comparison and analysis of results. The current system of local government in the Republic of Ireland comprises of 31 local authorities. There are 26 local authorities responsible for local government in 24 geographical counties including the County of Dublin. Accordingly, 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 (Limerick City and County Council) and Waterford (Waterford City and County Council). Also, there are three city councils who were responsible for local government in the cities of Dublin, Cork, and Galway. As such this study focuses on the 31 local authorities, however, one local authority “Tipperary” is separated into “Tipperary North” and “Tipperary South” local authorities. Therefore, 32 local authorities are assessed in total giving a complete population of local authorities and city councils.

### *Data Analysis*

To facilitate the continual comparison of results throughout the research process and to highlight the variations between each local authority, data were inputted into a content analysis tool. This procedure allowed the authors to identify the level

Table 1

## Summary of Criteria for Assessing the Economic Sustainability of Event Management by Local Authorities

## Assessment Criteria

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Local authority generic planning guidelines for event management provided
Local authority economic planning guidelines for event management provided
Local authority event economic policy in County Development Plan (CDP)
Economic planning guidelines complaint with UNWTO: Aims of sustainable tourism (2005)
Economic viability
Local prosperity
Employment quality
Economic planning guidelines complaint with ETIS (2013)
Tourism flows (volume & value)
Tourism enterprise performance
Quantity and quality of employment
Safety & health
Tourism supply chain
Economic planning guidelines complaint with GSTC 2013 (2013)
Economic monitoring
Local career opportunities
Public participation
Local community opinion
Local access
Tourism awareness and education
Preventing exploitation
Support for community
Supporting local enterprise and fair trade
Guidelines for long-term promotional benefits
Guidelines for standard of living
Guidelines for controlling inflation and host community costs
Guidelines for interruption of normal business
Guidelines for business development
Guidelines for additional trade
Guidelines for resident exodus
Guidelines for induced development
Guidelines for the management of leakages from events
Guidelines for opportunities for local entrepreneurs

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Source: Adapted from Dwyer et al. (2000); GSTC (2007); EC (2013); Griffin, Morrissey, and Flanagan (2010); UNEP/UNWTO (2005).

of economic planning and economic sustainability provided by local authorities for event management. The findings provided a valuable insight into the provision of economic guidelines and policies for event management by local authorities. An example matrix of the content analysis framework is outlined below.

#### *Example Matrix of Content Analysis Framework*

As can be seen in Table 2, the first and last letter of the county they represent abbreviates the local authorities displayed in the matrix. For example, "CK" abbreviates the first and last letter of County Cork. Table 2 clearly highlights how local authorities varied on the categories assessed. For Example,

County Cork had 34 events supported by local authorities in 2013 but had not provided generic planning guidelines. However, no local authority provided independent economic planning guidelines or event economic policies in county development plans (CDPs). Also shown is the lack of integration of sustainability indicators in planning guidelines and policies and lack of guidelines for the management of leakages. The comparison of results is shortly discussed further in detail and in the context of current theory.

#### Results and Discussion

This study and research approach provided a nationwide perspective on the levels of economic

Table 2  
Example Matrix of Content Analysis Framework

Local Authority (LA) Provision of Economic Planning Guidelines (E/PG)	CW	CN	CE	CK	Cc	DL	D	SD	Dr	F	G	Gc	KE	KK	KY	LS	LM	LK	LD	L	MH	MO	MN	O	R	S	Ts	Tn	WD	WH	WX	WW
Criteria Assessed Within LA Guidelines	33	47	64	34	22	41	22	12	26	23	62	29	32	27	46	20	29	58	31	36	35	112	29	37	53	47	31	28	56	36	48	27
LA events supported in 2013							x					x						x														
LA Generic Planning guidelines provided																																
Year of publication							12					12						13														
LA Economic planning guidelines provided																																
LA event Economic Policy provision in CDP																																
Integration of sustainability indicators in guidelines																																
Management of leakages																																

planning by local authorities for event management in Ireland. The content analysis approach enabled the authors to assess the 32 local authorities and city councils to examine the provision of guidelines and policies and the integration of sustainability indicators within such policies and guidelines. Additional investigation also allowed the authors to examine the relationship between local authorities and economic event impact planning. This determined which local authorities and city councils adopted, implemented, and utilized economically sustainable planning tools for managing and monitoring event management impacts. The results are illustrated in Table 3.

*Planning Matrix for Assessing Economic Sustainability of Event Management Provision by Local Authorities*

Events have a clear role to play in the social and economic development of a community. This is clear to be seen by local authorities who use the event product as a strategic tool to aid urban regeneration city imagining, cultural provision, and job creation as well as adding value for the end user, the community. As such the need to plan for the economic impacts of events should be prioritized in local authority planning. Analysis of this research has illustrated the overall low levels of local authority planning provision in terms of guidelines, policies, and adoption and integration of sustainable economic indicators for managing the economic impacts of events. The variation of results suggests that economic planning for event management has not been embraced by local authorities throughout Ireland. However, to fully comprehend the findings, the analysis of the assessment variables is discussed.

The research initially set out to examine the provision of generic planning guidelines for event management within local authorities. Having reviewed 32 local authorities and city councils in Ireland results revealed that just four local authorities provided generic planning guidelines for event management. This low adoption rate of generic planning guidelines is worrying considering local authorities are using events to achieve economic objectives and raise their profile and competitive advantage of their specific regions (Etiosa, 2012; Pugh & Wood, 2004). However, the provision of guidelines



Table 3  
 Planning Matrix for Assessing Economic Sustainability of Event Management Provision by Local Authorities

Local Authority (LA)	CW	CN	CE	CK	Cc	DL	D	SD	Dr	F	G	Gc	KE	KK	KY	LS	LM	LK	LD	L	MH	MO	MN	O	R	S	Ts	Tn	WD	WH	WX	WW				
Criteria Assessed Within LA Guidelines	33	47	64	34	22	41	22	12	26	23	62	29	32	27	46	20	29	58	31	36	35	112	29	37	53	47	31	28	56	36	48	27				
LA events supported in 2013							x											x																		
LA Generic Planning guidelines provided																																				
LA Economic planning guidelines provided																																				
LA event Economic Policy provision in CDP																																				
<b>Guidelines compliant with UNWTO Aims of sustainable tourism (2005)</b>																																				
Economic Viability																																				
Local Prosperity																																				
Employment Quality																																				
<b>Guidelines compliant with ETIS (2013)</b>																																				
Tourism Flows (volume & value)																																				
Tourism Enterprise performance																																				
Quantity and Quality of Employment																																				
Safety & Health																																				
Tourism Supply Chain																																				
<b>Guidelines compliant with GSTC (2013)</b>																																				
Economic Monitoring																																				

(continued)

Table 3 (Continued)

Local Authority (LA) Provision of Economic Planning Guidelines (E/PG)		CW	CN	CE	CK	Cc	DL	D	SD	Dr	F	G	Gc	KE	KK	KY	LS	LM	LK	LD	L	MH	MO	MN	O	R	S	Ts	Tn	WD	WH	WX	WW							
Criteria Assessed Within LA Guidelines																																								
Local career opportunities																																								
Public Participation																																								
Local community opinion (consultation)																																								
Local Access																																								
Tourism Awareness and Education																																								
Preventing Exploitation																																								
Support for community																																								
Supporting local enterprise and fair trade																																								
Guidelines for long term promotional benefits																																								
Guidelines for standard to living																																								
Guidelines for controlling inflation and host community costs																																								
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Guidelines for additional trade																																								
Guidelines for resident exodus																																								
Guidelines for induced development																																								
Guidelines for the management of leakages from events																																								
Guidelines for opportunities for local entrepreneurs																																								

cannot be underestimated, as they are necessary to facilitate planning in event management, which can ensure the longevity of the event sector in Ireland and secure long-term benefits.

The research then determined which local authorities, if any, provided guidelines specifically for planning and managing the economic impacts of events. Economic planning guidelines can assist local authorities in maximizing economic benefits while minimizing costs but also giving consideration to the social development of an area and promote best practice. Results here revealed that no local authority provided economic planning guidelines. There is a clear lack of planning for economic issues of event management because results revealed no local authority provided economic planning guidelines. This is surprising considering economic planning guidelines can act as a blueprint for economic development of a city, town, or country (DEHLG, 2007). This in turn can facilitate a competitive economic advantage and stimulate economic activity (DEHLG, 2007). In addition to this they can also encourage economic activity and promote sustainable development patterns. This is significant because an important role for local authorities in future development of regions includes the need to promote sustainable economic development (DECLG, 2012). More importantly economic planning tools can provide a framework for managing economic costs and benefits as well as facilitate good practice in planning and supporting economic growth and better quality of life for host residents.

Following this, the economic policy provision in CDPs for the economic impacts of events were assessed. CDPs are intended to provide a strategic framework and policy context for all planning decisions in Ireland (DEHLG, 2007). They are prepared in accordance with the steps set out in the Planning and Development Act 2000 and 2010. As such the development and implementation of CDPs are legally required by local authorities and are a regulatory priority in national legislation. They set out strategies for the sustainable development giving precedence to social, environmental, and most importantly economic considerations and objectives. They cover important industries such as the tourism industry and its counterparts like the event sector. Therefore, it was surprising when results

revealed that no local authority provided an event economic policy in CDPs in Ireland. The importance of providing event economic policy has not been recognized within local authority planning. However, they should be a planning priority within local authorities and be regulated and implemented in national legislation to give precedence and maximize economic impacts of event management.

Upon clarifying the provision of local authority guidelines and policies, the integration of sustainable indicators within local authority planning processes and tools were assessed. The use of sustainable indicators has become particularly important in developing strategies for policy and decision making (Casser, Conrad, Bell, & Morse, 2013) within governments at all levels. Indicators can be applied as a tool for self-regulation and good practice to follow in developing and incorporating sustainability in policy making and guideline development. Firstly, the economic aims of sustainable tourism from the UNEP/UNWTO (2005) were assessed. These aims incorporate aims in an economic context and include economic viability, local prosperity, and employment quality. These aims focus on ensuring the viability and competitiveness of tourism destinations. However, it was found that no local authority addressed such aims. Conversely, applying these aims to local authority planning and policy making can aid planning, management, and monitoring processes, which can provide accurate results for decision making in local government [World Tourism Organization (WTO), 2007]. This in turn can facilitate more economically sustainable events.

The integration of indicators from the European Tourism Indicator System within local authority guidelines and policies was then assessed. The European Tourism Indicator System measures performance and monitors results while enhancing sustainability performance (EC, 2015). It identifies areas of improvement while managing risks effectively and creates benchmarks for future performance. The ETIS indicators can be used by local authorities to obtain improved data for informed policy decision making. This tool has been created as a result of lessons learned from previous indicator systems and offers an opportunity to maximize the economic benefit that can result from better management. Moreover, the economic value

indicators from the ETIS can track the contribution of tourism to economic sustainability in the destination. Therefore, this can balance economic, environmental, and social benefits while ensuring the long-term future of monitoring, managing, and enhance the sustainability of a tourism destination. However, again no local authority addressed any indicators from this tool within their planning guidelines or policies. Yet, crucially the use of sustainable indicators is critical in supporting tourism development and management (Oliveira, 2013). This comprehensive and consistent system has been noted to be a highly effective and flexible tool when applied in policy. Therefore, it may be beneficial for local authorities to incorporate such indicators within planning approaches.

In addition to this, the authors assessed the degree of integration of the global sustainable tourism criteria for destinations (GSTC-D) within local authority planning processes. The GSTC-D and the related performance indicators were developed based on already recognized criteria and approaches as a tool for managing sustainability in tourism. They reflect certification standards, indicators, and best practice, which again can be adopted as a guide to become environmentally, cultural, socially, and economically sustainable. Analysis revealed no local authority integrated GSTC-D indicators within the local authority planning tools or processes. Therefore, it seems the potential benefits of utilizing indicators in local authority planning have not been realized. Even still, applying indicators from this approach to local authority planning tools can promote the use of economic sustainability in tourism and event management while minimizing negative impacts, thus achieving best practice in event management by adopting universal sustainable principles.

Finally, analysis revealed no local authority prioritized guidelines, strategies, or policies for managing or monitoring the long-term promotional benefits of events, standard of living, controlling inflation and host community costs, interruption to normal business, induced development and additional trade, resident exodus, managing leakages, and opportunities for local entrepreneurs. However, without sufficient management of leakages, the local economy could lead to a decrease in economic benefits of tourism developments for the

local population (Webster & Ivanov, 2014). Moreover, the insufficient management and monitoring of each issue outlined above can immensely affect the longevity and sustainability of the event sector and create community disengagement with future tourism developments.

Overall the analysis and findings from this study have found a complete lack of planning by local authorities for securing the economic sustainability of the event industry. Planning for the economic costs and benefits of event management has not been prioritized in local authority planning processes in Ireland because no local authority adequately address economic impacts and concerns associated with event management. As such prioritizing the economic dimensions of sustainability appears to have flourished under governance in practice (Klijn & Skelcher, 2007). For this reason, the low degree of economic planning raises concerns for the future longevity of the event sector in Ireland. Also, it calls for nationwide improvement in relation to economic sustainability for the event industry in Ireland. Furthermore, there is a clear need for the development of effective, comprehensive, and robust planning guidelines and policies to facilitate changes in local authority planning in relation to economically planning for event management.

## Conclusion

This article has examined the relationship between local authorities and planning for the economic impacts associated with event management in Ireland. The research focused on 32 local authorities and city councils in Ireland and utilized a content analysis approach to assess each local authority. As such the economic costs and benefits of hosting events have been well documented in this research, as has the need to provide planning tools for planning and managing the economic impacts of event management within local authorities.

Having identified the increased popularity of the event sector in Ireland, analysis has revealed a low level of planning provision for the economic benefits and costs of events. The overall findings have revealed just four local authorities provided generic planning guidelines for event managers. This low level of guideline provision

is increasingly concerning considering events in Ireland attract over 300,000 people and are worth €450m to the Irish economy. More significantly no local authority provided economic planning guidelines for dealing with the costs and benefits of economic issues. Moreover, findings show a lack of policies within CDPs for event managers to manage and mitigate the economic impacts of events. Therefore, it seems the economic concerns associated with event management and the need to address and plan for such issues have not been recognized in local authorities throughout Ireland. Results also highlighted that no guideline or policy sufficiently reflected or addressed any international best practice model, tool, guideline, or indicator system such as the UNEP/UNWTO aims of sustainable tourism, the GSTC, and the ETIS. However, under the ETIS, the Health and Safety indicator was addressed by Dublin City Council and Louth County Council. Also under the GSTC, the public participation indicator was addressed by one local authority while the local community opinion indicator was addressed by three local authorities. However, it may be necessary and highly beneficial for local authority planning processes and tools to adequately reflect such systems. The provision of planning tools and processes can facilitate the maximization of economic benefits while minimizing negative economic benefits.

Additionally, the lack of planning guideline provision, which focuses on the economic impacts of events, can have implications for event practitioners. The lack of policies and guidelines for event practitioners illustrate the event tourism product and indeed the event industry as being undervalued in economic terms. Overall, this lack of planning guideline provision makes it difficult for event practitioners to plan for and manage the economic benefits and mitigate economic costs. As such the need to plan for event management may ensure the longevity of the national event sector and secure long-term community and destination benefits. This is significant considering a key economic goal of event practitioners is to achieve meaningful economic benefits (enhanced revenue distribution, employment creation, creating competitive advantage, increased media exposure); therefore, in order to aid this process, local authorities need to facilitate good practice in event industries.

Subsequently, the lack of comprehensive event planning processes has had an impact at a national level in Ireland. This was seen in the case of the Croke Park Stadium concerts (Garth Brooks) in Ireland. In this case, the community residents residing around Croke Park Stadium in Dublin objected to the events and subsequently in a drawn-out event licensing process resulted in the cancellation of 5 sold-out concert nights (capacity 80,000) in 2014. This in turn resulted in a loss of earnings estimated to be worth around €50m to the local Dublin economy. Yet, had there been detailed planning processes and guidelines in place, the cancellation of concerts may have been prevented. Additionally, if a local authority planning process had been implemented, the sale of tickets by event practitioners in advance of event licenses being obtained would have been prohibited. Therefore, this state of affairs may have been totally avoided. As such, appropriate strategic economic policies and planning guidelines by local authorities may in effect save potential loss in revenue and in effect allow the event industry to self-manage under good strategic local authority guidance, thus facilitating good practice in event industries and enhancing the quality of the national event industry in Ireland.

Fundamentally, it is clear that room for nationwide improvements in current practice is essential within local authorities in Ireland in relation to planning sustainably for the economic impacts of events. There is a need for comprehensive, robust, and proactive sustainable guidelines and policies to enable local authorities to plan sustainably for the economic impacts of events. The analysis revealed the need for solutions in relation to planning sustainably for economic impacts of event management, which is essential in achieving sustainability and planning outcomes and objectives for event practitioners by local authorities. However, this research offers an opportunity for current practice to be improved by adopting and utilizing best practice indicators in economic policies and guidelines. A limitation of this article is that it only focuses on the economic planning by local authorities and does not incorporate environmental and sociocultural impacts. This research offers an opportunity for future research to investigate the assessment of economic planning guidelines and policies for event management, hence facilitating a longitudinal analysis.

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