



FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND HOSPITALITY

INDUSTRY PHD RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY

PROJECT TITLE

Athlone: The correlation between sustainable economic destination development and tourism brand management

SUPERVISORS



Dr. Aisling Keenan Gaylard is a lecturer and researcher with the Department of Business Management at AIT



Dr. Kelly Maguire is a lecturer and researcher with the Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Ireland's tourism and hospitality sector has been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in the last 12 months, with an estimated 90% drop in revenue and a staggering 160,000 job losses (Fáilte Ireland, 2021). International tourist arrivals around the world are estimated to have decreased by 74% in 2020 with travel restrictions and other bans imposed by destinations to prevent the spread of the COVID-19. However, this has resulted in one billion fewer tourists and an overall estimated loss of US\$1.1 trillion in export revenues from international tourism (UNWTO, 2021). In Europe, international arrivals are estimated to have fallen by 71% alone.

Therefore, a significant onus now needs to be placed on a responsible and sustainable recovery of the tourism sector to ensure that destinations develop and plan for better tourism and re-imagine effective sustainable tourism brands. This research will aim to determine current and future sustainable planning needs and priorities within local and regional tourism plans and strategies in Athlone, Ireland, a destination at the centre of Ireland's Hidden Heartlands and will set forth to examine the extent to which brand identity is a factor for consumers in choosing a destination to visit.

This research will also investigate the extent to which tourism enterprises consider regional tourism branding as an added valued component of business operations. A mixed methods approach utilizing a quantitative analysis of regional tourism plans and qualitative semi-structured interviews with a representative sample of tourism stakeholders in Athlone will be adopted for the purpose of this research. The findings from this research will set forth to inform future tourism policy, planning, development and branding in order to secure the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of destination Athlone.

	<h1>QUALIFICATIONS</h1>
<p>DURATION: 48 MONTHS</p> <hr style="width: 25%; margin-left: 0;"/> <p>Funding Agency: Industry/AIT President Doctoral Scholarship</p>	<p>Minimum Qualifications Primary degree (hons) in tourism, hospitality or digital marketing. Preferred qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MSc in digital marketing or Masters of Arts in Tourism Management and Destination Leadership or equivalent ● Tourism experience ● Marketing Experience
	<h1>APPLICATION PROCESS</h1>
	<p>Each application should only consist of</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Detailed curriculum vitae, including - if applicable - relevant publications; 2. Transcripts of degrees, 3. The name and email information of two academic referees, 4. A cover letter/letter of introduction (max 2000 words). <p>In the letter, applicants should include the following details:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. An explanation of your interest in the research to be conducted and why you believe you are suitable for the position. b. Details of your final year undergraduate research project (if applicable) c. Details of your MSc research project (if applicable) d. Details of any relevant modules previously taken, at undergraduate and/or Master level. e. Details of any relevant work experience (if applicable).
<p>Download Application form from here: https://www.ait.ie/research-and-innovation/postgraduate-research-opportunities Closing date for receipt of completed application forms is Friday 20th May 2022</p>	<p>For further information please contact: Dr Aisling Keenan Gaylard (akeenan@ait.ie)</p>