



EUROPEAN REGION OF GASTRONOMY

Galway, West of Ireland

Candidate for European Region of Gastronomy - 2018

FROM THE GROUND UP
Feeding our Future

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GALWAY, WEST OF IRELAND

Nestled on the shores of the Atlantic at the very edge of Europe, Galway is a county of unparalleled natural beauty with a ripe land and rich marine which feeds nearly 10 times its population.

Our region stretches from the small green fields and stone walls at the north of the county, east to the rich farmlands of the Shannon River basin, south to the unique karst landscape of the Burren and into the west to the vibrant Galway city, the trout fishing capital of Europe, Lough Corrib, and the hills of Connemara, and along 689 kilometres of wild, rugged Atlantic coast to our renowned off-shore islands.

Culturally-diverse with a young population, Galway is Ireland's first bilingual city and the county is home to the largest Gaeltacht (official Irish speaking) community in the country. The city has quadrupled in size in the last 50 years and, with close to one-fifth (19.2%) of the population hailing from overseas, it has the highest non-native population in Ireland. Galwegians are proud of our reputation as a place that people fall in love with and never want to leave.

Our rich soils and mild maritime climate produce grass that enables a strong and sustainable agricultural sector. With over 350 restaurants, including two of Ireland's 11 Michelin star establishments, Galway has one of the highest densities of restaurants in the country and our chefs work tirelessly with producers to promote the best of our region's bounty on their menus.

Our tourism industry is a major employer, bolstered by the hundreds of thousands of domestic and international visitors who flock to the city and county each year, attracted by our legendary hospitality, our stunning land- and seascapes, and the myriad of food, arts, culture and sporting festivals which have earned Galway the mantle of 'The Festival Capital of Ireland'.



Lough na Foey in Joyce Country, North West County Galway. **Image:** Tourism Ireland
Below: Local produce from the region. **Image:** Julia Dunin Photography



A sign for Galway Market. **Image:** Julia Dunin Photography



Festival Capital

Galway is recognised internationally for its festivals and has become known as ‘The Festival Capital of Ireland’. Our festival programme encompasses arts and culture, film, music, sport and comedy, as well as a range of food festivals throughout the region. Every month presents yet another festival, each with its own unique identity, yet these festivals embrace our gastronomy and Celtic food heritage as well as respecting seasonality in showcasing our local food produce.

Each food festival in the region has undertaken to commit to the European Region of Gastronomy programme through:

- Citizen inclusion
- Food education
- Promotion of SMEs and education
- Linking urban/rural
- Sustainability

Our 2018 festival programme will be exciting, fun-filled, colourful and vibrant, in keeping with tradition. Our aim is to encourage all events and festivals in the region to showcase the best of our produce and to ensure that gastronomy is a central theme.



(l-r) Food writer Sally McKenna at Galway Food Festival 2015; Chef JP McMahon at Connemara Mussel Festival, image: Aoife Herriott; competitors at Galway Oyster Festival.

A Taste of Our Festivals

The FoodieForum	February
Galway Food Festival	April
Connemara Mussel Festival	May
The Mayfly Trout Fishing Festival	May
The Burren Food Trail	May
Bia Lover, Festival of Food Athenry	June
Claregalway Castle Garden Festival	July
The Galway International Arts Festival	July
Inis Oírr Festival – The Aran Islands	August
Clarinbridge Oyster Festival	September
Galway International Oyster Festival	September
Food on the Edge – International Chefs’ Symposium	October
Bia BoFinne – Inishbofin Food Festival	October
Baboró – International Arts Festival for Children	October
Bake Fest Galway	October
Celebrating Local – Galway Food, Craft and Gift Fair	November
Claregalway Castle Christmas Food and Craft Fair	December

At the Centre of Galway Life

Food plays a critical role in all our lives in Galway, from farmer and fisherman to chef, restaurateur and consumer. We want to build upon our strengths to grow:

- an enhanced food culture;
- to embed food further within our lives, our society and our economy;
- to create more exciting food experiences and increasingly positive everyday interaction with food.

We will do this together, drawing on our proud heritage as one of Europe’s top food-producing regions. This is why Galway should be awarded the title of **European Region of Gastronomy 2018**.

GALWAY'S GASTRONOMY

What is the gastronomy of our region?

Fish

Like many fishing communities along the North Atlantic coast, our heritage is built on fresh fish.

In the centre of Galway city lies the Claddagh. Made famous by the Claddagh ring, it is one of Europe's most unique fishing communities, where herring and mackerel are most abundant, alongside cod, whiting and flat fish. Along with our fresh fish offering, we have a great tradition of curing, smoking and salting – particularly along the coast and on the islands.

Shellfish

We are perhaps best-known for our oysters and, in particular, our world-famous oyster festival. Running since 1954, the Galway International Oyster & Seafood Festival is the oldest oyster festival in the world and the second-most recognised Irish festival after St Patrick's Day.

Prior to the introduction of fast food outlets, oysters and mussels were the street food of Galway, and still to this day we are blessed with a rich tapestry of oyster farmers. Other shellfish popular in the region include mussels, clams and periwinkles, while in recent years we have witnessed an increase in shellfish aquaculture, for example, sea urchins and abalone.

Freshwater Fish

Galway is highly-regarded internationally for our wild salmon and the region is also home to two of the most important wild brown trout lakes in Europe – Lough Corrib and Lough Mask.

The pursuit of wild salmon has created a network of fishing lodges where salmon, sea trout and wildfowl are menu stalwarts. Despite dwindling salmon stocks, these country houses still play an important role in our region's tourism and gastronomy. The Corrib River, and its fly fishing in the city near the University and Cathedral, is a sight that draws tourists and fishermen to the Salmon Weir Bridge.



Clockwise, from top: Mussel farming in Galway, Michael and Diarmuid Kelly of Kelly Oysters, native oysters.



A black-faced mountain sheep at Derrigimlagh Bog, County Galway. **Image:** Big Smoke Studio/Tourism Ireland

Seaweed

Seaweed was harvested in Ireland for centuries before West of Ireland companies established commercial entities. It comes in many forms and one seaweed found on our western shores is *Ascophyllum nodosum*, more commonly known in different geographic locations as either Rockweed, Knotted Wrack or Egg Wrack. In the Irish language vernacular of Connemara it is known as 'Feamainn Bhui', meaning yellow seaweed.

Many of the small pastures (buaile) on the Aran Islands were formed over the centuries by the back-breaking work of dragging seaweed and sand from the shores.

Seaweed harvested from the clean coastline of the North Atlantic Ocean is a food source rich in vitamins and minerals and has many uses including food product development, cosmetics, aquaculture and agriculture feeds.

Sheep

Our region supports two unique types of sheep farming. The flat farmland of East Galway is one of our main sources of sheep meat, while the mountainous West of the region is home to an ancient culture of mountain and hill sheep-grazing. Our black-faced mountain sheep is indigenous to the region and has its own unique flavour. It has recently obtained PGI status, which is a designation we will seek to explore for other specialist products of our region.

Beef

Small farmers in Galway have a long and proud custom of cattle-rearing on our rich and excellent grasslands. Traditionally, the cattle were sold and moved to Ireland's East Coast where they were fattened and prepared for slaughter. The marts where these trades take place are a rich part of our heritage. In recent times, some small farms are beginning to specialise in rare breeds of Irish cattle such as Dexter and Moiled.

Poultry

Poultry, in particular hens, turkeys and geese, were at the centre of our farming heritage. Small scale poultry farming was traditionally undertaken on every farm in our region. In more recent times we have seen a rise in the number of farmers and families that are again keeping poultry and selling their produce to local markets.

Pork

The pig plays a significant role in the culture of our gastronomy. Historically, as the rights of our small tenant farmers were ignored, and their farms grew increasingly smaller, bacon became the mainstay of our diet and was enjoyed with our magnificent local potatoes and vegetables. There are many excellent pork products in the region including a wide range of speciality sausages and puddings made in local butchers using secret family recipes.

Local Abattoirs

There are 11 local abattoirs in Galway which process beef, lamb, poultry and pork which are born, reared and locally sourced in the region. The short supply chain, high quality and sustainable feed, as well as excellent welfare standards, ensures top-quality meat and products are enjoyed by locals and visitors alike. These abattoirs add greatly to our gastronomy and their products are named on some of the best restaurants in the region.

Game

The rugged mountains and coastline of our region contain one of the jewels of our gastronomy – wild game. During winter months we have an abundance of wildfowl, particularly snipe and woodcock, and with modern environmental protection, wild grouse and deer are returning to our landscapes in greater numbers. As a result we are seeing a resurgence of game on our restaurant menus.

Dairy

All small farms produced their own milk and cooperatives soon followed Irish independence. Butter-making remains a tradition on some of our farms, while the farmhouse cheese sector is thriving in the region.

Bread

Like all regions, we have our own unique bread. Commonly known as 'Irish Brown Bread', ours is made with wholemeal flour and buttermilk. While there are some examples that are sold commercially, the real bread is still made in many homes in the region to this day. Our brown bread is enjoyed with many meals, from breakfast to supper.

Drink

It's a little known fact that Galway city was once one of the largest wine ports in Europe. The legacy can still be felt today, through the great wild geese wines of France, such as Lynch-Bages and Chateau Kirwan. Galway is now home to a fast developing craft brewing industry throughout Ireland, with a number of leading brewers based around the county. The city is often used as a location to test new product development for craft beers and ciders from other regions. Whiskey is also enjoying a renaissance in the region.



Galway in Numbers

Size: 6,149 km². Ireland's second largest county with 689km of coastline and 52 islands

Pop.: 250,653 (City 75,529, County 175,124)*

Galway City nearly quadrupled in size in the past 50 years.

It is the only city on the Wild Atlantic Way, the world's longest coastal driving route.

Galway City has a young, well-educated population. The number of 20-24 year olds in the city is twice the national average. Over 45% of the population has a third-level education.

Galway's population increased by 35.2% between 1991 and 2011.

Galway City percentage of non-Irish population: 19.2%

*Census 2011

Irish Food & Agriculture*

Of the 6.9 million hectare land area of Ireland, 4.5 million is in agricultural use.

There are 139,860 family farms in Ireland, including over 12,000 farms in Galway.

The average farm size is 32.7 hectares.

Galway produces enough food to feed about 1.5 million people.

*Reference: Central Statistics Office



*Food plays a critical role in all our lives
in Galway, from farmer and fisherman
to chef, restaurateur and consumer.*

A VISION TO FEED OUR FUTURE

'We are starting with fertile ground, we are planting the seeds, but we must set strong roots and tend to the plants and the soil carefully, feed them, support them, so that we may cultivate here for many years to come.'

This vision reflects on the past and looks to the future. It sets out our intentions and gives us a path towards the future of food in the Galway, West of Ireland region and beyond.

We commit to be ambitious, positive, proactive and inclusive because this platform provides us with an exciting and unique opportunity, but we must also be practical, setting out the pathways by which we will achieve our long-term goals.

We commit to creating a tangible legacy, to ensure that the programme of activities organised for the European Region of Gastronomy year will be sustainable in 2018 and beyond.

A Collaboration from the Ground Up

The Galway, West of Ireland bid is rooted in strong partnerships, engagement and collaboration.

We believe that having a broad stakeholder base, incorporating the public and private sector, knowledge institutions and community-based groups, is essential to achieving our objectives and it is an approach that is enshrined in our theme 'From the Ground Up'.

The proposed programme will enable us to enhance our food culture in Galway and provides a platform for collaboration which is necessary to achieving our goals.



Members of the Galway, West of Ireland Steering Committee with Made in Galway at the consultative workshop in September 2015.

OUR THEME, AIMS & OBJECTIVES

In Galway, we are proud of and acknowledge our rich food heritage. We live it every day, we make it what it is. Culture belongs to the citizens.

Our theme, **From the Ground Up – Feeding Our Future**, reflects our vision for a food culture that is:

- **Democratic**
Good food for all, an inclusive society
- **Open**
Reflecting Galway's traditional heritage and intercultural diversity
- **Sustainable**
Providing for food-based livelihoods and quality of life for current and future generations
- **Local**
Promoting local value chains, local access and markets
- **Global**
Outward focused, a global footprint in food tourism and quality food exports.

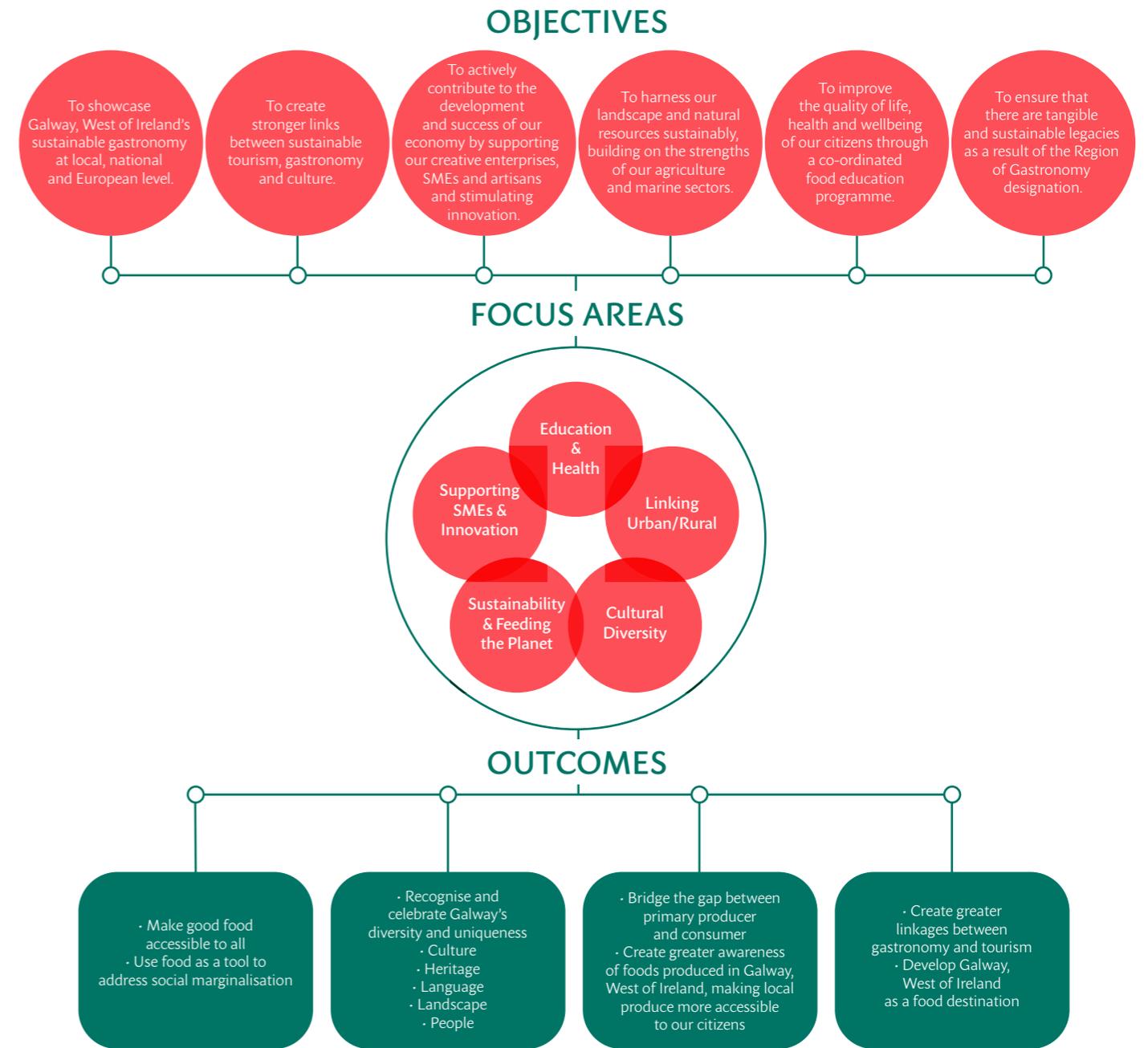
Aims & Objectives

Our aim is to refresh and renew our commitment to an inclusive food culture – for our health, our economy, our communities, our identity and our environment – and to support sustainable economic, cultural, social and environmental development.

Objectives

We will reach into our communities to develop our programme for the European Region of Gastronomy and our vision for Galway gastronomy.

This is about our farmers, fishermen, food producers, our hospitality sector, our small businesses, our health workers, our teachers, our parents, our children...
In short, all of us.



FROM THE GROUND UP: *Our Key Focus Areas*

In our developing plans for the Galway, West of Ireland European Region of Gastronomy programme, which will run for the calendar year January–December 2018, we have identified key focus areas to help us meet our objectives.

These focus areas, identified through consultation with our stakeholders, across all of the European Region of Gastronomy platform focus areas, concentrating on:

Education and Health

Linking Urban/Rural

Cultural Diversity

Sustainability and Feeding the Planet

Supporting SMEs and Innovation

Education and Health

Education and Health are major focus areas for Galway, West of Ireland's European Region of Gastronomy programme, emerging as priorities from our initial stakeholder consultation workshop.

Education – An Investment in People

Education, in the broadest sense, is a key tool that we will use throughout our programme. Investment in people will support our efforts to develop food education programmes, inspire chefs, support food entrepreneurs and work with all in our food community.

Our overall objective in education is to improve the quality of life, health and wellbeing of our citizens through a coordinated food education programme. Our specific objectives will engage education and training partners and relevant stakeholders to provide food education activities for children; re-engage families with lost home cooking skills and support our gastronomic sector through innovative educational opportunities.

We will develop a pilot programme for children in primary schools in the region. A key legacy of the European Region of Gastronomy programme will be the development and review of a food education programme that can be offered through the region and beyond.

A major goal for us, through our education activities, will be to erase the elitist tag associated with locally produced, quality food. Good food is for everyone.

Health – Empowering Our People

The health theme is closely linked with education; we aim to empower citizens to improve eating habits by giving them the knowledge and skills to make better food choices. We will target measures at those who need it most, such as the marginalised groups identified under the citizen inclusion section, and we also recognise that the issue of obesity and diet-related disease crosses social lines. We will examine measures to improve food quality in healthcare, social care and education settings and engage with primary care teams.

Our European Region of Gastronomy programme will support the implementation of the World Health Organisation's Healthy Cities Programme, which is already underway in Galway and which aims to put health and wellbeing high on the social, economic and political agenda.



Images: Connemara Mussel Festival

Proposed Projects:

The FoodieForum

The 'Foodie Forum' is a unique, educational, interactive gastronomy experience organised and managed by three GMIT lecturers. It provides a networking platform for chefs, restaurateurs, producers, academics, business advisors and members of the public to debate key topics around gastronomy. It also allows culinary students, the next generation young chefs, the opportunity to interact with and learn from key players in the Irish food industry. In 2017 and 2018 the key themes will include 'the future generation'.

Economy Gastronomy

The art of cooking is a lost skill in many Irish homes today. It is not fair to assume people have lost interest in cooking but rather live busy lives and many traditional skills are disappearing. This project aims to reconnect families with home cooking using local festivals and events.

Adopt-a-School

The Steering Committee has expertise in developing a national food education programme. This project will connect schools with local food businesses to support food education activities, such as school gardens, taste/cookery workshops, visits to farms and restaurants, and to explore health, social and cultural themes around food.

Bia Hero

Playing on the Irish word for food, 'bia', we will develop an art competition for schools, leading up to 2018, to design a European Region of Gastronomy food mascot/avatar, while encouraging children to think about their relationship with and appreciation of local food.



Linking Urban/ Rural and Cultural Diversity

Galway, West of Ireland has a strong cultural identity and rich heritage firmly rooted in our unique landscape, culture, language and proud rural traditions.

Galway's history as a trading port attracted many international visitors and influences in the past and its reputation in more recent times as a city of arts and culture has brought people from all over the world to live and work here.

While we have welcomed people of many different nationalities, with their own languages, traditions and, of course, food cultures, there is also recognisable cultural diversity within the native Irish population such as the traditions of our Irish Traveller population, our islands, coastal communities, and remote Irish-speaking areas.

Diversity – Celebrating Our Culinary Identity

Food is a central theme of cultural identity – for many cultures it is a central part of what defines them. Our aim is to highlight and take pride in all our collective culinary identities so that we can promote them. Food is powerful – it unites people around the table, it is at the centre of every significant life event and celebration, it brings us together. We aim to use gastronomy as a tool to help address social exclusion, marginalisation and discrimination, while simultaneously fostering mutual respect.

Bridging the Gap – Linking Our Urban & Rural Communities

Galway, West of Ireland is a predominantly rural region. Although Galway city is not considered a major urban centre in the European context it was awarded 'Europe's Micro City of the Year' by *fDI* magazine in 2014.

We will use the European Region of Gastronomy programme as a tool to foster greater mutual understanding and appreciation between urban and rural dwellers and to link them with each other in a really tangible way. This can be achieved through networking and enhancing our markets whilst improving access to local produce in our towns and villages which will help strengthen this link. Festivals and events will also play an important role in this regard.

Proposed Projects:

Food Culture Carnival – Intercultural Street Feasts

Linking in with our diverse communities, our chefs and restaurateurs and our international student population, we will celebrate Galway's culinary diversity in a way that is accessible to all through street feasts. These will be a feature of major events and our community gatherings.

Our Food Histories – An Intergenerational Project

Storytelling is central to Irish culture and can be harnessed to record our food heritage and recent history.

This project will focus on the traditions of our islands and communities along the coast, with the Wild Atlantic Way and regions bordering Galway, as well as the food traditions of the new Irish; the memories people brought with them from their native lands when they made Galway, West of Ireland, their new home. Through the sharing of food and food stories, young Irish people can connect with their parents' and grandparents' food heritage and history.

Food Culture Everywhere

Our aim will be to raise awareness of our cultural diversity and food heritage through all of our activities and in spaces outside of those where gastronomy is normally represented.

Through our various cultural festivals we will link with local communities to showcase their cultural traditions, as well as with embassies to showcase food from other European countries.

Room to Grow

It is our intention to explore opportunities to incorporate more growing spaces throughout our city, suburbs and towns where edible gardens can be developed.

Galway City Council already supports a number of School and Community Organic Gardens, including gardens in a refugee centre and a homeless shelter, through the *Let's Get Galway Growing Network*, as well as two allotment sites.

We plan to extend these activities, along with the number of school and community gardens, in both the city and county. These growing spaces will not only enhance our urban environments and quality of life, but can be used as educational tools and as an actual source of fresh, wholesome food.



'Catch of the Day'. Image: Galway City Museum

Sustainability and Feeding the Planet

On a local level we must protect our environment and our unique landscapes, recognising the role that traditional farming and fishing practices have played in shaping and protecting this heritage. We must directly tackle practical issues of food waste and the environmental impact of our own actions and choices.

Tackling Global Issues Locally

Globally, environmental sustainability is a major issue that will impact food supply into the future. Our sustainability as a region will ultimately also have huge influence over our global competitiveness as a food exporter. This is a major focus of our national agri-food development strategy, FoodWise 2025, and the national sustainability programme for food and drink producers called Origin Green from Bord Bia (the Irish Food Board).

Over the next three years, we will work to further embed Origin Green in the region and to promote the optimum adoption of Origin Green for Galway, West of Ireland. While doing this, we will develop local value chains to retain as much value as possible within the region.

Proposed Projects:

European Food Gateway Summit

We will host a European Food Gateways Summit in 2018 which will highlight opportunities for Small & Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) based in Galway and Ireland to reach out to European markets. It aims to showcase ideas for food enterprises and identify (with the assistance of Bord Bia - The Irish Food Board) route to market opportunities in Europe and promote research and development activities, technologies and supports for the food industry.

Developing Local, National & European Agri-food Sustainability Indicators

Key to Ireland's and Galway's export strength is its position as one of the most sustainable food producers. Underpinning this strength is the family farm, a natural grass-based agricultural system.

The National Agricultural and Food Development Authority, Teagasc, based in Athenry, County Galway, has developed national agri-sustainability indicators. Working with European partners in a large-scale *Horizon 2020* project, Teagasc will develop a series of indicators at local, national and European level in 2018, enabling Ireland to compare our sustainability credentials with other European countries.

Developing an Organic Value Chain

Motivated by the new Common Agricultural Policy, organic farming has increased by about a third in recent years. Certified Organic farming is an environmentally-sensitive farming production system. There are 120 organic farmers in Galway and 360 in the wider West of Ireland region. Most of these farmers have made a transition from conventional farming and so are relatively open to innovation. Improving farm to fork linkages, we will develop a value chain project creating a greater consumer focus amongst farmers.

Being Greener

Several initiatives will be enhanced and introduced under the banner of 'Being Greener' as we work towards 2018 and beyond, and these will be incorporated across our programme of activities. These include:

Greening Galway Festivals – reducing or eliminating environmental impact with green planning, waste management, energy and water conservation, sustainable transport and sustainable suppliers;

Green Schools – strengthening themes of food sustainability and preventing food waste in the existing very successful *Green Schools Programme* in primary schools;

Food Waste Prevention Programme and *Stop Food Waste* – campaigns to help citizens and businesses prevent and tackle food waste.

Galway will also see the set-up of a *Bia Food Initiative* depot to re-distribute surplus food from businesses to local charities.



The Friendly Farmer, Ronan Byrne. Image: Julia Dunin Photography

Supporting SMEs and Innovation

In Galway, West of Ireland, we have a vibrant and growing local food sector, built on strong primary production, and backed by a variety of advisory, marketing and grant-aid supports at local and national level. We want to grow local markets and add as much value as possible within the region, where it can benefit our producers, while also recognising the importance of our export markets.

Tourism is a key component of our local economy and good food is at its heart. The vision of Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority, is that 'Ireland will be recognised by visitors for the availability, quality and value of our local and regional food experiences which evoke a unique sense of place, culture and hospitality'. Fáilte Ireland is committed to supporting great Irish tourism experiences and promoting business excellence. We will build on Fáilte Ireland's National Food Tourism Strategy and leadership to ensure that the visitor experience is enhanced using our programme as a stimulus to link food, hospitality, tourism and the wider cultural experience of Galway, West of Ireland.

Stimulating Innovation

Innovation is encouraged at all levels, from product development, to the development of route to market. Innovation is about new ideas, but can also be about learning from the past and combining traditional methods with new technologies and digital developments.

Proposed Projects:

Food Academy & The West's Local Marketplace

The Local Enterprise Office Galway has joined forces with Bord Bia (the Irish Food Board) and Supervalu (an Irish multiple retailer) to create the Food Academy programme. Food Academy works with and nurtures small businesses through their journey from start-up to getting their products on the shelves.

In 2018, regional enterprise support agencies such as Local Enterprise Offices and Bord Bia (the Irish Food Board) will collaborate on a regional basis and hold a 'West of Ireland Marketplace' trade event which will showcase local producers to food buyers from across the region, nationally and buyers from European partner regions.

Start-Up – New Food Entrepreneurs

The Certificate in Food Innovation & Entrepreneurship at Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology is a new accredited course delivered in partnership with food entrepreneurs. This programme will provide would-be food entrepreneurs with the expertise and practical steps to launch their business. By 2018, the first graduates from this programme will be supporting new food entrepreneurs in the region.

'From Idea to Fork' Food Company Development & Growth Pathway

There are many agencies currently delivering advice and support to the food sector. The aim of this initiative is to provide a 'one stop shop' to guide food companies, sign-posting what needs to be done and which agencies to talk to, along with individual case management. This initiative will help producers identify the steps to progression, and move on to each step at the appropriate time, with the right advice and support along the way.

Food Incubation Units & Innovation Hubs

The food sector has been identified as an industry with significant growth potential and a recent local economic report (*NUI Galway - Whittaker Institute*) made a number of specific recommendations to assist this growth.

The Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) report identified an infrastructural gap in the provision of food incubation space in the West of Ireland. Two infrastructural developments, including incubation and innovation space, are to be developed in the region. State Development Agencies are also exploring the development of Páirc na Mara, a marine enterprise park. The aim is to attract marine-based projects, including seafood and seaweed-based initiatives.

Key to Ireland's and Galway's export strength is its position as one of the most sustainable food producers. Underpinning this strength is the family farm, a natural grass-based agricultural system.





Chefs from across Europe toured the islands during Food on the Edge in 2015. Image: Julia Dunin Photography

WORKING WITH EUROPE

Engaging with the European Region of Gastronomy platform and partners has already been an enriching experience and we know there is much more to be gained from collaborations across the platform.

We are committed to the platform and we are confident that Galway will contribute significantly to it. We have much to offer both current and future platform members.

Our collaborations include:

Noord-Brabant

We are in discussions with our European Region of Gastronomy partner in Noord-Brabant and will continue to work closely with them through the platform, as well as bilaterally. It is the intention of both regions to have a number of joint elements to our programmes in 2018 which support the aims and objectives of the European Region of Gastronomy.

As part of our collaboration with Noord-Brabant we are proposing to develop a partnership project, proposed under the INTERREG North West Europe, which is about *Connecting Start Up Communities* focusing on supporting SMEs and strengthening the start-up ecosystems for smaller and medium-sized cities around Europe.

Aarhus

One of our key projects to support SMEs and innovation is the development of Food Innovation Hubs. Members of the Galway European Region of Gastronomy partner group will visit the Agro Food Park in Aarhus, Central Denmark, to learn from their experience in establishing food innovation hubs.

Food on the Edge

Launched in 2015, Food on the Edge is an international symposium of chefs held in Galway and created by Galway-based chef and restaurant owner, JP McMahon.

Themed around an exploration of the 'Future of Food', this event attracted over 40 of the world's top chefs and 350 international delegates. This flagship symposium will seek to invite chefs from other European Regions of Gastronomy to participate in the event during their year of designation, giving them an international culinary platform for their ideas.

European Region of Gastronomy Platform Collaborations

We will work with the platform to deliver the following identified initiatives:

- Masterchef Competition
- Food Map of Europe & Marketplace
- Joint Master Degree Programme

European Actions:

European Gastronomic Twinning

We will build on existing Twinning experience and successes to showcase and profile our local food at European level, for example our Twinning arrangement with the Anjou region in France.

European Quality Product Designations

It is our intention to explore the potential to register iconic Galway foods, animal breeds and shellfish varieties under the EU PDO, PGI and TSG schemes. We will work with our European Region of Gastronomy partners to learn from their experience in this regard.

European Capital of Culture

We will continue to work closely with the Galway European Capital of Culture 2020 team on a number of projects and events that focus on areas such as food, culture, agriculture, maritime, heritage and creativity.

UNESCO Creative Cities Network

Galway is a member of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network through our designation as a UNESCO City of Film. As part of our programme we will work with the network, in particular with the cities that have been designated under the creative field of Gastronomy with a view to developing collaborative and innovative projects.

European Small Islands Network (ESIN)

In partnership with Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann (the Irish Islands Association) we will work with the ESIN to develop a project looking at small islands' unique gastronomic heritage and cultural traditions which are strongly influenced by their peripheral and off shore location.



Clockwise, from top: H.E. Jean-Pierre Thébault, French Ambassador to Ireland (third from right) is pictured with former Mayor of Galway, Cllr Thomas Welby, visitors from Anjou and members of the Connemara Mussel Festival Organising Committee during Connemara Mussel Festival; tourists visiting Galway Farmers' Market (image: Tourism Ireland); a Galway Hooker, the region's iconic fishing boat, pictured in Galway Bay (image: Tourism Ireland); Graham Roberts of Connemara Smokehouse photographed during a Made in Galway visit to Anjou.

CITIZEN INCLUSION

Citizen inclusion has been to the fore in the development of our bid programme to date and will be a vital part of its organisation and execution.

As we continue to develop our programme, our engagement process will ensure that practical actions come from the ground up. We will ensure strong and effective citizen participation in all aspects of our programme, reaching out to the most marginalised and target populations including children and young people, older persons, Travellers, island communities, urban and rural dwellers, ethnic minorities and migrants. Our ethos of citizen inclusion is central to our theme and programme.

Citizens will be engaged through:

- Food festivals and events
- Food education programmes
- Consultative workshops and briefings
- Existing forums such as the Intercultural Forums, Older Persons Council, Young People's Parliament etc.
- Public participation networks

The next generation, our children and young people, are a specific target group for our European Region of Gastronomy programme. We are trying to bring about long-term cultural change to grow our food culture, and we believe this is the place to start. If we empower them, children will educate us and they will be the change-makers.

ENGAGING SMES

Our SME community, local food and hospitality business people have already spearheaded many significant food events and initiatives in the Galway region, such as food festivals and food experiences.

The creativity and ambition of our restaurants has built Galway's reputation as a gastronomic destination. They also provide a valuable route to market for our food producers. Engaging with the SME sector is imperative as the ideas and initiatives to further develop, enhance and promote Galway's food tourism offering will come from the ground up.

Our proposals detailed within our focus areas support SMEs as they develop, through the 'Idea-to-Fork' Development Pathway, growing the local market for their produce through Local Value Chain Development and encouraging innovation, through Food Innovation Hubs.

Made in Galway

The Made in Galway initiative supports local enterprises, assisting hundreds of local food and craft producers with route to market while also highlighting the attractiveness of Galway as a tourism destination.

The interactive website, madeingalway.ie, is widely promoted through the media and events, including attendance at national and international trade fairs. It has been presented as a model of best practice in the GRISI+ INTERREG IVC funded project. Under our European Region of Gastronomy programme, it is our intention to further enhance the international marketing element of this initiative and to engage further with SMEs to assist them to promote and grow their business, including opportunities in the export market.



MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Our marketing and communications plan will be developed with consideration for our target audience and their media consumption preferences, thus allowing for the development of the correct marketing mix.

From the outset of our planning phase our target audience has always been at the core of our communications strategy and we believe that this early engagement using the ground up approach, provides us with the best possible foundation for the future success of our communications plan.

We realise that our target audience is diverse and geographically spread and so with this in mind we will use a combination of marketing tools from traditional media to social media to best communicate with them.

Our communication plans will include:

- Regular updates of our food community database
- Development of a calendar of events for the region, marketed nationally and internationally
- Press releases to local and national media outlets
- Consultative interactive workshops
- Presentations
- Web marketing through our website, galwaygastronomy.ie, and that of our partners
- Social media communications
- E-zines
- Targeted e-mail shots
- Experiential marketing at food events and festivals
- Development of a Region of Gastronomy blog/vlog
- Development of promotional videos of Galway's gastronomy
- Linking with Bord Bia (the Irish Food Board) to market to both Business and Business to Consumer audiences nationally and internationally.
- Linking with Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority, to capitalise on international press trips which would assist in the promotion of Galway, West of Ireland and the European Region of Gastronomy on an international stage.

We intend to participate at national and international trade fairs and events in order to highlight and promote our rich gastronomy, heritage and culture. We will also work closely with our embassies and diaspora networks to promote our programme internationally.

The food community in Ireland is highly active on social media and we will utilise this to promote, not only our own region of gastronomy aspirations, but those of our European Region of Gastronomy partners within the platform. We believe that a cohesive marketing and communications plan for the entire platform would be of significant benefit to all partners, and this is something we would be willing to contribute to the development of.



SUSTAINABILITY & LEGACY

Galway will use the European Region of Gastronomy to sustain a legacy of a cohesive and inclusive food culture. This legacy will result in a better food experience for all.

Already, the European Region of Gastronomy bid for Galway has been included in a number of statutory policies, strategies and plans impacting on the longer-term economic, social, cultural and environmental development of Galway. These include the six-year Local Economic and Community Plans for both Galway County Council and Galway City Council. Gastronomy and tourism is highlighted as a key area for development under the 10-year Tourism Strategy for Galway which is currently being developed in line with our national tourism development strategy. The aims and objectives of the programme will also be supported through the implementation of the Local Development Strategy currently being developed under the LEADER programme for implementation up to 2020.

Close collaboration between the partners on the European Region of Gastronomy 2018, the European Youth Capital 2019 and the Galway European Capital of Culture 2020 bids, means that gastronomy will be a key theme for all of these programmes. It is intended that projects and events initiated before or during 2018 as part of our programme can be built upon and augmented in these complementary initiatives, ensuring that there is further legacy from our gastronomy programme.

Our European Region of Gastronomy theme is 'From the Ground Up' as we want our actions to be embedded in our communities, in our schools, in our homes, as well as in our policies and strategies. Initiatives that come from, and are run by, community and voluntary groups and citizens themselves are likely to have better engagement and more long-term impact. In this regard, it is not only the big headline events that are important, but also the small, on the ground, actions that can bring about incremental change.

ECONOMIC PROVISION

Galway County Council, as the lead body along with the key implementing partners, will have shared responsibility for the financial management of our European Region of Gastronomy programme.

In line with our overall approach to the European Region of Gastronomy programme, funding will be sourced from all of the four sectors. The majority of the headline funding for the programme will be from the public purse, including from the local authorities, enterprise development authorities (local and national), knowledge institutions and from central government sources where possible. The private sector and the community and voluntary sector will also contribute essential resources which will be central to the delivery of our programme.

We will seek to secure financing from EU funds including those administered at local level under the LEADER element of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.

We have a commitment in principle from the following partners to support our programme:

- Galway County Council
- Galway City Council
- Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology
- Teagasc
- National University of Ireland (NUI), Galway
- Údarás na Gaeltachta
- Bord Bia
- Fáilte Ireland
- Marine Institute
- Bord Iascaigh Mhara
- Local Development Companies (LEADER)

Indicative Budget for European Region of Gastronomy 2016-2018

Secretariat	€500,000
Marketing & Communication Plan	€100,000
Cross-Collaboration	€500,000
European Content & Actions	€150,000
Programme Budget	€3,000,000
Total Indicative Budget 2016-2018	€4,250,000

EVALUATION

It is proposed to develop a framework for monitoring and evaluation. This will include both internal and external evaluations to enable us to assess the value of the European Region of Gastronomy programme and its impact on the further development of our region's food and gastronomy.

Programme partners and individual project leaders will log key project indicators contributing to one or more of the programme objectives described.

Evaluation tools to be used may include:

- Analysis of baseline data for key indicators of relevance to the programme;
- Surveys of consumers/producers/visitors;
- Food sectoral studies;
- Focus groups/stakeholder engagement workshops;
- Qualitative case studies around 'stories' of good practice e.g. quality of collaborations with European Region of Gastronomy partners;
- Quantitative measures e.g. number of food-related courses delivered/number of visitors/spend per visitor;
- Comparative data for different regions and different food products and ingredients;
- Analysis of product diversity;
- Media analysis – to include traditional and social media, e.g. website, blogs, national/international coverage.

We are proposing to work with our European Region of Gastronomy partners in participating regions with a view to acting as external evaluators for aspects of each other's programmes, thereby providing a valuable external viewpoint and a perspective drawing on a trans-European approach.

We are currently exploring feasible methods to ensure high-quality external evaluation, through our links with research and third-level institutions, to strengthen the integrity of our analysis of the impact of the European Region of Gastronomy programme.



ORGANISING BODY & MAIN PARTNERS



Galway County Council (Lead Partner and Organising Body) is the local government body responsible for the administrative area of County Galway, excluding Galway City and serves a population of 175,124 (based on Census 2011). Galway County Council comprises 39 Elected Members from across five Municipal Districts.



Galway City Council is the local government body responsible for the administrative area of Galway City and serves a population of 75,529 (based on Census 2011). Galway City Council comprises 18 Elected Members who are elected from across three local electoral areas. Galway City Council is the lead body for Galway 2020 – Galway's bid to become the European Capital of Culture in 2020.



Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) is a third-level multi campus higher education institute located in Galway and Mayo. GMIT offers programmes in a number of disciplines including Culinary Arts, Hotel Management, Bar and Restaurant Studies and International Tourism. GMIT was the *Sunday Times Institute of the Year* in 2015, 2007 and 2004.



Teagasc is the Agriculture and Food Development Authority in Ireland, which has its Rural Development campus in Athenry, County Galway. Its mission is to support science-based innovation in the agri-food sector and the broader bioeconomy that will underpin profitability, competitiveness and sustainability.

Key Stakeholder & Collaborating Bodies:

Bord Bia – The Irish Food Board
 Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) – Irish Sea Fisheries Board
 Comhar na nOileán Teo
 Comhdháil Oileáin na hÉireann
 Enterprise Ireland
 European Small Islands Federation
 Fáilte Ireland – National Tourism Development Authority
 Fáilte Ireland Food Champions
 FLAG West
 FORUM Connemara
 Galway Chamber
 Galway City Community Network
 Galway County Public Participation Network
 Galway Education Centre
 Galway Local Enterprise Office
 Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board
 Galway Rural Development Company Ltd
 Health Service Executive
 Made in Galway
 Marine Institute
 National University of Ireland, Galway
 SCCUL Enterprises
 Údarás na Gaeltachta
 Western Development Commission

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