

## **Implementation of the DIT-ACHIEV Model for Sustainable Tourism Destination Management: Killarney, Ireland, A Case Study**

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### **Abstract**

The DIT-ACHIEV Model is a model of sustainable tourism indicators developed in a previous research project undertaken by the School of Hospitality Management and Tourism, Dublin Institute of Technology. The indicators represent six fields of interest – Administration, Community, Heritage, Infrastructure, Enterprise and Visitor (Flanagan et al, 2007). This current research addresses the implementation of the DIT- ACHIEV model in an Irish tourism destination, with the objective to assess whether it can be implemented by the local community in any tourism destination.

The methodology used to implement the model is based on recommendations by Goodey (1995) and Denman (2006). Goodey suggests that a local network of interested parties is required to achieve sustainable tourism (1995). Denman proposes that a multi-interest working group should be created and wide public consultation is necessary for sustainable tourism. The model is being piloted in Killarney and Carlingford, Ireland; the two destinations were selected via a competitive tender process. This paper will discuss the challenges encountered following the methodology in Killarney.

There were numerous public consultations to ensure community participation, which identified sustainable tourism issues. Subsequently, a situational analysis was performed using pre-existing datasets where possible; this revealed data gaps regarding visitor and resident perceptions. Consequently visitor and resident surveys were developed to capture this information. The visitor survey methodology is working well. However the numbers of residents completing the resident survey were initially very low.

The main difficulty in implementing the model has been engaging the public. Conversely, the community involvement in the visitor surveys is one of the most positive outcomes. The lessons learnt from the Killarney experience will be used in the second destination with the aim of developing a best practice toolkit for the implementation of sustainable tourism.