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Developing Cultural Tourism Through Cross-Sector Co-operation: Evidence from the West of Ireland

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2 **Developing cultural tourism through cross-sector co-operation: evidence from the West of Ireland**

3

4 **Highlights**

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- 6 • Cross-sectoral co-operation between tourism and cultural actors is examined
- 7 • Cross-sectoral co-operation is mainly informal, occasional and haphazard
- 8 • There is a willingness to overcome barriers to cross-sectoral co-operation
- 9 • Having a shared vision and a leader figure to champion co-operation is key
- 10 • A shared commitment and interest in the local area can provide a firm basis to underpin co-
- 11 operation

12

13 **Key words:**

14 Co-operation; cultural tourism; Ireland; cross- sectoral co-operation.

15

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18

19 **Abstract**

20 Studies of co-operative activity in the tourism literature focus largely on linkages between tourism
21 firms and little has been done to examine co-operation between tourism firms and those in other
22 sectors. Yet the inter-dependency that exists between tourism and other sectors in product
23 development is clearly apparent. One such example is in the production of cultural tourism where
24 co-operation between the cultural and tourism sectors is a necessity.

25

26 This paper reports on the findings of a project undertaken in regions in the west of Ireland. The
27 research, identifies that while not without its challenges, there is a strong willingness for cross-
28 sector co-operation by both sectors. It highlights the importance of a shared vision and notes the
29 need for a leader to 'champion' the idea of co-operating with another sector. The findings have
30 implications for both the sectors and policymakers and for informing discussions on how to harness
31 linkages between tourism and other sectors.

33

34

35 **1. Introduction**

36 Co-operation is a well-studied concept in the tourism literature. However, the research focus to date
37 has been almost entirely on tourism firms co-operating with each other. This does not capture the
38 full complexity of how the extensive contemporary array of tourism products, experiences and
39 destinations are produced. In reality, many tourism firms co-operate with non-tourism firms in order
40 to create and supply a product or service. In many sub-sectors of tourism, cultural tourism being a
41 case in point, co-operation of some shape or form is a necessity. Yet researchers have been slow to
42 specifically investigate co-operative activity involving tourism firms interacting with
43 firms/agencies/actors in other productive sectors. It is this cross-sectoral nature of co-operation that
44 is of concern here.

45 In order to investigate cross-sectoral co-operation, the paper reports the findings of a study of
46 tourism firms inter-relating with firms and organizations engaged in cultural activities. The decision
47 to select culture as the second sector for analysis stems from the fact that cultural tourism has
48 become such an extensive area of tourism activity. Internationally, cultural tourism is now an
49 enormously important market segment accounting for some 360 million international trips a year or
50 some 40% of global tourism (OECD, 2009). In recent years, national, city and regional destinations
51 across the world have been re-positioning and re-visioning their destination images through cultural
52 lenses. The rise of cultural tourism has been fuelled by a series of factors including the growth of
53 what Pine & Gilmore (1999) have called the experience economy, a development manifest in
54 tourism terms in the evident increased demand for experiential tourism, with mere products and
55 services no longer enough to satisfy the needs of sophisticated and mature consumers. With the
56 huge expansion of cultural tourism has come significant growth in research into aspects of cultural
57 tourism. However, relatively little attention has focused on questions relating to the production of
58 cultural tourism products or the nature of connectivity between tourism and cultural producers.
59 That is the focus of this paper. It asks questions about how products, activities and experiences that
60 originate in the 'cultural' sector become integrated into the workings of tourism production.
61 Specifically it asks: what factors motivate tourism and culture firms to co-operate? What types of co-
62 operation do they engage in? Are there barriers to firms from the tourism sector co-operating with
63 cultural organizations and how might these be overcome? The paper begins by reviewing literature
64 on participatory and co-operative approaches to developing tourism destinations before going on to

65 briefly contextualize recent developments in cultural tourism. Empirically, it draws on the findings of
66 a study undertaken in 2012 in two rural destinations in one of the most westerly parts of Europe:
67 Galway/Connemara and Westport/Clew Bay in the west of Ireland. Following a discussion of the
68 findings, academic and policy implications are drawn.

69

70 **2. Developing tourism supply through co-operation**

71

72 Butler (1999) argued that ever since tourism became a popular activity, there has been a well-
73 established pattern of integration in terms of developing tourism supply. Initially, most attention
74 focused on planning contexts (Panyik, Costa & Ratz 2011) but of late, growing attention has been
75 paid to the multitude of ways in which diverse stakeholders within a destination can interact,
76 partner and network to create new products and approaches to developing tourism (Mackellar
77 2006, Hjalager 2009). By 2000, Tosun (2000) was arguing that the participatory approach to tourism
78 development was being perceived as the norm. Now, there is a clear consensus about the
79 importance of co-operation in enhancing tourism supply, offer a high-quality experience and aiding
80 the sustainability of destinations (Hall, 2004, Ewen et al 2007, Zemla, 2014, Viren et al, 2015). Hall
81 (2004), for example, highlighted the potential for co-operative behaviour to be a primary economic
82 driver, where community embedded business networks can underpin successful control over a
83 destination's development (Tinsley & Lynch, 2007). Similarly, Romeiro and Costa (2010) noted that
84 the positive effects of a network permeate beyond the tourism industry. These have enabled a more
85 coordinated and sustainable management of natural resources, helped maximize the sustainability
86 of employment and stimulated processes of social innovation'. Similarly, Zemla (2014) has noted the
87 importance of inter-destination co-operation in enabling participating destinations to enhance their
88 competitive advantage. While the benefits have been highlighted in many studies, it is also noted
89 that such networks and clusters are extremely complex (Cawley, 2008) and Novelli et al (2006) argue
90 that 'consideration should be given to the process rather than to the outcomes'. From a policy and
91 management perspective issues around the formation, implementation and development of such
92 co-operation and networks are of particular interest.

93 The networks and co-operative practices referred to above can be divided into two broad categories:
94 institutionalized networks that have a formal structure, hierarchy and objectives and; non-
95 institutionalized networks that are informal, abstract in nature, complex and to some extent
96 invisible. Formal, contract-based co-operation originates in the institutional and professional
97 contexts in which individuals and organizations operate, and its outcomes relate not just to the

98 results of co-operative activity but also to the governance of relationships established through the
99 course of the co-operative process (Beritelli, 2011). Informal co-operation, in contrast, can be
100 serendipitous, as Ziakas et. al. (2011, 142) explain, there may in fact be 'no awareness by the
101 agencies involved that they operate as a network and instead ... interactions take place based on an
102 understanding of "who can do what" and "who has what". Such networks have a decentralized
103 structure with no single leader and behaviour is linked to personal interests that are built on
104 personal trust (Ziakas & Costa, 2011), they can be flexible in nature and quite open to new partners
105 (Zemla, 2014). The type of links between organizations in the same destination are often practical in
106 nature, as Romeiro and Costa (2010:85) show in their case study where 98.3% of contact is made
107 'for the resolution of problems or specific necessities'. While co-operative behaviour within tourism
108 communities tends to distinguish itself less by formal rules and norms and more by autonomous
109 approaches, there may be evidence of both formal and in-formal co-operative activities (Beritelli,
110 2011). On the one hand, co-operation may be supported by professional acquaintance and
111 institutional/organizational connections, while on the other, actors may co-operate if they trust and
112 understand each other, sometimes independently from their organizational connection. The
113 importance of both formal and informal co-operative practices in achieving development objectives
114 is clearly recognized by Johns and Mattson (2005) and Beritelli (2011) amongst others. The
115 significance of co-operation is clearly apparent, but two key questions that are fundamental to an
116 understanding of co-operation; what drives co-operation and what leads to successful co-operation
117 are also addressed in the literature.

118

119 **2.1 What drives co-operation?**

120 Much research suggests that co-operation is often initiated by a third party, often in the guise of a
121 public sector agency like a rural development company or a tourism authority. For example, in the
122 case of the Hungarian Rural Tourism Days initiative, Panyik et al (2011: 1353) discuss how this 'event
123 was "top down", initiated by the Hungarian LEADER Centre and resulted in the largest countryside
124 tourism event in Hungary'. The objective of this initiative was to encourage tourism operators to co-
125 operate to offer discounts on a particular day in the off-season in order to promote traditional
126 Hungarian customs, attract visitors to remote rural areas and increase tourist numbers in the off
127 season. Similarly, Bhat and Milne (2008) report on the New Zealand Tourism Board's destination
128 website which necessitated the co-operation and effective establishment of a network of tourism
129 businesses. Studies like this point to the complexity of such arrangements, with important issues
130 being the centrality of certain businesses in the network, the extent of actual co-operation, and the

131 role played by the embedded and informal relationships between businesses to niche tourists. Chell
132 and Baines (2000: 195) also note the difficulties that economic development agencies have in
133 'reaching out to the microbusinesses'.

134 Equally, co-operation can be seen to be initiated by the actions of entrepreneurs. In fact the
135 importance of entrepreneurs in terms of destination developed has been noted by Ryan et al (2012)
136 and Komppula (2014). A growing literature has examined the motivations of entrepreneurs who
137 engage in co-operation as well as the effects of their co-operative actions. Greve and Salaff (2003)
138 suggest that entrepreneurs create or use established networks in order to develop their access to
139 necessary resources, competencies, opportunities and various kinds of supports. In tourism, the
140 businesses at issue are generally small or medium sized (Mykletun & Gyimóthy, 2010).
141 Entrepreneurs often involve their families in their businesses and motivations can be driven by
142 lifestyle interests (Getz and Carlsen, 2005). All of these factors encourage the likelihood that
143 entrepreneurs will seek to extend their social or business contacts and networks to generate gains
144 for their business. The small and medium-sized nature of most tourism businesses provides what
145 Wanhill (2000) has referred to as the community underpinnings for entrepreneurship and job
146 creation. This links to Bosworth and Farrell's (2011:91) comment about rural entrepreneurs being
147 embedded in their local areas. Acknowledging this, they argue, encourages a move away 'from a
148 single minded view of profit-driven entrepreneurship' and brings 'the important features of
149 networks, community and embeddedness more centrally into our understanding of a tourism
150 entrepreneur'.

151

152 **2.2 What factors contribute to the successful development of co-operation?**

153 A variety of factors are identified in the literature as being important in terms of sustaining co-
154 operation. According to Mykletun and Gyimothy (2010), in order for a network or co-operative
155 activities to succeed, certain qualities such as mutual goals, common interests or passion, altruism
156 and mutual trust are required. Jamal & Getz (1995) note factors such as: stakeholder recognition of
157 their interdependence, perception that benefits will accrue to all co-operative partners, utilization of
158 the skills of a strong convener, and possession and monitoring of a strategic plan. While operational
159 and organizational factors are recognized, other more personal characteristics also play a
160 fundamental role. These can include: strong leadership, common identity, vision, honesty and
161 openness, active listening and the ability to adjust to new situations (Selin and Chavez, 1995). Corte
162 et al (2014:13) argue that the focus in the literature on trust has negated the importance of

163 individual contribution and conclude that 'the personal attitudes and previous experience can not
164 only impact a network's creation but also its eventual success'. This key role of the co-ordinator in
165 managing tourism business networks is similarly raised by Lemmetyinen and Go (2009).

166 As is evident in the factors discussed above and in the earlier discussion about motives underpinning
167 co-operation, the social context in which this business action is undertaken needs to be
168 acknowledged. As Czernek (2013: 99) notes 'the willingness to co-operate is determined not only by
169 economic factors and a simple calculation of costs and benefits (although it is essential, especially at
170 the beginning to start co-operation)' it seems to be that 'social and cultural determinants' are also
171 fundamental to its success. Of particular significance is the fact that co-operation according to Nee
172 (1998: 87) is 'produced spontaneously in the course of social interactions in networks of personal
173 relations'. Therefore co-operative behaviour between '... groups in tourism destinations is an
174 interpersonal business' that does not necessarily follow 'rational' principles (Beritelli, 2011: 623). As
175 such, fundamental to its success is the recognition and encouragement of the development of these
176 interpersonal factors. Czernek for example, argues that in promoting co-operative initiatives,
177 policymakers need to go beyond economic growth and activity and pay special attention to these
178 'qualitative factors, particularly those improving human and social capital' (2013: 100).

179

180 **3. Co-operation and cultural tourism development**

181 Given the marked rise of cultural tourism in recent decades, investigating cross-sectoral co-
182 operation between tourism and culture seems a useful exercise. The potentially symbiotic
183 relationship between culture and tourism has been acknowledged by both practitioners and
184 academics since at least the late 1970s (Tighe 1986). Recent decades have seen a growing awareness
185 of the importance of arts and culture as attractions and motivators for tourism as well as a growing
186 use of culture as a mechanism for signalling destination distinctiveness. Essentially, culture and
187 tourism have come to be viewed as powerful agents of economic growth and as vehicles for
188 fostering appreciation of regional diversity (Europa Nostra, 2006). Increasingly affordable and
189 flexible transport options, the rise of short-breaks, the advent of multiple annual holiday taking and
190 the attendant rise of cities as favoured tourism destinations have all stimulated the rise of cultural
191 tourism.

192

193 In line with the growth of cultural tourism activity has been a substantial increase in the literature on
194 the topic. Some of this has examined the role that cultural tourism plays in destination repositioning
195 and urban regeneration (Loukaitou-Sideris and Soureil 2012, Evans 2005). A great deal has focused

196 on the consumption of cultural tourism products and the role that cultural motivations play in
197 driving participation in tourism activity. Efforts have been made to conceptualize, *inter alia*, the
198 tourist who engages in cultural tourism, their modes of engagement, underpinning motives and
199 ensuing behaviours (McKercher 2002). Smith's (2009:3) definition of cultural tourism reflects this
200 emphasis in the literature, suggesting that it can be usefully thought of as a 'passive, active and
201 interactive engagement with culture(s) and communities, whereby the visitor gains new experiences
202 of an educational, creative and/or entertaining nature'. There has also been research interest in
203 problematizing the union of culture and tourism. Russo (2002), for example, problematizes the
204 'success' of cultural tourism, outlining the 'vicious circle' that can threaten heritage cities dependent
205 on what can effectively become mass flows of cultural tourists. More generally, researchers highlight
206 the dangers of conceptualizing culture primarily as a commodity, pointing to the losses that can
207 ensue with respect to meaning and value (Cohen 1988). There has also been stern criticism of city
208 decision-makers who adopt the 'add culture and stir' approach (Gibson and Stevenson 2004): those
209 who invest in cultural tourism strategies based on the idea that because the festival / cultural
210 quarter/ iconic building / cultural trail seems to have worked elsewhere, then it can work in their
211 destination.

212

213 Surprisingly, what passes for cultural tourism production remains relatively under researched in the
214 meantime. Certainly the growth of cultural tourism production and the extremely diverse nature of
215 supply have been noted (Smith, MacLeod & Robertson 2010). Equally, researchers like Hughes
216 (1996) and Smith (2003) have suggested ways of classifying production into sectors like arts tourism,
217 theatre tourism or creative tourism. More recently, Hughes and Allen (2010) have examined how
218 entertainment fits into the broader tourism supply; however, they do so from a consumer
219 perspective. Thus, much scope exists for furthering understandings of how, and through what
220 business actions, production activities normatively associated with cultural producers, be they in
221 performing arts, crafts, festivals, literature, come to be produced, packaged and distributed to
222 visiting tourist audiences.

223

224 **4. Methods**

225 This study adopts a case study approach to investigating cross-sectoral co-operation between the
226 tourism and cultural sectors and draws on research that focused on three adjacent destinations in
227 the west of Ireland: Galway, Connemara and Westport/Clew Bay (see Fig 4.1). These rural areas are
228 sparsely populated except for a handful of small urban centres, and stretch along an extensive,
229 indented coastline. The choice of areas for study was purposeful (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). They are

230 recognised as key tourism areas in a national context. The west of Ireland is recognised as ‘an iconic
231 region of Ireland, due to the perception of the rugged Atlantic Coast, the wilds of Connemara, the
232 culture and heritage of the islands and the attractions of Galway’ (West Tourism Development Plan,
233 2008-2010) and the areas of Galway, Connemara and Westport/Clew Bay are major destinations
234 within this region. In addition to the natural beauty referred to in the quote, the region has a
235 vibrant, well established and well recognised cultural sector encompassing a range of activities
236 including theatre, crafts, visual arts, film, performing arts and arts festivals. Ireland is no exception in
237 the international preoccupation with developing cultural tourism. Culture has been key to Ireland’s
238 tourism attractiveness for centuries and cultural tourism has been a key strategic pillar of Irish
239 tourism policy since the mid-2000s (Fáilte Ireland, 2007). Notwithstanding the wealth of tourism
240 and cultural activities in the region, however, the development of cultural tourism as a concept,
241 product and brand has been hampered to date by poor connectivity between the two sectors. The
242 study was interested to investigate why this might be the case and how better connectivity be
243 fostered.

244 The study data were gathered in 2012 using a mixed methods approach that involved in-depth
245 interviews and an online survey. Forty three key informant interviews were conducted with
246 representatives from both public and private sectors working in a range of tourism and cultural fields
247 and with local, regional and national responsibilities. Interview respondents were selected using
248 both purposeful and snowball sampling, enabling the researchers to locate information rich key
249 informants (Patton, 2002). Designed as ‘guided conversations’ (Johns & Lee-Ross, 1998), the
250 interviews were loosely structured and undertaken in a manner that enabled the researchers to
251 steer the respondents around specific topic areas, in whatever order seemed appropriate at the
252 time. The interviews were recorded and typically lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. They were
253 subsequently transcribed and thematically coded. An online survey was administered to a broad
254 spectrum of tourism and cultural organizations in the two study areas. A number of national and
255 county-based public organizations in both the tourism and culture sectors made their relevant
256 databases available and circulated the survey on behalf of the researchers. One hundred and forty
257 survey responses were collected, 75 from the tourism sector and 65 from cultural organizations. An
258 overwhelming majority of the entities surveyed can be classified as micro enterprises. With the
259 exception of those operating in Galway city (population of 75, 529 in 2011, Census of Ireland 2011),
260 they function in a very rural context: 64.9% of the population in the Western region live outside of
261 towns with 1,500 residents (Western Development Commission 2012). The survey used a mixture of
262 question types including closed, open ended and likert scale questions.

263 5. The extent and nature of cross-sectoral co-operation

264 To begin, the study asked participants to focus on current levels of co-operation. It found that while
265 70% of respondents engaged in co-operation generally, just 40% said that they engage in cross-
266 sectoral co-operation (this didn't differ significantly between sectors with 43% of tourism and 37% of
267 arts and culture respondents engaging in cross-sectoral co-operation). As figure 5.1 shows, this
268 cross-sectoral co-operation took a variety of forms but tended to be mostly informal in nature,
269 occurring only occasionally.

270
271
272 **PLACE FIGURE 5.1 HERE**

273
274 The types of co-operation reported stemmed largely from personal interest and knowledge and
275 from a variety of connections which individuals involved in one sector have with the other sector. As
276 one key informant explained, a lot of these connections would be '*personal*', while another clarified
277 how '*... a very close working relationship*' and the fact that they '*know {them} very well*' underpin the
278 kind of co-operative activity they engage in. While collaboration was found to have emerged from
279 both reactive responses and proactive approaches, whereby individuals initiated projects, it can also
280 be seen to have come about almost by accident as a result of modest, individual activities, or to have
281 gradually emerged as an idea. Thus, the findings suggest that modest efforts 'on the ground' that
282 encourage dialogue, build connections and develop small scale co-operative initiatives can be scaled
283 upwards as activities snowball and grow, gradually involving more people and resulting in more
284 frequent co-operation. This was particularly evident in the case of the Greenway Artists Initiative
285 that has developed along the Great Western Greenway, (a recently developed walking and cycling
286 trail built along a disused coastal railway line and the Irish winner of the European Destination of
287 Excellence Network award 2012). This was developed by a local artist and a hotel that together
288 began to stage exhibitions of local artists' work. This initiative, as one key informant explained '*... fell*
289 *into place really... it was basically an idea that sprang from one exhibition ... and I thought why not*
290 *have the exhibition along the Greenway itself. So I did and it went incredibly well so I approached the*
291 *hotel and asked them if they would be interested ... and they were*'.

292
293 Specifically, the types of informal co-operation identified were classified under six headings,
294 mirroring the work of Ziakis et al (2011), as illustrated in Figure 5.1. Joint marketing/promotion and

295 sharing information/ideas were the two most frequently cited. Examples of the former included:
296 making accommodation or food & beverage referrals; providing 'what's on' information; bundling
297 theatre/performance/visit/entertainment tickets with accommodation; recommending itineraries;
298 selling tickets on behalf of another supplier; displaying promotional materials. Co-operating through
299 sharing information/ideas involved activities like sharing expertise about such issues as health and
300 safety, fund-raising and dealing with public agencies. Respondents spoke of a range of co-operative
301 activities that included sharing physical spaces (e.g. hosting an art exhibition in a hotel lobby),
302 purchasing services (e.g. employing local creative producers to create marketing material, engaging
303 local musicians to perform in visitor attractions) and in-kind sponsorship (providing accommodation
304 /catering for visiting artists at discounted rates). Some examples of more formalised types of
305 arrangements were also identified. Sometimes these involved suppliers coming together to bundle
306 their products into a package which is then sold to the tourist. The development of walking holidays
307 in Clifden was one such example. Such types of co-operation are more formalised in that they
308 require quite a lot of communicating, sharing and negotiating to select, and package products that
309 complement and enhance the final tourist offering. However, they do not involve formal contracts
310 or strategic alliances but rather rely on social norms and trust to ensure that such arrangements
311 occur and benefit all concerned.

312 As a consequence of all of the co-operation between tourist firms and providers in the cultural
313 sector, packaged cultural experiences are now extensively promoted and distributed to tourists
314 visiting the study areas. The experiences in question extend through both day-time (e.g. festivals,
315 museums, art galleries, crafts trails, heritage tours and guided walks, language classes, food and
316 drink, lunch-time concerts) and night-time offerings (festivals, traditional music, concerts, theatre,
317 dance, film, food and drink). At one extreme, the co-operation at issue is the simple advertising of a
318 cultural event on a tourism premise, at the other it is an over-haul or re-invention of a cultural
319 offering specifically with a tourist audience in mind.

320

321 **5.1 What are the motives for cross-sectoral co-operation?**

322 To identify what factors motivated the cross-sectoral co-operation identified, respondents were
323 offered a list of possible factors and asked to tick as many as appropriate. The list included raising
324 their profile or gaining exposure, increasing audiences or visitors, increasing profits, helping develop
325 their local area and 'other'. The results are listed in Figure 5.2. As might be anticipated, increasing
326 audience or visitor numbers was the most important reason, while raising profile was also

327 important. More surprising, perhaps, is the fact that approximately 70% of respondents said that
328 they engage in cross-co-operative activity because it helps the development of their local area.
329 Survey respondents explained that *'the more we help each other the more people we attract to our*
330 *area, and '... if this can help the wider community then all the better'*. As one survey respondent put
331 it, *'more integration between arts and culture, arts and tourism could bring more tourists to the West*
332 *of Ireland'* while another explained that they believed it to be *'beneficial to our country and*
333 *specifically our town to work together'*

334

335 This awareness of the broader impact of co-operation was also apparent in the key informant
336 interview data where Galway respondents spoke of co-operation as a *'kind of promotion of Galway*
337 *as an area'*; recognising that they are *'all together in it ... and whatever they're doing is good for the*
338 *city'*. Closely related to the strong emphasis on working together to benefit the local area is the
339 related concern to strengthen the area's brand, image and reputation. As one key informant
340 explained, *'we see it as being an experience. What we do is we promote the experience of the city ...*
341 *As a collective we can, and the advantage to us is we bring people in, we give them reasons to come'*.
342 In Westport, respondents spoke of *'a realisation ... that everybody has to really work together'*; that
343 *'it's not down to one segment or one sector ... trying to promote the town that everybody works*
344 *together ... (that) is the secret'*. The data show a clear realisation that working together promotes the
345 area and also the experience for the tourist.

346

347

PLACE FIGURE 5.2 HERE

348 The potential benefits that can accrue when tourism and culture organizations work together were
349 readily acknowledged in a number of the key informant interviews. Some focussed on the
350 advantages it brought for their own business or sector: for example one respondent explained that
351 because of co-operation *'the business comes to town and everybody will get a spin-off of it'*, another
352 noted that *'co-operation means we raise the quality of the art and possibly the reach, audience wise'*,
353 and another said that *'it might increase the profile of, and funding for, the festival'*. Others focussed
354 on the advantages from the perspective of the town or destination, with one tourism respondent
355 noting that *'everybody pulls together to further the town really'* and another culture respondent
356 saying that they would be happy to promote any business as *'the more you have to offer in a place,*
357 *the better it is overall'*.

358

359 5.2 Factors underpinning successful co-operation

360 While the study did not specifically set out to investigate what constituted successful cross-sectoral
361 co-operation, the findings suggest that two factors are particularly important in this regard: a
362 common vision with a shared goal and the existence of a leader figure. Key informants spoke of the
363 value of working with *'like-minded people'*, where everybody understands and works towards shared
364 goals. Multiple respondents echoed this. One respondent explained that they co-operated because
365 they *'wanted to develop relationships with other local businesses so we could create a symbiotic*
366 *relationship in which we are all going for the same goal'*. Another stated *'what we do is promote the*
367 *experience of the city. As a collective we can, and the advantage to us is we bring people in, we give*
368 *them reasons to come'*. Given the challenges stemming from the differences in the focus and value
369 orientations of the sectors (to be discussed below), the need for a common vision and shared goals
370 is very apparent. Equally, given the number and range of stakeholders involved, it is important that
371 the engagement of as many stakeholders as possible be encouraged, as community groups,
372 businesses, public organizations and agencies all play vital roles. In light of the key finding that study
373 participants were united in their desire that their business activities would benefit their local area,
374 the development and sustainability of the area or town would seem to represent an obvious basis
375 upon which to build a shared common vision.

376
377 Numerous key informants spoke of how leadership, either from an individual champion or from an
378 agency like a local authority or a Town Council, combined with a 'long term vision' was important to
379 successful co-operation. Both key informants and survey respondents referred to the need for
380 *'strong leadership'*, *'someone with a big vision who can bring arts, crafts and tourism together'*
381 (Survey Respondent), while key informants noted the need for *'a culture and arts Tsar ... who will*
382 *hold clout with them ... someone that can pull the thing together'* noting how *'you need a leader and*
383 *if you have that leader you have no problem'*. One commented how in Westport a strong Town
384 Council is *'brilliant'* as it provides *'leadership'* to the area. Others referred to the influence of one
385 individual in developing the Clifden Arts Festival, noting how *'... one man, one individual who pulled*
386 *the whole thing together ...'* while another spoke of the respect that people in the area have for this
387 individual and how he is *'the cog in the wheel, he's the axle, and then everyone comes around him'*
388 and how, because he is so well respected for his work and the fact that *'everybody gets treated the*
389 *same, ... the entire community gets behind it'*.

390

391

392 **5.3 Are there barriers to co-operation and how might these be overcome?**

393 It is notable that 60% of respondents don't engage in cross-sectoral co-operation, and particularly
394 interesting is the fact that although 70% of respondents engaged in co-operation within their own
395 sectors, indicating a willingness to participate in co-operation in principal, only 40% did so cross-
396 sectorally. Thus rather than co-operation being the issue, it was clear from both key informant
397 interviews and survey data that actors in both the tourism and cultural sectors recognise that
398 working cross-sectorally differs quite substantially from working within their own sector.
399 Respondents were asked whether they perceived any barriers to co-operation and 71% believe that
400 some exist. Foremost among the barriers identified were: a lack of awareness of opportunities to co-
401 operate, not knowing anyone in the 'other' sector; and not knowing how to set about co-operating
402 (Figure 5.3). In this context, it is not surprising that a certain degree of scepticism was identified, and
403 among respondents, there was a sense that the sectors are quite different from each other. This
404 difference was founded in the first instance in what might be described as value orientation. While
405 tourism firms were confident of the strong business acumen and commercial focus that underpinned
406 their modus operandi, they sometimes believed this to be lacking among cultural producers. Thus
407 respondents commented that *'people involved in the arts are not necessarily business people ... the*
408 *business side is just not what they are into ... they see it as an unnecessary tack on to their actual job*
409 *of providing an art experience'*. The data contain much descriptive commentary on the *'artistic*
410 *temperament'*, and *'quirkiness'* of those in the cultural sector. Cultural respondents, meanwhile,
411 mentioned concerns such as when it comes to tourism *'it's .. about bed nights, and it's always about*
412 *bed nights'* another said in relation to their artistic endeavours that *'there's a concern that maybe if*
413 *the commercial entities get their hands on it they might run away with it'* and that *'opening up to*
414 *tourism may have a negative impact on artistic vision, integrity and quality, thus compromising the*
415 *quality, integrity and authenticity of the cultural form'*. One respondent summed it up in stating:
416 *'the biggest barrier [to cross-sectoral co-operation] is understanding, lack of awareness and trust –*
417 *the arts and culture sector view the tourism sector as being like second-hand car salesmen, and the*
418 *tourism sector think of those in arts and culture as having their heads in the clouds'*.

419

420 **PLACE FIGURE 5.3 HERE**

421

422 The data show that perceived differences between the two sectors went beyond commercial
423 matters to the nature of working practices in the two sectors. These differences are manifold and

424 are shaped by factors which range from the nature of the creative process to the financial
425 uncertainties that characterise the arts and culture sector on the one hand and the tight time-lines,
426 packaged, and sometimes reductionist nature of tourism activity on the other. Several very practical
427 examples of these differences came through in the research. Referring to the need for the tourism
428 sector to adopt a sizeable lead-in time to marketing their services, one key informant spoke about
429 how tourism actors need to know what the *'product'* is in order to sell/promote it, while arts and
430 culture actors may be simply unable to pre-define what the creative form will be, given the need to
431 wait and see what it turns out to be. Other respondents highlighted operational issues from the
432 perspective of offering visitor experiences. For example, while craft producers may be happy for
433 tourists to come and visit their workshop (and purchase their crafts), tourist opening hours must be
434 scheduled such that they do not disrupt the working routine of the crafts person concerned. This can
435 be difficult for tourism providers who may believe that viable tourism offerings must operate on a
436 highly scheduled, routinized basis.

437

438 Notwithstanding these barriers, the findings revealed that attitudes to both the prospect and
439 experience of cross-sectoral co-operation are very positive. The survey findings show that 97% of
440 respondents are very open or somewhat open to greater levels of co-operation between the sectors.
441 As one key informant explained *'I'd be delighted to support anything to do with arts and culture, or*
442 *arts, or music'*. This positivity was also reflected in the survey findings, as respondents claimed *'if*
443 *something were to happen to promote the closer co-operation of tourism and arts businesses in the*
444 *West I would feel it would be of huge benefit ... to my business'*. This is clearly an important finding
445 that augurs well for future development. Key interviewees were positively disposed towards the
446 idea of co-operation and readily identified a range of benefits for each sector. Some respondents
447 clarified that they *'wanted to develop relationships with other local businesses so we could create a*
448 *symbiotic relationship in which we are all going for the same goal'* while another claimed that they
449 *'believe that the different sectors can prove to be mutually beneficial to each other's success'*. The
450 general positivity to the idea of further co-operation between the sectors was further manifest in
451 the diverse range of suggestions that respondents made as to how barriers to co-operation might be
452 overcome and levels of co-operation increased (Figure 5.4).

453

454

PLACE FIGURE 5.4 HERE

455

456 In some of these suggestions, respondents saw their businesses having key roles to play in e.g. more
457 joint promotion & marketing initiatives and more networking opportunities. In others, respondents
458 clearly saw the need for 'third party' stakeholders, most notably local authorities, public tourism
459 agencies and industry associations to proactively promote co-operative practices by providing forms
460 of encouragement, incentives, funding, mentoring and support. The role that such agencies have to
461 play in shaping a common goal or vision for bringing the two sectors together and in advocating and
462 encouraging leadership in the area was also recognised by respondents. Indeed, the study found
463 several examples where public agencies are playing key roles in driving cross-sectoral co-operation.
464 The Crafts Council of Ireland's development of a 'Craft Trail' is one example. This initiative seeks to
465 open up the craft sector to tourists, allowing them to see craftspeople at work and to purchase their
466 crafts. Údarás na Gaeltachta, the public development agency for the Gaelic speaking Gaeltacht areas
467 in Ireland introduced a criteria into its festival funding scheme which requires all tourist-oriented
468 festivals to include a cultural element into its programming. The intervention of Fáilte Ireland, the
469 national tourism development agency, is also very apparent through a number of initiatives. It
470 introduced *Blaiseadh Gaeltachta*, for example, as a classification/labeling system to allow B&Bs to
471 indicate to tourists that they can provide an Irish language experience. It also operates a mentoring
472 scheme whereby mentors experienced in developing and marketing tourism products are allocated
473 to cultural organizations as a means of enhancing their effectiveness in accessing tourism markets.

474

475 **6 Discussion**

476 The clear finding of the research is that organizations are interested in cross-sectoral co-operation
477 with 97% of respondents, and almost all interviewees indicating that they are open to greater levels
478 of co-operation between the sectors. However the fact is that only 40% of the respondents engage
479 in such co-operation and cross-sectoral co-operation was much less common than co-operation
480 more generally. For the 40% of the survey sample actively engaged in cross-sectoral co-operation,
481 the symbiotic relationship between tourism and culture is acknowledged and valued. The types of
482 co-operation identified were found to involve largely informal, occasional activities that relied on
483 personal knowledge, networks and associations. Sometimes, a third party public agency like a
484 tourism or a cultural development agency was involved, thus adding a degree of formality, but most
485 commonly it was a matter of individuals and firms connecting individually. In this, the study's
486 findings support extant research as to the importance of informal connections (Beritelli 2011, Ziakas
487 and Costa 2011, Zemla, 2014).

488 Overall, the findings clearly show that for a whole series of reasons, these organizations have much
489 to gain by aligning their activities more closely. Yet, the inclination to engage in cross-sectoral co-
490 operation was tempered by the existence of a series of barriers to co-operation, both perceived and
491 real. This notwithstanding, the data identified a number of suggestions as to how these might be
492 overcome, all of which advocated initiating some form of dialogue / engagement / networking in the
493 apparent belief that co-operative engagement would develop from that initial communication. The
494 matter of stimulating engagement seemed to be influenced by a number of drivers. In the first
495 instance, the findings show that an important driver is clearly the individual entrepreneur (reflecting
496 the work of Ryan et al (2012) and Kompuala (2014)). Much of the data points to individual tourism
497 entrepreneurs taking the initiative to engage with an actor in the cultural sector. Entrepreneurs
498 engage in co-operation because of the benefits that they believe will accrue, most notably in terms
499 of increasing consumption of their service/product, but also because of the benefits that they
500 believe will be generated for the destination more broadly, in line with the work of Greve and Salaff
501 (2003) and Bosworth and Farrell (2011). Thus, for example, one Westport hotel began exhibiting art
502 as a way of attracting customers. Over time, this began to function as an attraction in itself and the
503 hotel developed the idea significantly such that now the hotel atrium is used as a space in which art
504 and crafts are displayed on a monthly rotating basis. Another hotel located on the Great Western
505 Greenway capitalised on the opportunity offered by the trail to develop the 'Gourmet Greenway'. It
506 worked in conjunction with food producers in County Mayo to devise a food trail that would
507 showcase artisan food in the locale. In similar vein, one of Connemara's main tourist attractions,
508 Kylemore Abbey, decided to engage local musicians as part of their showcasing / promotional
509 activities. The success of this initiative inspired them to include musical performances into their
510 routine tourist offerings as a means of enhancing the visitor experience and of providing an indoor
511 alternative to the largely weather dependent experience offered at their attraction. While these
512 examples show the importance of entrepreneurial initiative, they also point to the snowball effect
513 that individual instances of co-operation can have. As such examples are noted by the broader
514 community it may be that they encourage others to think about co-operating, thus helping co-
515 operative practices to become normalized.

516 Researchers such as Panyik (et al 2011) Bhat and Milne (2008) highlight the important role of public
517 bodies in initiating and developing co-operation. This study concurs in finding that public agencies
518 like tourism development boards, cultural agencies and regional development organizations have an
519 important role to play in fostering co-operative activity. As discussed in the findings, the varied
520 interventions of public agencies operating at both national and local levels acted to encourage and
521 facilitate tourism firms working with the cultural sector. It is notable that none of this intervention

522 was formal. Neither were they particularly strategic in that the public sector bodies were working
523 largely independently of each other even though they were all trying to achieve broadly similar aims.
524 What was particularly interesting, however, was the fact that some of the most successful examples
525 of co-operation identified were ones where individuals, businesses, or communities supported the
526 efforts of the public agency, saw the value in their initiatives, and drove them forward. A good
527 example of this is the Great Western Greenway in the Westport/Clew Bay area. Here, combined
528 public leadership at national and county level led to the development of the Greenway trail itself,
529 but it is the work of local businesses, artists and community groups working in tandem that has built
530 upon the initiative and realized further tourism initiatives including the Gourmet Greenway, the
531 Greenway artists Initiative, the Greenway Sculpture and Greenway Adventures. Several public
532 agency key informants interviewed reported running networking events in other areas with no long-
533 term impact after the event was over. Thus, while it is clear that public agencies have an important
534 role to play in fostering co-operative activity, these findings suggest that the attitude and
535 disposition of members of the community and businesses is equally as important, and it is only if
536 they think that something is a worthwhile effort that real connectivity will emerge.

537 To date, much of the literature focuses on businesses being motivated to engage in co-operation in
538 order to leverage greater access to resources, markets, supports or profits and so the focus is on
539 how co-operation can bring benefits to the firm. To an extent, the findings generated here support
540 this focus. They show that the key motive expressed by tourism firms in initiating co-operative
541 activities was an interest in boosting tourist numbers and audience numbers. However, this study
542 has also highlighted the importance of other motivations. Most notably, they show that study
543 participants were also motivated to co-operate because they perceive it to be a means of advancing
544 the development of their local area. This came through very strongly in both the survey and the
545 interview findings. Some of the stated reasons for the openness to future co-operation identified,
546 for example, included '*[I] believe in co-operation for mutual benefit and the greater good*', '*it is*
547 *good for the area*' '*arts and culture are integral parts of tourism*' and '*sectors are intertwined and*
548 *[there are] clear interdependencies – it makes sense*'. In line with extant research, the study found
549 that strong personal and professional relations and the existence of networking were key contexts
550 underpinning co-operation. The firms studied were predominantly SME's and the locations in which
551 they were operating were small town or rural in nature and this may be significant: as discussed
552 earlier, the small-scale nature of tourism activity in these areas makes personal contact easier. These
553 findings support Wanhill's (2000) ideas about the community underpinnings of entrepreneurial
554 activity. They equally reinforce Czernek's (2013) observation that social and cultural determinants
555 can often be as important as economic factors and Bosworth and Farrelly's (2011) comment about

556 the extent to which rural entrepreneurs are embedded in their local areas. The current findings
557 broaden our understanding of embeddedness as what is shown is not only that small tourism firms
558 are tied to the place in which they are located, they are acutely aware of this fact and take it into
559 account when making decisions about engaging in co-operation.

560 Czernek (2013) differentiates between exogenous and endogenous factors that explain differing
561 levels of co-operation in tourist regions and this is relevant here. What this study has identified is
562 that as well as being motivated by endogenous considerations such as profits and increased visitor
563 numbers these businesses are also motivated by the desire to benefit the local area. This
564 consideration could be thought exogenous as there may be no direct impact on the business. So is
565 this an altruistic, corporate responsibility type of action? The answer is of course different for
566 different businesses. For some, there is recognition that improving the destination will have a
567 positive effect on their business. For others, this recognition may be less definite, yet there is an
568 awareness of how the development of both the destination and the business is entwined, and so the
569 objective of improving the destination becomes something of an internal objective of the individual
570 tourism business.

571 As discussed in the literature, there are a wide range of factors associated with successful co-
572 operation. This study has highlighted two factors which have led to the successful development of
573 cross-sectoral co-operation in these areas; a shared goal and the important role of a leader.
574 Mykletun and Gyimothy (2010) have outlined the importance of 'mutual goals, common interest or
575 passion' in underpinning effective co-operation. In this study, a key commonly shared interest was a
576 commitment to the development of the local area. This emerged as a key shared goal binding those
577 who co-operate together. Multiple respondents spoke of this shared goal. One respondent explained
578 that they co-operated because they *'wanted to develop relationships with other local businesses so
579 we could create a symbiotic relationship in which we are all going for the same goal'*. Another stated
580 *'what we do is promote the experience of the city. As a collective we can, and the advantage to us is
581 we bring people in, we give them reasons to come'*. This finding raises important questions about
582 how such shared goals can be developed. Are some places and communities more likely to be able
583 to develop mutual goals or is this something that can be 'created'? How can the difficulties of
584 creating shared visions and goals between different sectors be overcome? There is an important role
585 here for a 'leader' who as Corte et al (2014) state plays a role not only in the creation of a network or
586 instigation of co-operation but also in its eventual success. This leader uses the shared goal or vision
587 to unite the parties and encourage the strategy of co-operation.

588

589 7 Conclusion

590 Increasingly, tourism has been highlighted as an experiential service (Andersson 2007). Yet in spite of
591 the fact that tourists choose places in terms of the multi-dimensional experiences that they can offer
592 (Rustichini & Siconolfi 2004), much of our understanding about the tourism offering focuses on
593 individual products and individual firms. While the tourism literature provides insights about co-
594 operation generally, the focus is on co-operation between tourism firms. Given the increasing
595 interactions between tourism firms and providers in other sectors, this appears to represent a gap in
596 knowledge. Tourists are attracted to places for the experiences they can gain there and their
597 evaluation of destinations is determined by the experience of their visit. This focus on experience
598 requires us to adjust our research lens when evaluating tourism provision. It is not about the tourist
599 attractions that are available, the accommodation stock that exists or even the events that are
600 offered, it is a combination of all of these things that creates the tourist experience. As tourists seek
601 experiences they are often seeking something that is not provided by the tourist sector alone.
602 Rather, they are attracted, for example, by the allure of historical sites, theatrical performances,
603 cultural events, opportunities to learn new skills or taste new foods.

604 Cognizant of this, the paper deals with the important issue of cross-sectoral co-operation. As
605 destinations seek to stand out in a crowded market-place and re-invent themselves to become more
606 sustainable they are increasingly looking at what new products and experiences can be offered. This
607 necessitates a cross-sectoral approach. This paper has shown that cross-sectoral co-operation is not
608 without its challenges. Tourism firms may not have a well-developed awareness of the opportunities
609 that exist in the cultural sector and vice versa. Skill sets, working practices, norms and values differ
610 between the two sectors while perceptions held by actors in the different sectors concerning such
611 issues as quality, ownership and control may be contentious. However, these study findings show a
612 strong willingness to overcome these potentially problematic issues and to seek common ground. In
613 this context, a key research finding emerging from the study is that common ground can lie in a
614 shared commitment and interest in the local area. On the basis of this finding, the paper argues that
615 an effective basis for cross-sectoral co-operation can be found by putting the destination to the fore
616 and developing a shared vision that aims to make the destination as a whole more attractive for
617 tourists. Implicit in such an approach is a need for tourism businesses to move away from focusing
618 on their business activities as independent entities to understanding how their offerings fit with
619 those of the destination more widely. From a policy perspective, the study findings suggest that if
620 strategies are to effectively encourage cross-sectoral co-operation they must root themselves in a
621 shared vision that is underpinned by mutual respect for both sector's core activities and values. This

622 shared vision can be found in the common desire to enhance the wellbeing of the destination as a
623 whole for the benefit of all concerned.

624 Another critical finding to emerge from the study was the undoubted need for a leader to
625 'champion' the idea of co-operating with another sector. Leaders seem to be very important in
626 negotiating common ground between the two sectors, in advocating lateral thinking and in ironing
627 out the complexities that arise in co-operating cross-sectorally. This leadership role can be supplied
628 by an individual entrepreneur, a community activist or it can come from a third party in the private
629 (e.g. an industry association or chamber of commerce) or public arena (e.g. regional development
630 body, tourism agency). In cases where a third party agency are actively involved in seeking to
631 promote co-operation, the findings suggest that interventions will only work if there is 'buy-in' from
632 the array of concerned stakeholders.

633 Given the small-scale nature of the study reported here, there is further need for research to
634 investigate whether in fact these findings are in any way representative of cross-sectoral co-
635 operation involving other sectoral actors (e.g. food, eco, adventure tourism) or operating in other
636 geographical areas. With the focus on tourism as an experience it is vital that we examine the
637 tourism product from this perspective too, and this necessitates focussing on the cross-sectoral
638 relationship between tourism and a variety of other sectors. Cross-sectoral co-operation is likely to
639 be fundamental to the development and sustainability of tourism destinations of the future and this
640 is why research like this is so important for policy makers and academics alike.

641

642

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