# **New Application Guide**

for Quality Assurance Schemes



www.onlinelistingtool.failteireland.ie

How to apply for approval to Fáilte Ireland Standards including details on using the Online Listing Tool





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### 1. About Failte Ireland

Fáilte Ireland was formed in 2003 under the National Tourism Development Authority Act to guide and promote tourism as a significant driver of the Irish economy. We provide both strategic and practical support to develop and sustain Ireland as a high-quality and competitive tourist destination. We work with the tourism industry in areas including business support, enterprise development, training and education, research, marketing and regional development.

In its role as The National Tourism Development Authority, Fáilte Ireland plays a lead role in improving standards in both the accommodation and non-accommodation sectors of the tourism industry. These schemes provide assurance to visitors and encourage higher standards of tourism product amongst the industry in Ireland.

Fáilte Ireland's vision for Irish tourism is that of a dynamic, innovative, sustainable and highly regarded sector offering international and domestic visitors a positive and memorable experience beyond their expectations.

For further information on Fáilte Ireland please go to www.failteireland.ie

### 2. About Industry Quality & Standards

'Competitiveness through Quality & Service'

Quality is the key to boosting your business and improving your profits. Fáilte Ireland research has shown that consumers and the international travel trade are increasingly demanding an assurance of the quality of the products and services they buy and sell. Today's visitors want high quality experiences and their expectations are continually rising in all aspects of their holidays.

With this in mind, Fáilte Ireland has established a team dedicated to the development, introduction and maintenance of quality assurance schemes across tourism businesses.

The activities of the Industry Quality & Standards Team can be divided into four main areas:

- Registration the legal / statutory requirement for certain tourism enterprises to register with Fáilte Ireland.
- Listing/Approval the requirement for non-registered enterprises to meet defined standards to be eligible for Fáilte Ireland approval.
- Classification/Star Grading the assessment of quality of particular tourism facilities against defined criteria in order to reach a star rating.
- Categorisation the differentiation of similar products to better inform the consumer of what is on offer.

Fáilte Ireland has specific legislative obligations concerning standards within the tourism industry and the management of quality within the industry.

This manual caters for the approval, classification and categorisation of properties and sectors which do not legally require registration (i.e. listing and approvals only).

For details on the schemes currently available and the specific requirements, please go to the Quality and Standards section on www.failteireland.ie.



In order to ensure a consistent approach to these quality assurance schemes a National Quality and Standards Framework has been developed. Please see section 3 for further details.

### 3. The National Quality & Standards Framework

The National Quality and Standards Framework has been established within Fáilte Ireland as the optimum approach when defining the requirements and criteria for approval and classification or categorisation. It has already been used to establish approvals and categorisation for the Golf and Spa & Wellness tourism sectors. Participation in the National Quality and Standards Framework is voluntary.

Leading to an accreditation or in some sectors the award of the Tourism Quality Mark (TQM), the Framework is an integrated model to support effective quality assurance and product marketing in tourism. It has been designed in line with international best practice, and serves as a route map for enhancing standards and quality across all products and sectors in tourism.

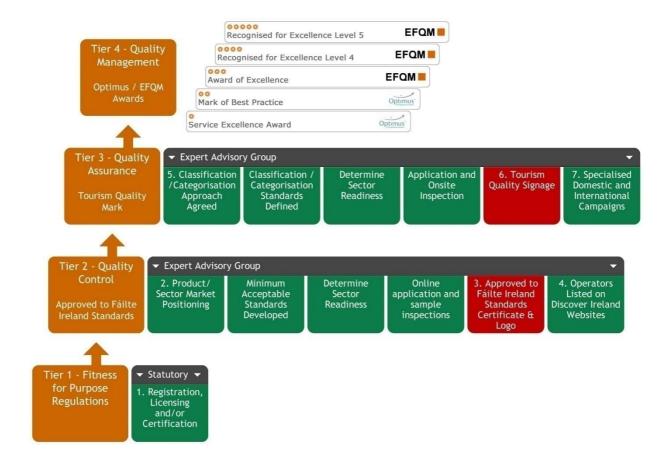
Through the development of an associated quality brand concept and logo, the Framework also serves as a quality assurance trail for consumers by designating establishments and products as approved and recognised as providing a high quality experience for the consumer. The Framework offers a clear path for all tourism enterprises to deliver improved quality and excellence through a process of continuous improvement.

The following basic principles apply to our schemes:

- Participation is voluntary and is open to all operators in the industry sector regardless of membership of industry bodies, location, style of property, etc
- An on-site assessment is required, and any resulting actions addressed before the property will be accredited
- The 'award' i.e. certificate and authorisation to advertise as 'approved to Fáilte Ireland standards' is for a defined duration (e.g. 1 or 2 years)
- Each property needs to renew at the end of the defined period those who do not renew are removed from the system and required to remove references to Fáilte Ireland approval
- Each property receives a pre-arranged assessment visit
- A nominal application and renewal fee is charged to cover the costs
- All assessments are completed by an independent assessor Fáilte Ireland has contractors in place to complete assessments across all sectors
- Each approval system has a set of minimum standards that must be complied with in order to become accredited
- Categorisation and classification systems build on approval systems and contain additional criteria which are to be reached before a Tourism Quality Mark will be awarded. The decision to introduce categorisation or classification depends on the requirements of the sector



#### **Summary of the National Quality & Standards Framework**



### 4. How do I become Approved to Failte Ireland Standards?

The process for approval under a Fáilte Ireland quality assurance scheme for some sectors such as Golf, Spa or Individual Self-Catering is as follows:

- 1. An enquiry is received, initial questions answered and the Applicant is referred to the relevant section of the Fáilte Ireland website where further information is available.
- 2. The Applicant reviews details, decides to proceed and, where relevant, at which level they would like to be accredited (e.g. for self-catering, which star rating they are aiming for).
- 3. The Applicant registers their interest via the Online Listing Tool (further details provided later in this document).
- 4. The Applicant is contacted by Tourism Standards Assessments Ltd (TSA) the contractor appointed by Fáilte Ireland to administer quality assurance schemes on their behalf. The specific requirements of the relevant accreditation are discussed and any additional questions are answered.
- 5. The Applicant should then review the relevant criteria and declaration of compliance document, ensure all requirements are in place and that they are ready to proceed with their approval.
- 6. TSA will then provide login details for the Online Listing Tool by email.
- 7. The Applicant should then login, enter the details of the property they wish to have approved, and make the relevant payment using a credit or laser card.
- 8. An automated receipt will be provided to the Applicant.
- 9. Once payment is received, TSA will contact the Applicant to arrange for an on-site assessment visit.



- 10. During the assessment visit, the Applicant will accompany the Assessor to provide any necessary information. The Applicant should also provide a signed copy of the declaration of compliance and any documentation as requested by the Assessor. All details of the visit will be noted in order to provide a written report.
- 11. Should the Applicant need to address points noted as a result of the assessment visit, a letter will be sent confirming the outcome of the assessment visit and stating, if required, any actions that are to be taken or conditions to be met, and the deadline by which completion of these actions must be sent to TSA.
- 12. Following confirmation that any required actions have been completed, the assessment report and recommended accreditation level will be presented to an approvals board. This recommendation is subject to the approval of Fáilte Ireland.
- 13. The outcome of the review will be communicated to the Applicant.
- 14. Once approved the Operator is eligible to use the term 'Approved to Fáilte Ireland standards for 2011' (or relevant year(s)) and to market their property under this branding on their website/promotional literature.
- 15. All successful Applicants will be added to the Fáilte Ireland database, and appear on Discover Ireland websites. Further details on the approved property such as images, directions, etc may be requested at this stage.

#### **Key Points to remember:**

- Each property must be listed separately i.e. if you have 3 self-catering properties, each will need to be visited and must also have a separate entry on the Discover Ireland websites.
- Only approved properties can be displayed on Fáilte Ireland websites.
- Only properties which have been visited by our Assessors and successfully completed the approval process may be described as 'Approved to Fáilte Ireland standards'
- All Properties are visited as part of the initial assessment process
- While accredited to Failte Ireland standards, properties will also be visited regularly after their initial assessment to ensure that all required standards are being maintained.

### 5. What is the Online Listing Tool?

The Online Listing Tool is a web-based system which was developed by Fáilte Ireland to service those interested in and participating in our Quality Assurance schemes.

It facilitates online applications for those wishing to become accredited to one of the quality assurance schemes.

Existing Operators across many sectors also use the tool to review and update their listing on the Discover Ireland websites and to renew their participation in the scheme as and when required.

In order to provide an efficient service to potential and existing Operators alike at a time that best suits their business, application and renewal fees can be paid through the Online Listing Tool at any time and regardless of office hours.

The home page of the Online Listing Tool also provides links to websites and documents containing key information for our quality assurance schemes.

The Online Listing Tool is available at www.onlinelistingtool.failteireland.ie.



### 6. Applying for Approval using the Online Listing Tool

In the case of many Fáilte Ireland quality assurance schemes online application is required. It is a quick and simple process. This section provides step-by-step instructions on what you need to do.

Existing Operators who wish to add a new property for approval can also do so while logged in to their account in the 'Existing Users' section. Details are provided in the User Manual available on the login page of the tool at <a href="www.onlinelistingtool.failteireland.ie">www.onlinelistingtool.failteireland.ie</a>. Alternatively, please follow the details below:

#### 6.1. Register your Interest

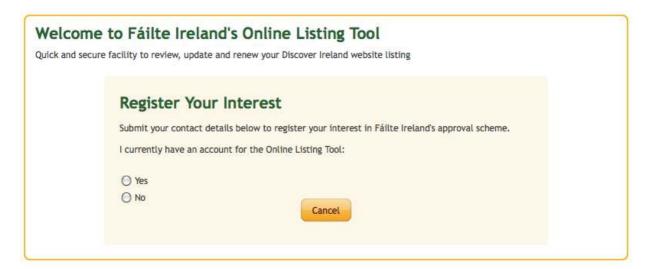
To join and benefit from Fáilte Ireland's approval scheme, firstly you need to register your interest.

To do so, go to the Online Listing Tool (www.onlinelistingtool.failteireland.ie) to the 'New Users' section.





You will then see the following screen – select as appropriate:



#### 6.2 **Enter your details**

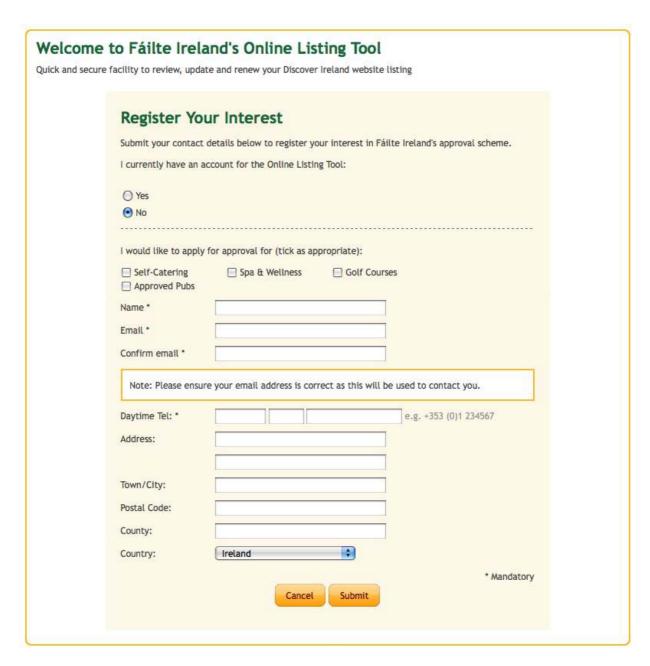
Depending on which option you select ('I currently have an account for the Online Listing Tool' Yes or No), a different form will appear. This is because some information is already recorded for those who have current Online Listing Tool accounts.

Please fill in the form completely and accurately.

Note: Please ensure your email address and daytime telephone number are correct as these will be used to contact you.

Select which product(s) you would like to apply for by checking the relevant box. This list contains all products which currently use the Online Listing Tool for approvals and renewals.





Once you have completed each field, click 'Submit' and your details will be entered into the system.

As outlined in step 4 of the approval process (see Section 4 for details), you will then be contacted by TSA to discuss your application.

You should also review:

- The relevant Criteria document for the product and level (e.g. star rating for accommodation, categorisation for spas) at which you would like your property to be approved
- The **Frequently Asked Questions** (FAQ) document for the product
- The Declaration of Compliance document for the product (which includes the statutory and regulatory requirements which must be in place prior to an assessment visit)

Note: Relevant documentation or certificates of compliance or registration must be available for the Assessor, if required, at the time of the visit.



#### 6.3 Log in, enter property details

Once you are ready to proceed with your application, TSA will send you an email with the details you need to log into the Online Listing Tool and continue the process.

Click on the link in the email you receive and you will be brought to the login page to submit your property details and pay online.

Enter the email address and password exactly as they appear in the email and click 'Sign In'.



Once you have reviewed the text on the following screen and are ready to proceed, please click on the green button 'Submit your Property Details and Pay Online'.





A form will then appear on screen which you need to complete accurately.

This is the information that will be entered into the Fáilte Ireland database about your property, and therefore it will appear directly on the Discover Ireland websites. Please ensure that all details are correct.

For suggestions on how to maximise the effectiveness of this information, please see section 8 of this document before completing the text.

The first section of the form requests property name and address, telephone number and other contact details - these relate to the property that you would like to have approved, and will appear on the Discover Ireland websites. These are usually different to the Account details, which relate to the Owner of the property. If you use a booking engine, please include the details in the relevant field.

Note: Fáilte Ireland does not provide an online booking service - should you use an alternative supplier, please ensure the exact link to your property is provided.

The second section of the screen relates to the description and has three sections:

- Short Description this should include information which will entice potential visitors to find out more about your property
- Long Description this should provide more detail about your property, the location, etc
- Directions clear directions should be provided. Remember that the visitor may not be familiar with local landmarks

We recommend that you take time to write a clear, accurate description of your property as this is what will attract customers to you.

For Self-Catering applications which contain more than one property, you will need to complete separate screens for each property. Some of the information will be automatically copied from the initial screen, however it is vital that you review each screen to ensure that it relates to a specific property.

It is not acceptable to describe all properties in the same listing.

Description			
Short Description:	300 Characters Remaining		
Long Description:	3000 Characters Remaining		
Directions:	750 Characters Remaining		



Before submitting your details, you must read and accept the Disclaimer. The Disclaimer is a short text which relates to your listing on Fáilte Ireland websites. By ticking the box, you accept the content of the Disclaimer which includes:

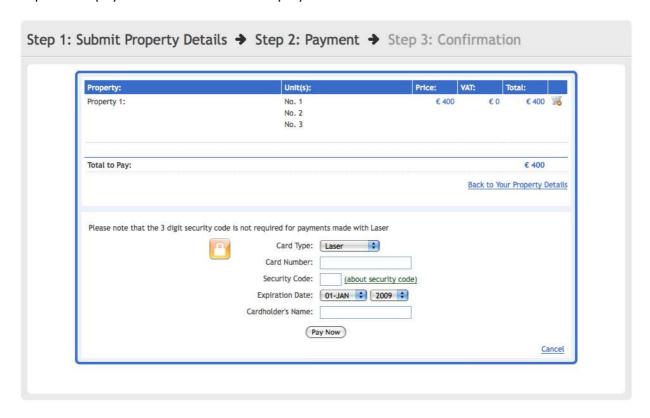
- Accepting responsibility for the accuracy of the text provided.
- Committing to reviewing the content for each property regularly (at least once per year).
- Committing to ensuring that each property or unit is listed separately and that the
  description and images provided to Fáilte Ireland or anywhere where they will be listed
  with reference to Fáilte Ireland approval are correct, and relate to the specific property
  or unit in question.
- Committing to removing references to Fáilte Ireland approval from your website, online or promotional materials should the property be removed from the Fáilte Ireland quality approval scheme either voluntarily or following action taken by Fáilte Ireland.

It is mandatory to accept the terms of the Disclaimer before you can proceed.

#### 6.4 Pay and get an automated receipt

Once you have accepted the Disclaimer, you will be brought through to the payment section of the Online Listing Tool where you will see the application fee displayed.

Fees and VAT rates vary by product, therefore it is possible that the amount you are required to pay will differ from that displayed below.



The tool has been set up to accept Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Laser cards only. Although you are entering the card number, expiry date, and other details into the tool, the information is not being stored by Fáilte Ireland.

1. Enter in your card type: Visa/MasterCard/Laser/American Express.

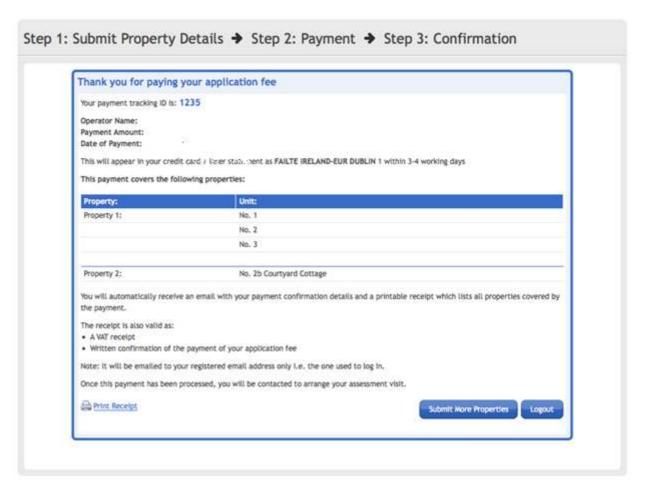


- 2. Enter in your card number without any spaces or dashes.
- 3. Enter the Security Code (click on 'about security code' for information on where to find this code). This is not required for Laser.
- 4. Enter the expiry date.
- 5. Enter the name of the Cardholder exactly as it appears on the card i.e. if the name on the card is Mrs. B. Curran, the name that should appear in the cardholder's name box is Mrs. B. Curran.
- 6. Click on 'Pay Now'.

#### 6.5 Confirmation of Payment

Once you have made your payment, you will receive an automated email with your payment confirmation details and a printable receipt which lists all properties covered by the payment. The receipt is also written confirmation of the payment of your application

**Note:** It will be emailed to your registered email address only i.e. the one used to log in.



Should this payment not appear on your credit card within seven days, please email info@tsaireland.ie with your payment tracking ID.

#### 6.6 Next Steps



Once this payment has been processed, TSA will contact you to arrange for an on-site assessment visit.

For further details on the assessment visit and application process, please see section 4 of this document.

### 7. What are the Benefits of Approval?

Quality is key to boosting your business and improving your profits. Fáilte Ireland research has shown that consumers and the international travel trade are increasingly demanding an assurance of the quality of the products and services they buy and sell. Today's visitors want high quality experiences and their expectations are continually rising.

There are a significant number of benefits available to you while approved under the appropriate scheme:

- Association with the Fáilte Ireland brand name seen as a guarantee of quality for visitors in Ireland.
- International recognition Eligible to use the term 'Approved to Fáilte Ireland Standards' in all promotional material and on websites.
- Quality Assessment an independent assessment carried out by experienced professionals which will provide an indication of where your business is, relative to the required standards.
- Free listing on www.discoverireland.ie which promotes Ireland to approximately 2.7 million Irish visitors per year, with 'Where to stay' and 'What to do' amongst the most
- Free listing on www.discoverireland.com, a link to 47 different country websites, including over 19 foreign language versions, attracting over one million unique visitors every month.
- Training Participation in specialised Fáilte Ireland Training Programmes.
- Business Support & Advisory Services Access to Failte Ireland Business Support and Marketing Advice such as mentoring, web-check, etc.
- Access to marketing opportunities offered by regions, destinations and Fáilte Ireland / Tourism Ireland to quality-assessed operations only.

Note: Where an establishment, for whatever reason, ceases to participate in the Fáilte Ireland Approval, Categorisation or Classification Scheme, all references to Failte Ireland approval on signs, print material or online must be removed.

### 8. Your Discover Ireland Listing

With 7 out of 10 people researching and choosing their holidays online, keeping your listing up to date and attractive to your online customer is more important than ever.

#### 8.1. Tips to make the most out of your Discover Ireland Description

- **Tourism is an Experience Industry, so deliver experiences!**
- Content is the thing that attracts customers and retains their attention. It is the one and only means, which will bring customers to your website and turn leads into sales.
- Say something about the **location** as well as the property in the very first paragraph. People tend to choose location first, accommodation second.



- Write a catchy **headline**. 'Holiday cottage with off-street parking with stunning views.
- Keep paragraphs short, if possible with one idea per paragraph it makes it much easier on the eye when you are reading from a screen.
- Remember, when it comes to writing: **less is more**.
- People love to read **lists**. Like this one. Easier to read and easier to understand.
- Write as if to one person, and tell them how they will benefit. Instead of 'The pool is heated year-round' try: 'You'll love the pool -we keep it at 76 degrees all year long'. 'You' and 'your ' are important words.
- Think of words that uniquely describe your property avoid using words like "best" or "premier". Focus on catchy words.
- **Remember:** The Discover Ireland website(s) are your online platforms to get traffic to your site and ultimately, to the point of booking.
- Include a reference to **booking** in your content.

#### 8.2. The Importance of Images

- Think of your listing on the Discover Ireland as your shop window for customers to take a glance at what you have to offer. Pictures are one of your most important assets.
- It is essential that you own the copyright to the images.
- Your images should be up to date and you should have the legal right to use them.
- Take 6 images and include: an outdoor shot, include rooms and a view shot. Think blue skies!
- We recommend the following formats:
- If your image is a 2 or 3 colour line drawing, then .GIF is the best format
- If it's an image with lots of busy action, use JPG

#### 8.3. Your Property and Listing Details

The content for your initial listing on the Discover Ireland websites is provided through the Online Listing Tool as part of your approval process. A description for each individual property is required. We will input the exact text we receive from you into the database, so it is important that it is as descriptive as you can make it.

After your property has been approved, you will receive login details which will allow you to access the 'Existing Operator' area of the Online Listing Tool. Full details on using this section of the tool are available in the 'User Manual' which you will find on the login page of the Tool.

### 8.4. How to View your Property and Listing Details

It is a good idea to view your property and listing details so you see how they display and understand what your potential customer sees. There are a number of different ways to see your listing:

- Go to www.discoverireland.ie and enter the name of your property in the search field and click on the magnifying glass icon or hit 'return' on your keyboard. This will list all properties which have the same name or contain the words you have entered.
- Search using the location i.e. select the type, county, town and click the 'search' button. This will show all of the property type in the area.
- You can also view your property details through the Online Listing Tool, by logging in to your account and clicking on the link 'View your listing on the Discover Ireland website' for the individual property you would like to view. This will then open a new screen with a live link to the property as it appears on the Discover Ireland website.



#### 8.5. How to Edit Property and Listing Details

If you wish to make changes to your property or account details (i.e. your correspondence address, telephone number, etc) you can do this through the Online Listing Tool once your property has been approved and your account for the OLT is set up.

For further details please see the User Manual on the login page of the Online Listing Tool at <a href="https://www.onlinelistingtool.failteireland.ie">www.onlinelistingtool.failteireland.ie</a>

Please note that changes will be made subject to the approval of Fáilte Ireland.



### 9. Questions and Answers

Some of the key questions and answers are listed below. For answers to any other questions you may have, please go to the relevant Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section on www.onlinelistingtool.failteireland.ie

#### 9.1. Which Accommodation Scheme should I be assessed under?

Fáilte Ireland offers a number of schemes for both accommodation and nonaccommodation sectors. Participation in all non-accommodation schemes is currently voluntary. Some accommodation types are 'Registered Accommodation' and therefore must follow the legal / statutory requirement to register with Fáilte Ireland

In terms of accommodation, this manual and process refers to Individual Self-Catering properties i.e. where there are between 1 and 7 properties on one site.

Self-catering properties where there are more than 7 properties located on one site are defined as a Group Scheme and must be registered.

See www.failteireland.ie for further details on Registered Accommodation schemes.

#### 9.2. How much does it cost to be approved?

A nominal fee is charged for both initial approval and renewal. Fees vary by product. Please contact TSA for details on LoCall 1890 252 783 or info@tsaireland.ie.

#### 9.3. How long is my approval valid for?

The validity period for approval varies by product – this means that Approved Operators in some sectors will need to renew every year, while for others it will be every two years, etc. For further details please contact TSA on LoCall 1890 252 783 or info@tsaireland.ie.

#### 9.4. How safe are my credit or laser card details?

Your card details are only used to make the payment while you are on the site. They are not stored in the system and will not be available once you have completed the payment transaction.

We use secure payment facilities provided by Realex Payments in order to process all credit card transactions. Realex Payments are certified and approved by several leading financial institutions. Their systems and security controls are based on current industry standards. There are several layers of technology in place to ensure the confidentiality, authentication and integrity of information.

- All information when in transit via the internet is encrypted (128bit SSL) to ensure confidentiality of sensitive data.
- Realex Payments are registered with the data protection commissioner as a "Data Processor". Cardholder information is encrypted and not displayed in their reporting system called 'realcontrol'.

Realex Payments have been accredited with the AIS (Account Information Security) certification by VISA and is one of the few companies in Europe to achieve this. Additionally Realex Payments are fully compliant with the PCI DSS (Payment Card Industry



Data Security Standard) at all times. This shows their commitment to the above industry standard in every aspect of payment processing.

#### 9.5. What is the difference between Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland?

Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland work together in strategic partnership. Each agency has a distinct role and remit.

Tourism Ireland is the agency responsible for marketing the island of Ireland as a holiday destination overseas. It delivers targeted marketing programmes and works in close cooperation with travel trade, on-line operators, media, carriers and Irish industry partners.

They run www.discoverireland.com and related microsites in markets such as Great Britain, USA and Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, Italy, Spain and Australia. All of these sites are driven from the same database as www.discoverireland.ie and use the same text, images and product information. (see section 8)

Tourism Ireland works with the two tourist boards on the island of Ireland, Fáilte Ireland and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, who are responsible for product and enterprise development and marketing to tourism consumers within the island of Ireland.

For further information on Tourism Ireland, please go to <a href="www.tourismireland.com">www.tourismireland.com</a>

### 10. Who do I contact if I have Other Questions?

Fáilte Ireland has contracted its listing, approval, assessment and classification functions for listed accommodation and non-accommodation products to a third party contractor-Tourism Standards Assessments Ltd (TSA)

#### **Tourism Standards Assessments Ltd (TSA)**

51 Bracken Road Sandyford Industrial Estate Dublin 18

Email: info@tsaireland.ie

Phone: 1890 252 783 (LoCall number)

Fax: 01-214 9579

Office Open Hours Monday to Friday | 9.00 am - 5.00 pm

#### **Reference Documents:**

There are also a number of reference documents on the following websites which may help you:

- www.onlinelistingtool.failteireland.ie
- www.failteireland.ie



## www.onlinelistingtool.failteireland.ie