

Examine the development of one tertiary economic activity in a Peripheral Irish region that you have studied

(30 marks)

I will discuss the North and West (N&W) through the lens of the tourism sector of tertiary economic activities. In 2017 the West region alone (Mayo, Galway, Roscommon) saw 1.9 million overseas tourists spend €694 million. There are a number of factors which contribute to this success, such as its remote location and scenic coastline.

The N&W region is dependent on its physical landscape, which is promoted internationally through Failte Ireland. While there was a dramatic drop in international visitors during the economic recession from 2008 to 2015, there has been an increase in numbers to Ireland recently with an increase of 7.1% in overseas visitors for January – October 2018 (Tourism Ireland). For the N&W region 42% of visitors are from Mainland Europe, 18% from Britain and 31% from North America. Therefore, while Dublin Airport remains the entry point to Ireland, transport and car hire are considered expensive and rail infrastructure are underdeveloped, tourism is growing in this peripheral region. Donegal, Galway and Sligo are the most popular destinations contributing €85 million to the local economy. This is considered an invisible export (any export that does not have a physical, tangible presence).

Tourism in the N&W region is, unfortunately, seasonal (May – August) which does hinder the continued growth of this sector, particularly as a wide range of the attractions are related to the outdoors – Glenveagh National park, in Donegal, receives 117,000 visitors each year. Glenveagh also now hosts the 250 km long, multi-sport “Race” every March. Similarly, Inis Mor, off the coast of Galway hosts the Red Bull Cliff Diving Championship, which brings large numbers of tourists to the area. Other attractions to the area include, Slieve League (125,000 visitors each year) and Ben Bulbin and Croagh Patrick for hill walking. Cruising along the River Shannon is also very popular in the region.

Ireland’s cultural traditions and heritage can also be sampled in the Gaeltacht regions of Donegal and Connemara. Sean Nos singing and Ceilidh dancing, as part of the Irish culture, act as attractive forces for international visitors. Complementing this is the investments made by Discover Ireland into the development of the Wild Atlantic Way and the Great Western Greenway. Finally, Tourism Ireland now offer fly/drive package holidays through Sligo, Galway, Knock and Donegal airports.