

Sustainable Tourism and Environmental Management – A Fáilte Ireland Perspective.

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Mission

Enhancing Ireland
through tourism –
Enhancing Ireland
for tourists



Vision – By 2030...



The tourism sector is economically resilient.

Visitors are regionally and seasonally dispersed.

We have delivered on our Climate Action targets.

The industry provides excellent visitor experience satisfaction

The industry provides excellent careers to staff.

Tourism provides significant contributions to local communities.

Coordinated, collaborative and sustainable destination development is carried out by national and local state bodies.

Strategic Framework



E

C

I

V

EXECUTION

Environment

Strategic Objectives

1. Support the industry to step change the environmental sustainability of tourism premises to achieve government targets by 2030 (carbon emissions and energy efficiency)
2. Ireland is a leading sustainable tourism destination, that protects, restores and champions our natural environment for the benefit of all

Community

Strategic Objectives

1. Develop a sustainable visitor economy that drives tourism revenue into communities across the country, enabling them to flourish and thrive
2. Through active collaboration with communities, leverage the potential of the tourism economy to support relevant and authentic development of destinations, making them great places to live and visit

Industry

Strategic Objectives

1. Support businesses to grow sustainably, driving competitiveness and resilience to enable sustainable development
2. Support employees in industry to continue to build expertise & knowledge delivering improved organisational efficiency and visitor experience while ensuring the long-term needs of the sector are met

Visitor

Strategic Objectives

1. Motivate our target audiences to choose Ireland as the destination that will best meet their needs
2. Support the development and delivery of exceptional and inclusive visitor experiences and accommodation which meets the needs and expectations of visitors



Environment



Environment Strategic Objectives

E

1

Support the industry to step change the environmental sustainability of tourism premises to achieve government targets by 2030 (carbon emissions and energy efficiency).

2

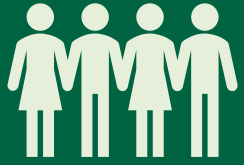
Ireland is a leading sustainable tourism destination that protects, restores and champions our natural environment for the benefit of all.

Saol na mBan Women's Lives



Community





Community Strategic Objectives

C

3

Develop a sustainable visitor economy that drives tourism revenue into communities across the country, enabling them to flourish and thrive.

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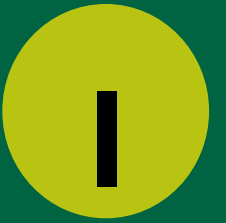
Through active collaboration with communities, harness the potential of the tourism economy to support sustainable and authentic development of destinations, making them great places to live and visit.



I ndustry



Industry Strategic Objectives



5

Support businesses to grow sustainably, driving competitiveness and resilience to enable sustainable development.

6

Support employees to continue to build expertise and knowledge delivering organisational efficiency and visitor experience while ensuring the long-term needs of the sector are met.



V isitor





Visitor Strategic Objectives

V

7

Motivate our target audiences to choose Ireland as the destination that will best meet their needs.

8

Support the development and delivery of exceptional and inclusive visitor experiences and accommodation which meet the needs and expectations of visitors

Activities Division



Walking –
development and
enhancement of
routes and trails
throughout
Ireland.



Cycling –
Development of
cycling trails,
greenways, and
mountain biking
trails



Water Based
Activities –
Blueway
development



Strategic
Partnerships –
working with
strategic partners
to leverage state
assets for outdoor
recreation



Planning and
Environment

Strategic Partnerships & Stakeholders



Work in partnership with several agencies on the delivery of projects:



Bord na Móna



**An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail**
Department of Rural and
Community Development



An Roinn Iompair
Department of Transport



Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo
Mayo County Council



SPÓRT ÉIREANN
SPORT IRELAND

Destination and Experience Development Plans (DEDPs)

CLEW BAY DESTINATION & EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Plean Forbartha Ceann Scribe agus
Eispéiris Chuan Mó

November 2021



Fáilte
Ireland



WILD ATLANTIC WAY
SLÍ AN ATLANTACH PHAID

SLIGO DESTINATION & EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

APRIL 2024

The Connemara Coast & Aran Islands

Visitor Experience Development Plan



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WILD ATLANTIC WAY
SLÍ AN ATLANTACH PHAID

A wide-angle photograph of the Cliffs of Moher in Ireland. The cliffs are high, rugged, and layered with horizontal rock strata. They are topped with green grass and some small shrubs. The ocean is a deep blue-green, with white foam from waves crashing against the base of the cliffs. A small, isolated rock formation stands in the water to the left. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. A large, semi-transparent grey arc is overlaid on the right side of the image, partially covering the cliffs and the sea.

Wild Atlantic Way & National Environmental Monitoring Programme

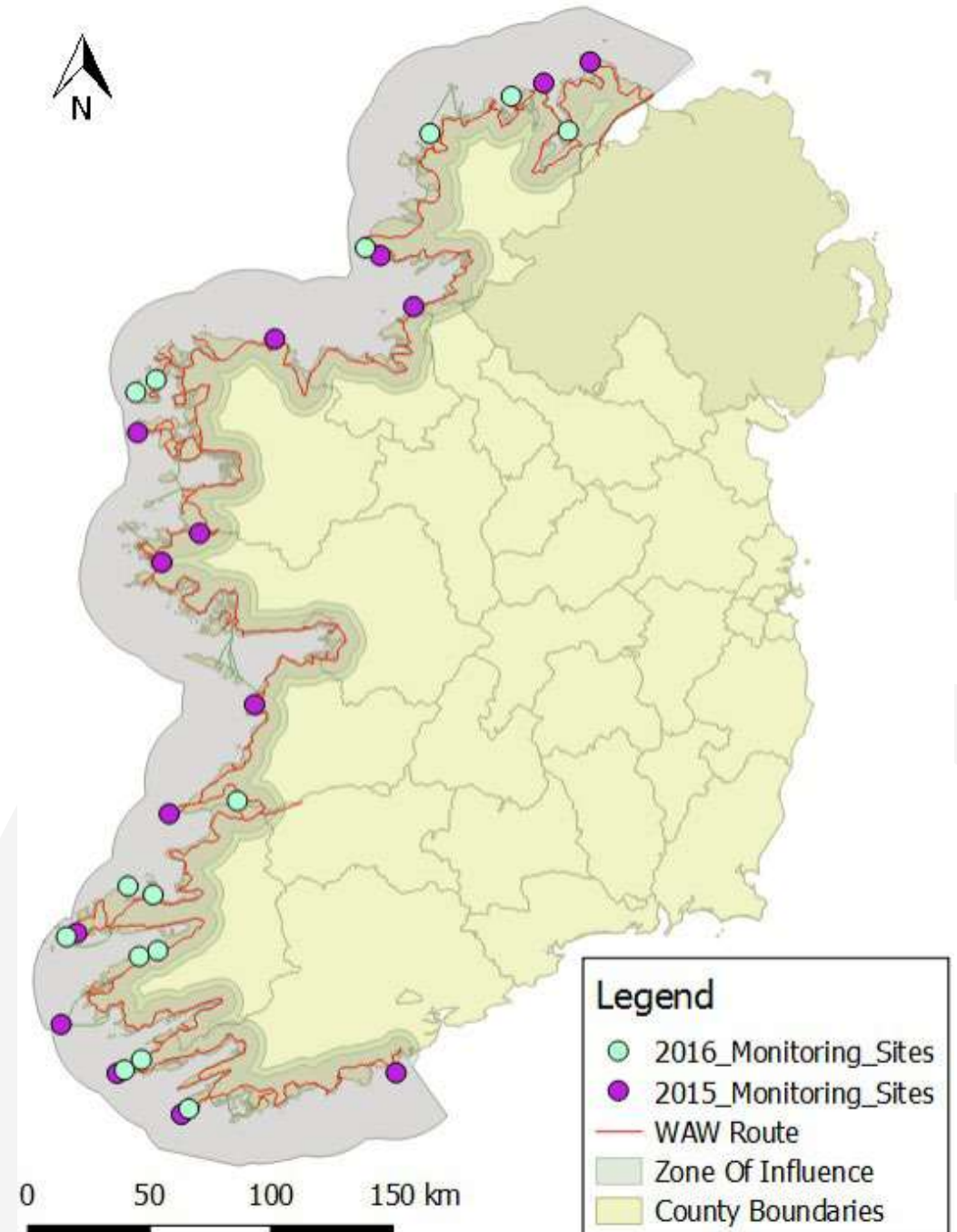
Wild Atlantic Way-10 years

- New impact report estimates that almost 2 million more tourists visited the Wild Atlantic Way in 2023 than in 2013
- The Wild Atlantic Way drives €3billion in revenue per year, an increase of 58% in 10 years
- 35,000 additional tourism jobs supported on the Wild Atlantic Way in 10 years
- The Wild Atlantic Way, the hugely successful tourism brand developed by Fáilte Ireland in response to the global financial crash, was launched to the tourism industry in 2014, and over the last decade has become a globally recognised tourism brand and has provided an economic engine for the west of Ireland.



WAW Programme 2015-2019

- Commenced in 2015 and as part of the Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme. Used to identify protective, remedial or improvement actions.
1. **Macro monitoring** compilation of relevant regional data that is collected by other agencies used to identify any emerging trends and changes regionally.
 2. **Site Surveys of visitor behaviour** monitoring general activities and associated environmental effects
 3. **Site Surveys of ecology** to describe the specific effects on the **ecology of areas** that were observed to have been used/trafficked by visitors and adjacent control areas



National Environmental Monitoring Programme 2021-2024



Building on the Wild Atlantic Way (WAW) environmental monitoring programme. In 2021 we expanded nationally to include strategic monitoring sites across 4 brands

- Varying Site types – Coastal/Inland/Urban
- Identifies **stresses & future risks** to the environment
- Assists in appropriate site management (Interventions / Recommendations)
- Notes **Good & Bad** Practices
- Stakeholder engagement/**Knowledge Share**
- 2024: Strategic in survey locations to maximise benefits: Include new National Parks (Páirc Náisiúnta na Mara) **Inch Beach**, Future Coastal Walks (**Downpatrick Head**), Future Investments e.g. JTF/PFG (**Clonmacnoise / Tramore**) Blueway (**Portumna**)
- To date monitored **59 no sites** across 4 brand areas (with **>30,000 visitors** monitored).



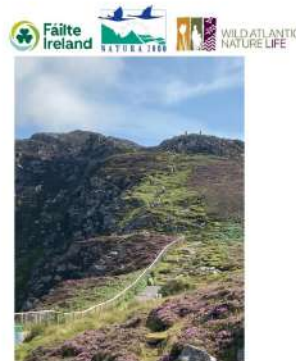
EU Life Projects

LIFE IP – Wild Atlantic Nature (WAN)

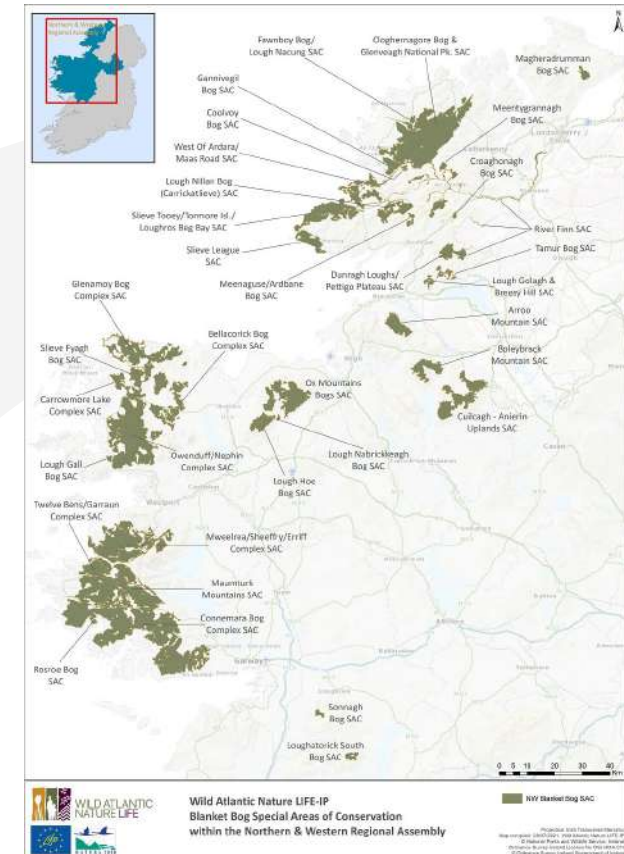
- WAN is a nine-year environmental project (2021-2029), worth €20 million
- Protect and improve the conservation status of 35 protected (SACs) blanket bog sites in Donegal, Leitrim, Sligo , Mayo & Galway
- The project recognises the important part sustainable tourism has to play in protecting the future of boglands
- FI are a partner on WAN and are tasked with the following:

-Preparation of guidelines for the sustainable presentation and management of tourist access to Protected Sites

- Organisation of Community Workshops to maximise the potential in nature for local tourism



*Guidelines for the Sustainable Presentation
and Management of Tourist Access to Natura
2000 Sites*



<https://www.wildatlanticnature.ie/>

LIFE on Machair (LOM)

- LOM is a five-year environmental project worth €7.4 million
- Protect & restore machair systems in Ireland
- Machair – unique & rare coastal system found only in North-West of Ireland & Scotland, important for birds, pollinators & flowering plants
- Under pressure from amenity use: wild camping, vehicles, fires, waste, dogs.
- FI are a partner on LOM and are tasked with the following:
 - Visitor Management Assessment for 9 project sites
 - Guidelines for Sustainable Recreation on Sensitive Coastal Sites
 - Deliver Community & LA Workshops



Machair system



EU Just Transition Fund Regenerative Tourism & Placemaking Scheme for Ireland's Midlands 2023-2026



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Arna chomhchistiú ag
an Aontas Eorpach

Co-funded by the
European Union



Tionól Reigiúnach Oirthir agus Lár-Tíre
Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly



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Ireland

Strategic Partnership with NPWS



Tourism Interpretative Masterplan for Ireland's National Parks & Nature Reserves



Experiencing the Wild Heart Of Ireland

**A Tourism Interpretative Master Plan
for Ireland's National Parks and Coole Park Nature Reserve**



New Trail Development – Connemara National Park



Part of the Strategic Partnership Initiative between Fáilte Ireland and the NPWS

Development of new entrance, trails and facilities that give visitors access to underused areas of the park

Will alleviate pressure on the existing trail network and infrastructure & improve visitor management and flow

Encourages visitors to stay in the park and surrounding areas for longer





Case Study - Glendalough & The Wicklow Mountains National Park

Glendalough & the Wicklow Mountains National Park



The Wicklow Mountains National Park is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Ireland, enjoying an international reputation for its spectacular dramatic glacial landscape, its unique monastic settlement, and its cultural, architectural and archaeological heritage.

Ecologically significant as an SAC and an SPA, within which nature and archaeology are interwoven and co-exist.

Glendalough within the park, dates to 600AD, has one of the best preserved medieval ecclesiastical sites in Ireland, of global significance.



A Living Landscape





Visitor Experience & Management Masterplan

Fáilte Ireland recognised the need to address these issues and challenges and to put Glendalough and the National Park on a sustainable path for future generations.

Striking a balance between environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects for this area.

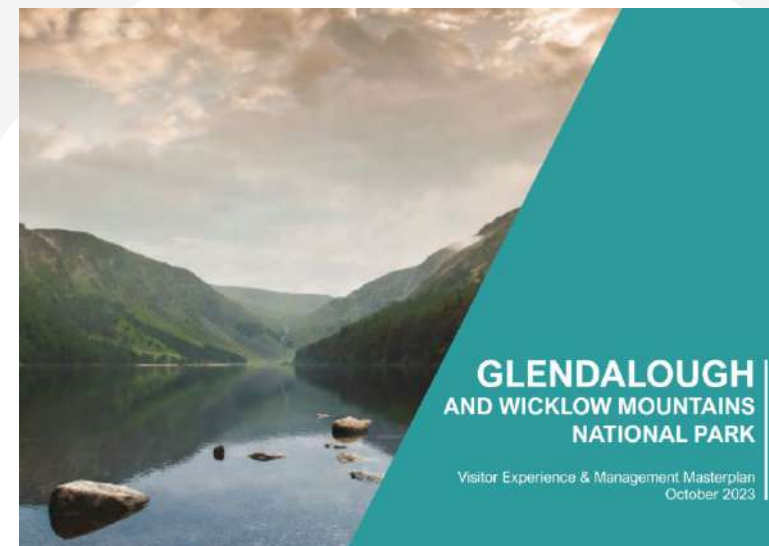
Working with our 5 other statutory partners we have developed a Visitor Experience and Management Masterplan (VEMMP).

This is a 7–10 year plan to provide a phased roadmap to protect and enhance the setting of these sites.

It was completed in late 2023.

The VEMMP aims to:

- ❑ Enhance
- ❑ Disperse
- ❑ Improve



Masterplan Implementation

3 phases of implementation/ delivery of the VEMMP

Phase 1 has commenced with good progress made to date

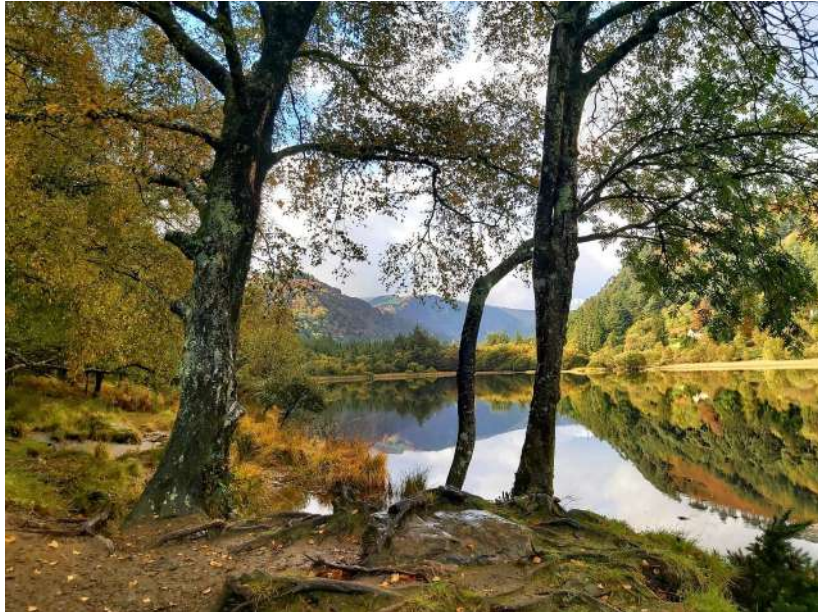


Considerations/Constraints/Challenges/ Risks to Delivery



To deliver the recommendations of the masterplan to support Glendalough and the NP to become a more sustainable tourism destination.

We need to understand and address these factors.



Delivery Mechanisms



Best Practice and Replication

Can this be a model of visitor experience and management practices that can be replicated in other destinations?

What are the principles that can be applied elsewhere?

- Master planning - to address challenges in a planned & consultative process, building consensus & collaboration to deliver
- Governance - multi stakeholder, round table approach, top of agenda
- Data collection - to inform policy & decision making
- Strategic - look to a variety of funding mechanisms
- Monitor & measure - impact & learnings



Thank you!