

# GEOPARKLIFE PROGRESS REPORT

## ACTION B1 TOURISM ENTERPRISES

### 1. Action B1 Aims:

To improve the environmental impact of enterprises

To improve the economic impact of enterprises

To improve resource planning for the enterprise

To facilitate implementation of new activities by enterprises

### 2. Projects and Actions:

Through GeoparkLIFE, the following projects have been progressed:

1. A Geopark Sustainable Code of Practice for Tourism has been introduced that seeks to define the broad environmental management practices that would be expected of all tourism enterprises.
2. A training programme has been developed (and delivered twice) that is designed to support enterprises in adopting the Geopark Sustainable Code of Practice. The programme has been reviewed, evaluated and further refined for delivery to further tourism enterprises between October 2014 and January 2015. See Appendix A and Appendix B for details.
3. Of 52 enterprises that participated in the training programme, 47 submitted evidence of adoption of the Geopark Sustainable Code of Practice. Approximately 15% of these enterprises would need to implement further measures in order to reach a satisfactory performance level within the Code of Practice.
4. A template for independently monitoring the Code of Practice Submissions was developed and implemented. This will be subject to refinement over the next number of months.
5. The Marketing Committee of the Burren Ecotourism Network has worked closely with Geopark personnel to execute a multi-faceted destination marketing strategy, using the Geopark logo as the umbrella brand.
6. As part of this strategy and also dovetailing with the project's objective of engaging with the local community, a significant public launch event, "The Burren Tourism Story", was held in March 2013. With the objective of informing the local business and resident community of the sustainable visitor experiences offered in the region, the event attracted more than 200 local participants and proved to be a highly motivational and energising experience. All Network members showcased their offering and a panel of inspirational guest speakers offered insight, advice and guidance to the assembly.
7. A strong business case for membership of the Burren Ecotourism Network and the Geopark Sustainable Code of Practice was successfully made, with a further 23

enterprises joining the existing 29 full members of the Burren Ecotourism Network in January 2014.

8. Applications were prepared for two international sustainable tourism awards and the Geopark was shortlisted as a finalist in each of those (The World Tourism for Tomorrow Awards and the World Responsible Tourism Awards).
9. The European Tourism Indicator System has been adopted as the framework for analysing the sustainable destination initiatives within the Geopark region; the Geopark continues to be a pilot destination for the system with Geopark personnel sharing experiences with a number of host destinations in Brussels in July of this year.

### 3. Performance to date against B1 Indicators:

A survey of enterprises who participated in the Code of Practice Training programme yielded the results below. This data will be complemented by data arising from the Burren Visitor Survey which is currently underway.

**OVERALL INDICATOR FOR B1: 100 enterprises to complete a training programme of 2000 training days.**

Overall Performance Year 1: 52 enterprises had the opportunity to participate in a total of 504 training days. (not all training days were relevant to all businesses)

#### COMPONENT INDICATORS

**Environmental Component: the use of environmental management techniques by the tourism enterprises, comparing pre-training to post-training.**

- 45% felt that the training programme had *significantly enhanced* their awareness of environmental management techniques and resources.
- 52% felt that the training programme had *somewhat enhanced* their awareness of environmental management techniques and resources. (i.e. a total of 97% reporting an enhancement of some level)
- 44% have measured and recorded specific savings since before the programme began while a further 20% were already doing this before the programme (36% however did not record any specific savings).
- 80% found establishing baselines was a useful management tool; 5% found that it wasn't. 8% did not manage to establish a baseline at all. A further 8% were new this year and so could not establish a baseline yet.
- 87% of enterprises felt that they had lessened their environmental impact as a result of the programme.
- 97% found the Code of Practice to be a useful and effective standard of environmental good practice in the Geopark.
- 44% of enterprises currently hold independent certification; 89% would like to maintain or obtain certification in the future.

**Economic Component: attitudes and beliefs of enterprise managers and owners as to whether or not their business has been strengthened as a result of the programme.**

- 66% of participating enterprises felt that *local awareness* of their business had increased somewhat as a result of their participation in the Network while 11% felt it had increased significantly.
- 57% of participating enterprises felt that *national awareness* of their business had increased somewhat as a result of their participation in the Network while 5% felt it had increased significantly.
- For 72% of enterprises, 2013 saw an increase in business on the previous year; for 19% their business was unchanged versus 2012 and 8% were down on 2012.
- 72% of enterprises expect an increase in business in 2014, 5% expect a decrease in business, while 10% expect no change.
- 77% were either *very confident* or *fairly confident* in the long-term sustainability of their tourism enterprise.
- 79% felt that their business had been generally strengthened as a result of the programme.

**Resource Planning Component:**      **the number of enterprises preparing new business plans and the extent to which the environmental themes are integrated into those plans.**

- 54% of enterprises currently have a business plan (of any sort), 46% do not. Only 17% of respondents indicated that environmental or sustainable themes were integrated into their business plans.

**Implementation Component:**      **the number of enterprises undertaking some new activity as a result of the programme, with descriptions of these activities.**

- 42% (14) felt they had engaged in new commercial activity as a result of their participation in B.E.N.; 58% (19) had not. 16 businesses (33%) skipped this question.
- When asked about the use of various environmental management tools in their business pre- and post-training:

**OVERVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT TOOLS  
PRE-AND POST-TRAINING**

–	a) already existed pre-training –	b) exists now post- training –	Total Respondents –
– Waste Measurement & Monitoring System	41.67%	61.11%	36
– Water Measurement & Monitoring System	24.24%	75.76%	33
– Water Protection Management Plan	39.39%	60.61%	33
– Energy Measurement & Monitoring System	35.14%	64.86%	37
– A documented Environmental Policy	32.50%	70.00%	40
– A current Environmental Action Plan	22.50%	80.00%	40
– A documented Green Purchasing Policy	31.58%	73.68%	38
– A Sustainable Transport information section on your website	22.22%	77.78%	36
– A Leave No Trace message on your website	16.67%	83.33%	

#### 4. Proposed Work Programme 2014-17

A broad work programme for Action B1 Tourism Enterprises is given a broad timeline in Table 1 below. The work programme follows a cycle of 1) recruitment 2) retention 3) Training Provision 4) Training Review & Refinement 5) Marketing and 6) Evaluation & Reporting.

	Q2 14	Q3 14	Q4 14	Q1 15	Q2 15	Q3 15	Q4 15	Q1 16	Q2 16	Q3 16	Q4 16	Q1 17	Q2 17	Q3 17
Retention & Recruitment														
Training														
Review & Refinement														
Marketing														
Evaluation & Reporting														

**Recruitment:** Seek to attract new participants in each of the next three training windows: 2014-15; 2015-16; 2016-17. At this point, a target of a total of 100 enterprises in the Network seems very optimistic. In 2014, we expect to welcome up to 10 new members (approximately half previous intake). However, within those 10 members, the main tourism enterprises in the area not previously involved have opted to join i.e. Aillwee Cave, Caherconnell Stone Fort as well as the Michael Cusack Centre and Doolin 2 Aran Ferries.

**Retention:** Seek to retain all current network members. Allowing for retirement and unforeseen circumstances, it can be expected that 5-10 current members will leave the Network in any given year.

**Training:** Refine Code of Practice training programme, support materials and online resources; develop relevant business capacity and networking training supports; introduce training in the area of sustainable business planning; invest in creating capable and effective trainers and mentors within the Network. Invest in strengthening the networking capacity of the members in order to drive further economic benefit.

**Marketing:** Deliver an integrated marketing strategy. This strategy needs to be reviewed and refined annually in conjunction with the Marketing Committee of the Burren Ecotourism Network.

**Evaluation:** All programmes and activities to include inbuilt evaluation mechanisms. In particular, the evaluation and data collection generated through primary survey research can be timetabled as follows:

	Q2 14	Q3 14	Q4 14	Q1 15	Q2 15	Q3 15	Q4 15	Q1 16	Q2 16	Q3 16	Q4 16	Q1 17	Q2 17	Q3 17
<b>Visitor Survey</b>														
<b>Resident Survey</b>														
<b>BEN Survey</b>														
<b>Enterprise Survey</b>														

**Reporting:** Overall experiences and effectiveness to be formally reported annually.

# APPENDIX 1: Code of Practice Training Programme

## October 2014 – January 2015

### CODE OF PRACTICE PROGRAMME – Oct 2014-Jan 2015.

	Date	Topic	Time	Notes
1	Tues 21 <sup>st</sup> October	Introduction to the Geopark Sustainable Code of Practice for Tourism	10.00-1.30pm	
2	Tues 28 <sup>th</sup> October	Energy Management & Climate Change	10.00-1.30pm	
3	Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup> November	Leave No Trace Awareness Session	10.00am-4.00pm	
4	Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup> November	Green Purchasing & Sustainable Transport	10.00-1.30pm	
5	Tues 18 <sup>th</sup> November	Water Conservation	10.00-1.00pm	
	Tues 18 <sup>th</sup> November	Water Protection & Wastewater Management	2.00pm-4.00pm	
6	Tues 25 <sup>th</sup> November	Waste Management	10.00-1.30pm	
7	Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> December	Visitor Education & Visitor Management	10.00-2.30pm	
8	Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> December	Writing Environmental Policy & Environmental Action Plans (targets).	10.00-12.00pm	
9	Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> December	Preparing your first Code of Practice Submission	12.30-1.30pm	
10	Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup> January	Conservation in the Burren	10.00-1.30pm	
11	Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> January	Leave No Trace Awareness (repeat)	10.00am-4.00pm	

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF FIRST CODE OF PRACTICE SUBMISSIONS: TUESDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY**

### NETWORK DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME – Oct 2014-Dec 2014

	Date	Topic	Times	Notes
1	Tues 23 <sup>rd</sup> September	Destination Vision & Strategy Day	10.00-1.00pm	
2	Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> October	Network to Get Work	10.00-1.30pm	
3	Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> October	Understanding our Markets Building Referral Teams	10.00-5.00pm	
8	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> December	GeoparkLIFE Awards Night	7.30pm	

# APPENDIX 2: Code of Practice Training Programme

## Learning Outcomes 2014-15

	WORKSHOP TITLE	LEARNING OUTCOMES
1	Introduction to the Geopark Sustainable Code of Practice for Tourism	<p>Upon completion of this workshop, the tourism enterprises will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have a strong awareness of climate change issues and of how greenhouse gas emissions from all sources controlled by the business can be minimized or offset.</li> <li>2. Be familiar with the Code of Practice Toolkit, online resources and evaluation process.</li> <li>3. Appreciate the purpose and recommended format of an effective Environmental Policy.</li> <li>4. Be equipped with the necessary guidelines, templates and other resources to enable them to draft an environmental policy that is appropriate to their own business.</li> <li>5. Appreciate the critical importance of an Environmental Action Plan and understand its key components i.e. baselines, benchmarks and targets.</li> </ol>
2.	Energy Management	<p>Upon completion of this workshop , the tourism enterprises will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have a strong awareness of the global, national and regional imperative for improved energy management.</li> <li>2. Understand how reducing energy consumption will reduce their carbon emissions and know how to record this.</li> <li>3. Know how to analyse their electricity bills, identify inappropriate charges and check if they are on the correct tariff.</li> <li>4. Be able to record energy consumption in KWh and cost for their baseline year and each subsequent year.</li> <li>5. Understand the concept of energy benchmarks and be able to select an appropriate benchmark for their business which can be compared to best practice benchmarks.</li> <li>6. Be able to set up a system for tracking energy consumption on a monthly/quarterly basis.</li> </ol>
3.	Leave No Trace	<p>Upon completion of this workshop, the tourism enterprises will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have heard why they and visitors should 'Leave No Trace'.</li> <li>2. Understand the 7 Principles of Leave No Trace.</li> <li>3. Understand the personal responsibility and choice-</li> </ol>



		<p>based approach of Leave No Trace.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Appreciate the 'grey areas' that arise in the drive to 'make good choices'.</li> <li>5. Know how they can spread and embed the Leave No Trace message amongst staff and visitors.</li> <li>6. Be able to access Leave No Trace resources online and on the Geopark intranet.</li> </ol>
<b>4.</b>	Green Purchasing & Sustainable Transport	<p>Upon completion of this workshop, the tourism enterprises will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand the economic, environmental and social dimensions and implications of company purchasing policies</li> <li>2. understand the range of ways in which they can increase the percentage of purchases that are locally-sourced, fair-trade, recycled and/or eco-friendly</li> <li>3. Understand the opportunities and constraints associated with developing sustainable transport infrastructure and supports in the Geopark</li> <li>4. Know the range and availability of sustainable transport options to and around the Geopark</li> <li>5. Understand the range of ways in which they can integrate a sustainable transport message into their business communications</li> <li>6. Know how to communicate sustainable transport options to visitors before and during their visit.</li> <li>7. Understand how they can set appropriate, realistic and meaningful targets for continuous improvement in the areas of green purchasing and sustainable transport.</li> </ol>
<b>5.</b>	Water Conservation	<p>Upon completion of this workshop, the tourism enterprises will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be aware of the national and regional context and relevant legislation for water conservation.</li> <li>2. Understand how conserving water will contribute to reducing their carbon emissions.</li> <li>3. Know how, why and when to analyse their water bills.</li> <li>4. Be able to establish water consumption in cubic metres (or litres) and cost for their baseline year and each subsequent year.</li> <li>5. Understand the concept of water consumption benchmarks and be able to select an appropriate benchmark for their business which can be compared to best practice benchmarks.</li> <li>6. Be able to set up a system for tracking water consumption on a periodic basis.</li> </ol>
<b>6.</b>	Water Protection & Wastewater Management	<p>Upon completion of this workshop, the tourism enterprises will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be aware of the national and regional context and relevant legislation for water protection and</li> </ol>

		<p>wastewater management.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Understand the importance of water protection and learn ways that the business can help protect water quality in its area.</li> <li>3. Understand the importance of adequately managing and maintaining their wastewater systems</li> <li>4. Be equipped with an approach and resources to enable them to effectively manage and maintain their waste water systems.</li> </ol>
<b>7.</b>	Waste Management	<p>Upon completion of this workshop, the tourism enterprises will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand how reducing consumption and associated waste will contribute to reducing their carbon emissions.</li> <li>2. Be aware of the national and regional context and relevant legislation relating to waste management.</li> <li>3. Know how to analyse their waste bills.</li> <li>4. Be able to establish waste generation in kg and in cost for their baseline year and each subsequent year.</li> <li>5. Understand the concept of waste benchmarks and be able to select an appropriate benchmark for their business which can be compared to best practice benchmarks.</li> <li>6. Be able to set up a system for tracking waste generation on a monthly/quarterly basis.</li> </ol>
<b>8.</b>	Visitor Education & Visitor Management	<p>Upon completion of this workshop, the tourism enterprises will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Appreciate the importance of interpretation and education as a component of the tourism product in the Geopark.</li> <li>2. Be able to explain the importance of conservation within the outdoor tourism product in the region.</li> <li>3. Be able to develop a formal interpretation policy that enables them interpret nature as an integral part of their outdoor experience.</li> <li>4. Know the range of information resources available to them to enhance their knowledge of the Burren &amp; Cliffs of Moher Geopark (geology, agriculture, archaeology, folklore, botany, biodiversity).</li> <li>5. Have a bank of practical information for managing visitors in the region e.g. parking, transport options, walking routes, Leave No Trace principles...</li> <li>6. When in the landscape, understand their responsibilities to visitors and sites, particularly in relation to visitor safety and quality of experience.</li> </ol>
<b>9.</b>	Targets & Environmental Action Plans	<p>Upon completion of this workshop, the tourism enterprises will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand the critical importance of setting targets as part of their Environmental Management</li> </ol>

		<p>Systems.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Understand how targets as defined in an Environmental Action Plan provide the framework for continuous improvement and annual review.</li> <li>3. Know how to develop appropriate and realistic targets based on defined baselines and benchmarks for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Energy Management/Consumption</li> <li>○ Water Conservation</li> <li>○ Water Protection &amp; Wastewater Management</li> <li>○ Waste reduction, re-use and recycling</li> <li>○ Green Purchasing</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Be able to articulate appropriate and realistic targets that provide incremental environmental benefit to the Geopark for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Contribution to Conservation</li> <li>○ Promotion &amp; Development of Sustainable Transport</li> <li>○ Visitor Education &amp; Visitor Management</li> <li>○ Enhanced Interpretation for Visitors</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>10.</b>	Conservation in the Burren & Cliffs of Moher Geopark	<p>Upon completion of this workshop, the tourism enterprises will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Appreciate that the conservation of the region's landscape is critical to the long-term environmental, economic and social sustainability of the Geopark.</li> <li>2. Understand the Principle of Additionality in respect of conservation contributions by the enterprise.</li> <li>3. Have identified ways in which both the enterprise individually and the Burren Ecotourism Network as a collective can make direct, tangible and incremental contributions to conservation in the Geopark.</li> <li>4. Be aware of the range of conservation-led programmes and organisations that are active in the Geopark.</li> <li>5. Appreciate the particular contribution of the local farming community both to the visitor experience and the conservation of the region.</li> </ol>