



LIFE Project Number
LIFE11/IEE/922

Progress Report
Covering the project activities from 01/06/2013 to 30/09/2014

Reporting Date
30/10/2014

LIFE+ PROJECT NAME or Acronym
Burren Tourism for Conservation

Data Project

Project location	Burren, County Clare, Ireland
Project start date:	01/10/2012
Project end date:	31/12/2017
Total budget	€ 2,225,245
EC contribution:	€1,108,872
(%) of eligible costs	50%

Data Beneficiary

Name Beneficiary	Clare County Council
Contact person	Ms Carol Gleeson
Postal address	Clare County Council, Ennistymon, County Clare, Ireland
Telephone	+353-(0) 87 2234263
Fax:	
E-mail	cgleeson@burren.ie
Project Website	www.burren.ie

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2. List of abbreviations

CCC	Clare County Council
SD	Shannon Development
FI	Failte Ireland
GSI	Geological Survey of Ireland
NMS	National Monuments Service
UCD	University College Dublin
HC	Heritage Council
NUIG	National University of Ireland Galway
OPW	Office of Public Works

3. Executive summary

3.1 General progress.

Progress has been very satisfactory in many respects. In B1 (tourism enterprises) training has been delivered to 51 enterprises in the Burren and active engagement of the stakeholders has been secured. A major event on the Burren Tourism Story in March 2014 attracted considerable interest and helped strengthen the foundations of the project. In B2 (monuments & habitats) site selection has been completed and site assessments and baselines (visitor profiles, observation studies, environmental assessments) are now being established for the seven chosen sites. In B3 (conservation management) the original module-based approach has been modified to focus on case-studies and skills development with the aim of strengthening and developing community involvement in conservation practices. This change caused a delay in the implementation of the actions.

In Action C (monitoring & evaluation) work is in progress to finalise indicators and standards for each action B1, B2 and B3. Baselines are being established through enterprise surveys, visitor surveys, observation studies and site assessment reports. An evaluation of tourism and conservation policy frameworks is underway. The European Tourism Indicator System is being used as a framework for sustainable development. In Action D (communication & dissemination), the project was launched at a major conference in October 2013, the project web site is evolving as the project develops, information leaflets have been distributed and information points are being updated to communicate the LIFE programme.

So far, total expenditure of only 12% of the total has been made, although this will accelerate substantially in the coming period. However, this expenditure may also be an under-estimate as some time-sheets have yet to be included.

3.2 Assessment as to whether the project objectives and work plan are still viable

The project objectives are to strengthen the integration of tourism and natural heritage, reconciling tourism development with conservation of biodiversity and cultural heritage in the Burren. These objectives are still viable.

The objective for tourism enterprises (B1) is to strengthen the capability of enterprises in the use of natural resources and related aspects of conservation. This objective is still valid. The four steps envisaged are environmental impact, economic impact, resource planning and implementation. One change in approach is that these four steps were envisaged to happen sequentially (i.e. one after the other). However, they are now being implemented concurrently (i.e. throughout the life of the project) as this reflects better the issues of the enterprises. The expected result of 100 enterprises with strengthened capability in tourism conservation will be achieved.

The objective for monuments and habitats (B2) is to develop a few focal points. These were planned as 7 in number, with site selection, assessment, definition of work

programme, action, maintenance and evaluation. The objective and target is still valid. However, the process of site selection took much longer than expected due to greater complexities than expected. But site selection has now been completed and further steps will be implanted rapidly to ensure that the project is on target.

The objective for conservation management (B3) is to develop models of best practice in the management of heritage sites. This objective is still valid. The approach was to be through training interventions with case studies and modules to be tested on sites. This approach is being modified by concentrating first on case studies and developing modules and training out of the case studies. This adjustment in approach is necessary due to the diversity in local conditions.

3.3 Problems encountered.

Major problems in B2 (monuments & habitats) were that the selection of sites took longer than expected due to the complexities involved. In B3 (conservation management) the original modular-based approach was found to be inadequate as a more community-focused was required. This approach has now been modified by focusing on different case studies and allowing the modules to emerge out of that. Because of these changes to approach, NUIG proposes to withdraw from the project. Also, UCD had difficulty developing an appropriate approach for the policy review but this has now been resolved. In the light of these and other adjustments, we propose to submit a modification request at the appropriate time.

4. Administrative Aspects

4.1 Work of the project manager and beneficiaries

There were two meetings of the project steering group in 18 September 2013 and 2 April 2014. These were less frequent than in the first period as the project had made considerable progress in defining key aims so that the need for main meetings was now less pressing. Minutes are in appendix 5. With less main meetings, it was therefore decided that more meetings should be held of sub-groups, focusing on particular topics, specifically B2 (sites and monuments) and B3 (conservation management). The B2 meetings were held on 14th May, 3rd September. The B3 meetings were held on 9th May, 23rd May, 3rd July. Working meetings with key partners on the B1 training programme were held in July and September.

The project plan envisaged the advisory group as representing the main community and private sector interests affected by the project. The advisory group has been established and has worked informally with the project. However, experience showed that the size of both advisory and steering group was too large and that a more targeted approach would be better. Consequently, we now propose to re-structure the advisory group into a panel and bring the members of the panel directly into the sub-groups. This integrates the advisory group better into the details of the project.

On 25 June we were delighted to welcome the LIFE unit and members of the Astrale External Monitoring Team.

Key tasks undertaken by the associated beneficiaries (AB) have been as follows:

<i>AB</i>	<i>Tasks undertaken</i>
SD	Following government decision to transfer tourism functions to Failte Ireland, SD withdrew from the project. FI have accepted the transfer of functions under the partnership agreement. However, there may be implications in the details of the resource allocation and this will be addresses in the forthcoming modification proposal.
FI	Support to sustainable tourism development through B1 and development of B2 monitoring and visitor survey
GSI	Work on geological aspects of B2 sites and case studies in B3
NMS	Work on specification and review of B2 sites and possible case studies for B3
UCD	Preparation of terms of reference for policy impact study on all actions
HC	Work on approaches to both B2 sites and B3 conservation management
NUIG	Following restructuring of the B3 task, NUIG have proposed to withdraw from the project
OPW	Assessment of sites for inclusion in B2 and development of site assessments and monitoring programmes

The depreciation rules for CCC are set by local government regulations. The current deprecation rate for equipment is 20%

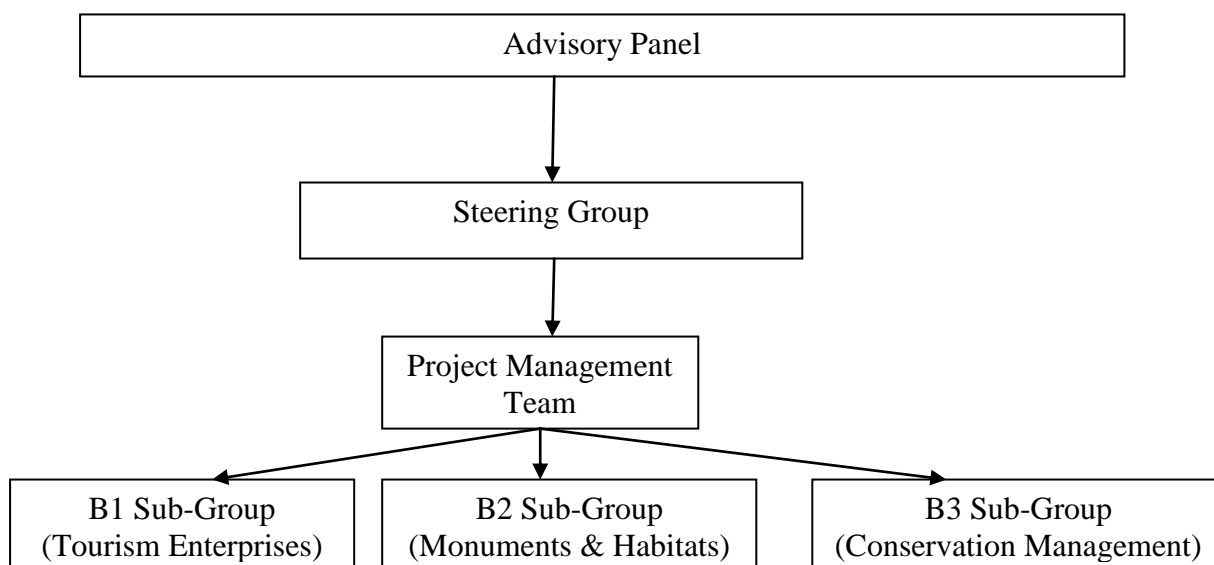
All partners are public organisations and have appropriate VAT status under Irish legislation.

4.2 Changes in the project's structure

Two significant changes have taken place and these will be included in the modification request at the appropriate time.

- Under government decision, SD tourism functions have been transferred to FI and SD has withdrawn from the project.
- NUIG has found that its approach and objectives are not appropriate to the revised B3 (conservation management) action and propose to withdraw from the project

4.3 Organogramme



4.4 Reports delivered since the start of the project

Report	Scheduled delivery	Actual delivery
Inception report	March 2013	June 2013
Progress report	Sept 2014	Oct 2014
Mid-term report	Feb 2016	Feb 2016 (planned)
Progress report		Mar 2017 (planned)
Final report	August 2017	Mar 2018 (planned)

The Commission's comments of 2 Oct 2013 on the Inception Report have been addressed in the preparation of this report. Also, the Commission's comments of 19 August 2014 have been incorporated.

Both Inception Report and this Progress Report have been delivered. The original application had envisaged the final report in August 2017. This is more appropriate for Mar 2018, and thus a further progress report will be required. Although only 12% of the budget has been spent so far, we envisage that 150% of the pre-payment (i.e. 60% of budget) will be used for the scheduled mid-term report. However, the discussion around our forthcoming modification request will need to review this in more detail

4.5 Request for modification

Following feedback on the progress report from LIFE the modification request will be prepared and submitted in first quarter of 2015.

5. Technical Aspects

5.1 Reports of actions

5.1.1 B1 Tourism enterprises (B1)

5.1.1.1 What has been done

This action in the project focused on tourism enterprises: improving environmental impact; improving economic impact; resource planning for the enterprise; implementing the plan. The first period reported in the Inception Report concentrated on developing guidelines for action, developing an approach to environmental impact and promoting the project to the enterprises. This present period marked the first stages of implementation in partnership with the enterprises.

Training was delivered to 51 member enterprises of the Burren Eco-tourism Network (BEN) in environmental management for tourism enterprises. Topics included the areas of waste, water and energy management, 'leave no trace'. Economic benefits of environmental actions, such as energy savings and waste reduction, featured prominently. The output of the training was the completion of environmental action plans for each enterprise. A number of guest speakers provided content through LAPN (Local Authority Prevention Network) working with the Environmental Protection Agency.

Key issues arising from the environmental training were the need for ongoing environmental education, particularly in relation to the fact that enterprises are at different levels of environmental awareness and the training must reflect that variation in starting points. For example, many enterprises found the environmental code of practice challenging but they are committed to further work with the improved consciousness of the potential benefits to their businesses. A further conclusion was that there was considerable expertise among the enterprises with substantial potential for the BEN group to seek further funding support through the Irish system, such as collective energy grants from Sustainable Energy Ireland. Details of the training programme and participants are provided in annex 2.

Following the training, a significant showcase event was organised in March entitled the "Burren Tourism Story". This showcased the tourism products developed by the BEN group and reflected the work undertaken by the group in terms of training and cooperation, demonstrating the economic added value that has been achieved. The event helped to

consolidate the work done so far and engage the stakeholders. 200 people participated in the event.

A specific outcome was the development of some new collaborative projects in sustainable tourism stimulated by BEN as a result of the training and related activities: activity trail, food trail, walking programme and a sustainable transport programme ('hostel hop').

As a result of these activities, membership of BEN has increased from 30 at the start of the LIFE project in 2012 to 50 by October 2014. These can be regarded as the 'active' enterprises. In addition, there are a further 50-100 'involved' enterprises who participate at occasional events and who will benefit from other similar activities in the future.

5.1.1.2 Problems

Results to date have exceeded expectations with no significant problems. The interest displayed by the enterprises has been substantial and the close link between environmental actions and economic benefits has been well demonstrated. A 'destination-led' mentality has been successfully promoted.

5.1.1.3 Progress review

As explained in the Inception Report, the environmental impact, economic impact and resource planning will continue to the end of the project, with implementation taking a greater and greater role as further progress is made.

B1 TOURISM ENTERPRISES		
Indicator	Project plan	Actual
<i>Deliverables</i>		
Report on tourism enterprises	Dec 2016	Dec 2016 (planned)
<i>Milestones</i>		
Completion of environmental impact stage	Dec 2013	To be continued throughout the project
Completion of economic impact stage	Dec 2013	To be continued throughout the project
Resource planning	Dec 2013	To be continued throughout the project
Implementing the plan	Dec 2016	Dec 2016 (planned)

5.1.1.4 Achievement of objectives

The aim of a tourism conservation programme for 100 enterprises is retained, with an intensive focus on the 'active' 50 enterprises and other supports to the 'involved' group of 50+ enterprises; a period of consolidation and reinforcement may be of more benefit to long term impact of the programme. Better-than-expected quality of results would compensate for

this. Quality of results will be indicated by the intensity of participation in a LIFE activities by the enterprises.

5.1.2 B2 Monuments and habitats (B2)

The aim here is to develop a few priority focal points, for testing best practice in visitor management in sensitive locations, such as geological and archaeological sites, monuments along walking routes, small car parks, footpaths and natural habitat sites. There are five major steps: site selection and assessment; definition of work programme; action; maintenance and monitoring; report and evaluation.

5.1.2.1 What has been done

For the first period, the Inception Report gave details of the completion of site identification, definition of evaluation criteria and field reviews.

In this present period, final site selection was completed. Key criteria were the need for highly visible demonstration projects, exemplifying the three contrasting locations of mass tourism, general interest tourism and special interest tourism

Site	Reason for selection
<i>Mass Tourism</i>	
BlackHead/Fanore	Heavily-used high amenity site on coastal touring route with access, land-use and conservation issues.
<i>General interest tourism</i>	
Aillwee Cave	Mature and well-developed visitor attraction with conservation issues
An Rath ring fort and Cahermore stone fort	Undeveloped adjacent sites with high potential and access issues
Poulnabrone dolmen	Mature attractions with growing visitor pressures and increasing demand for added services
Carron Church	Distinctive ecclesiastical monument on touring route with serious conservation issues
<i>Special interest tourism</i>	
Burren National Park	Park of international significance with access issues
Slieve Carron Nature Reserve	Sensitive site of local cultural significance under increasing visitor pressure

Work is now under way on this coordinated by external expert Zena Hoctor. All locations are currently being assessed as follows:

- I. On-site appraisal: Approach, facilities, information on site. Identify how visitors are directed. Condition of site and identification of visible recreational pressure points.
- II. Observation studies (see C Monitoring) Visitor movement and activities.
- III. Visitor Surveys (see C Monitoring) including visitor attitudes to the site, previous and present knowledge and perception of conservation issues, behavioural influences (if any).
- IV. Agency reports; condition reports, management structures, plans and strategies.
- V. Landowner interviews on issues at the site and attitude towards visitors and their behaviour Coach Tourism survey (see C Monitoring); use of sites, ecological impacts at 3 demonstration sites, bus driver's attitudes.
- VI. Agency interviews on site issues, policy implications (UCD) and steps forward.
- VII. Selection of specific, measurable physical, environmental and social indicators
- VIII. Development of on-going monitoring programme. (see C Monitoring).
- IX. Development of Working Programme for each site.

5.1.2.2 Problems

The Inception Report had envisaged completion of site selection, definition of work programme and commencement of measures by Sept 2014. In reality, only the site selection has been completed. This was because the issue of site assessment was more complex than previously anticipated. A total of 20 sites were reviewed with 7 criteria and 8 beneficiaries involved in the discussions. Thus the process of finalising the agreed list inevitably took longer than expected. However, now that the final list is fully agreed and adequately reflects the demonstration requirements of the project, the next phases of definition of work programmes and commencement of measures will proceed relatively quickly.

5.1.2.3 Progress review

The site assessment has been completed. While, by appearance, this is 20 months later than anticipated, many of the information collection and evaluation activities to be included in the action phase were incorporated in the assessment. Thus, the completion of the action will proceed relatively quickly in the forthcoming year.

B2 MONUMENTS AND HABITATS		
Indicator	Project plan	Actual
<i>Deliverables</i>		
Report on monuments and habitats	Dec 2016	Dec 2016 (planned)
<i>Milestones</i>		
Site assessment	March 2013	Oct 2014
Definition of work programme	June 2013	Dec 2014 (planned)

Completion of action	Dec 2016	Dec 2016 (planned)
Maintenance and monitoring	Dec 2016	Dec 2016 (planned)
Report and evaluation	Dec 2016	Dec 2016 (planned)

5.1.2.4 Achievement of objectives

The focus on the seven sites is the result of careful and systematic planning. This will provide an excellent foundation for further work, and a better basis than if the selection phase had been rushed. Work is now being undertaken on all location through site assessment, observation studies, visitor survey, people counters installed, condition reports on monuments, coach tourism impacts, landowner interviews, agency interviews, development of indicators, development of work programme, development of monitoring programme.

5.1.3 Conservation management (B3)

5.1.3.1 What has been done

In the approved project, the conservation management action aimed to develop models of best practice in the management of key heritage and natural sites. This will build up expertise of professionals and volunteers through training and case studies. The action will aim to develop training interventions and introduce case studies based on this foundation. Key steps have been defined as modules, case studies and evaluation. The Inception Report noted that work had commenced on the development of the modules. However, in the light of experience, the report emphasised that the approach needed to be re-examined with an increased emphasis on practical modules focused on the needs of the user groups and the active engagement of these groups.

Further work was undertaken in the development of this approach, with the re-focused objectives: to develop the skills base of all stakeholders in the understanding, management and conservation of natural and cultural heritage; reinforce Actions B1 and B2; strengthen community support of, and activism in, conservation; assess and analyse current policy that impacts this action and make recommendations on future integration of policies.

<i>User Group</i>	<i>Approach</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
Tourism Enterprises	Code of Practice;	Adopt a 'Road Meithel' (cooperative approach along routes)	Manual Best Practice Guides Case studies
Burren Conservation Volunteers	Training and development	Actions at Demonstration sites	Operational manual and tool kits Recording, reporting

			and response system
Landowners	Strengthening links between tourism businesses and landowners;	Information and awareness of rights and responsibilities, legislation Linkages to Community Projects	Practical training programme and facilitation.
Tidy Towns groups	Engaging tidy town groups with appropriate conservation activities	Case study with Ballyvaughan	Practical Tool Kit Guidelines
Local conservation groups	Skills training and monitoring around methodologies,	Pilot with Kilinaboy and ‘An Cabhail Mor’ (This becomes a demonstration site)	Trained personnel in traditional building skills; Add to demonstration sites
Local tourism development groups	Developing a programme of research and information provision on key aspects of the Burren;	Case study with Lisdoonvarna Secondary School and Lisdoonvarna Failte	Schools programme, Exhibition and information leaflets
All stakeholders	Mapping current policies that impact on partners and programme and how they are managed locally	Pilot exercises to address the interfaces	Recommendations based on pilot/case studies

5.1.3.2 Problems

Major problems were the need to re-consider the methodologies. In hindsight, the idea of developing individual modules did not reflect the diversity of the user-groups: too much emphasis had been placed on “top-down” and a “one-size-fits-all” approach. It was excessively remote from the needs of the user-groups. This has now been resolved by a stronger emphasis on building on the capabilities of the user groups and enhancing their skill levels in conservation management from their present starting point (“bottom-up” and “many-sizes”). This approach also places more emphasis on the divergent needs and potential of the user groups, and piloting creative systems to respond to these needs. New modules will evolve out of this.

5.1.3.3 Progress review

Case-study design is now being developed. Instead of a single set of modules, the modules will evolve through practice with each individual user-group, with individual modules reflecting the exigencies of each group.

B3 CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT		
Indicator	Project plan	Actual
<i>Deliverables</i>		
Report on conservation management	Dec 2016	Dec 2016 (planned)
<i>Milestones</i>		
Completion of modules	May 2014	Modules subsumed into case studies
Completion of case studies	Dec 2016	Dec 2016 (planned)
Evaluation	Dec 2016	Dec 2016 (planned)

5.1.3.4 Achievement of objectives

The original project plan projected completion of modules by June 2014 with case studies following to implement the modules. The new approach merges the modules with the case studies, so that the modules emerge through the case studies, and the case studies are used as the building-blocks of the modules. The user groups and their associated actions listed in the chart previously thus represent the case-studies. This is a substantial improvement of the methods envisaged to secure the outcome of the project plan goals for completion of conservation management actions.

5.1.4 Monitoring (C)

5.1.4.1 What has been done

Work is already under way on the monitoring actions:

Tourism enterprises (B1):

- Enterprise survey
- Code of practice submissions
- Elements of the visitor survey
- Coach tourism survey

Monuments and habitats (B2):

- People-counters installed at demonstration sites.
- Failte Ireland have commissioned external experts to undertake observation studies of environmental impacts of the 'Wild Atlantic Way' and this study is focusing on the LIFE demonstration sites
- Visitor surveys are being carried out at the B2 demonstration sites.
- Coach tourism survey

Conservation management (B3)

- No monitoring actions yet

Socio-economic impact

- A survey of residents is being designed for implementation in late 2014.

Policy Impact

Research design by UCD was slower than anticipated but has now been completed, focusing on sustainable tourism through the integration of tourism and conservation policies, with the following components:

- 1) Desk study of current policies: attached in annex 4.
- 2) Field work on tourism and conservation challenges in tourism enterprises (B1), monuments and habitats (B2) and tourism conservation groups (B3): target completion in April 2015.
- 3) Recommendations for sustainable tourism at three levels - local, national, European: target completion in October 2015.
- 4) Mainstreaming of recommendations during 2016/17, through (a) local pilot initiatives in the Burren; (b) promotion of national policy improvements for sustainable tourism; (c) generation of a European discussion around sustainable tourism.

5.1.4.2 Problems

As most work had focused on initiating actions in the main tasks of B1, B2 and B3, the monitoring arrangements were inevitably slow to make equivalent progress. However, over recent months stronger momentum has been achieved and the monitoring tasks are now at implementation. Benchmarks will be achieved by December 2014.

5.1.4.3 Progress Review

C MONITORING		
Indicator	Project plan	Actual
<i>Deliverables</i>		
<i>Milestones</i>		
Impact report on tourism enterprises	Dec 2016	Dec 2016 (planned)
Impact report on monuments and habitats	Dec 2016	Dec 2016 (planned)
Impact report on conservation management	Dec 2016	Dec 2016 (planned)
Socio-economic impact	Dec 2016	Dec 2016 (planned)
Policy impact	Dec 2016	Dec 2016 (planned)

5.1.4.4 Achievement of objectives

Monitoring systems are now in place

5.1.5 Communications and dissemination (D)

5.1.5.1 What has been done

The launch conference was held on 17 October, 2013, attracting 200 participants. This gave a valuable opportunity not only to brief the public on the Burren Geopark LIFE project, but also to locate the project within an international context of conservation challenges.

A targeted communication system is being set up including demonstration site signage, farm infrastructure along trails, information points and other communications tools. Web site usage exceed 2,000 per month. 11 press releases have been issued

5.1.5.2 Problems

No significant problems have been reported

5.1.5.3 Progress review

Due to the delay with implementation of the B2 monuments and habitats and the restructuring of the B3 conservation management the timetable for some of the communications actions has been adjusted.

D COMMUNICATIONS		
Indicator	Project plan	Actual
<i>Deliverables</i>		
Layman's report	May 2017	May 2017 (planned)
After-LIFE communications	Dec 2016	Dec 2017 (planned)
Overall final report	Aug 2017	Mar 2108 (planned)
<i>Milestones</i>		
Project web site	April 2013	June 2013
LIFE information boards	Dec 2014	Feb 2015
Opening conference	Mar 2013	Oct 2013
Mid-term conference	Dec 2014	Oct 2015
Closing conference	Dec 2016	Oct 2017
Schools programme completed	June 2015	June 2016



5.1.5.4 Achievement of objectives

Communication have been successful in connecting the project with key target groups.

5.1.6 Project management

See section 4 “Administrative Aspects”

5.1.7 Networking with other LIFE projects

Networking has been established with two Irish LIFE projects: BurrenLIFE and the Woodland Restoration projects led by Coillte. This networking comprised information exchange. No networking established yet with LIFE project abroad but this is an issue that will addressed in the coming period. However, the project has a strong profile and linkages within the destinations managed under the European Geopark Network and in the Pilot programme of destinations engaging with the European Tourism Indicator System (supported by the Commission).

5.2 Envisaged progress until next report

<i>Action</i>	<i>Progress envisaged Oct 2014 to Feb 2016</i>
B1 Tourism enterprises	Provide more intensive training for group of ‘active’ enterprises; aiming to systematically improve the standard of sustainable practice within these enterprises; Develop case studies showing progress of enterprises on the path towards sustainability. Continue to organize events and information for ‘involved’ enterprises Streamline training programme Train trainers and mentors from within BEN
B2 Monuments & habitats	For each site: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete surveys• Agree indicators• Complete land-owner interviews• Complete agency reports• Set up monitoring programme• Agree works or measures to be undertaken• Implement works or measures
B3 Conservation management	For reach user group: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete design of case-study• Undertake training• Implement case studies

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate and adjust as required
C1 Monitoring	<p>B1: Complete enterprise surveys B2: complete observation and visitor surveys; implement monitoring programme B3: Establish monitoring system for case studies Socio-economic impact: complete survey of residents Complete first draft of full policy impact report</p>
D1 Project web site	Ongoing
D2 LIFE+ information boards	Established
D3 Layman's report	-
D4 Targeted communications	<p>Mid-term conference Awards applications. Improve information provision at visitor centres and information points. Tailor material and incentives for coach and taxi drivers and for accommodation providers. Implement schools awareness programme with transition year students. Utilise farm infrastructure to act as a message medium.</p>
D5 After-LIFE communication plan	-
E1 Project management	Hold two steering group meetings; hold meetings of sub-groups as required. Liaise directly with advisory panel
E2 Networking	Establish networking linkages with other LIFE projects in Europe

Planned	x	x	x	x															
<i>Actual</i>																			
Action																			
Planned			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x									
<i>Actual</i>																			
Maintenance & monitoring																			
Planned													x	x	x	x	x	x	
<i>Actual</i>																			
Report																	x	x	x
Planned																			
<i>Actual</i>																			
B3 Conservation management																			
Modules																			
Planned	x	x	x	x	x	x													
<i>Actual</i>																			
Case studies																			
Planned	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x								
<i>Actual</i>				x	x	x	x												
Evaluation																			
Planned			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x						
<i>Actual</i>																			
C1 Monitoring																			
Planned				x	x					x	x					x	x	x	x
<i>Actual</i>				x	x														
D1 Project web site																			

Planned			x																	
<i>Actual</i>			<i>x</i>																	
D2 LIFE+ information boards																				
Planned								x												
<i>Actual</i>								<i>x</i>												
D3 Layman's report																				
Planned																			x	x
<i>Actual</i>																				
D4 Targeted communications																				
Planned			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Actual</i>			<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>													
D5 After-LIFE comm's plan																				
Planned																				x
<i>Actual</i>																				
E1 Project management/monitoring																				
Planned	x		x	x	x					x	x	x				x	x	x	x	
<i>Actual</i>	<i>x</i>		<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>															
E2 Networking: other life projects																				
Planned			x			x											x			
<i>Actual</i>			<i>x</i>			<i>x</i>														

5.3 Impact

5.3.1 Indicate as appropriate the impact of your project so far on the environmental issues tackled. Indicate your estimations as to what the impact of your project could be if other stakeholders applied your approach/technology.

The project has been successful in integrating the issues of tourism and conservation in a systematic way. A more holistic approach has been achieved. Through the three actions of tourism enterprises, demonstration sites and conservation management, improved interfaces have been secured between tourism and conservation actors. Tourism interests are now more confident in embracing conservation challenges to help their business. The conservation interests are more active in relating their conservation objectives to tourism needs.

5.3.2 Indirect impacts: Indicate any indirect impacts of the project (e.g. local authorities near the project may have been inspired by the project to invest time/money or adopt the project's approach to the conservation/environmental issue in question)

To date, only direct impacts have been observed. Indirect impacts will be monitored as they occur.

5.3.3 Outside LIFE: Summarise the different actions taking place outside the framework LIFE project (i.e. not financed by LIFE) but that are complementary to the project and add to its impact (if applicable).

The Burren Geopark was a 2014 finalist in the World Travel & Tourism Council 'Tourism for Tomorrow' award. The aim of these awards is to give international recognition for best practice in sustainable tourism. This acknowledgement of the Burren's achievement is strong evidence of the work undertaken and the results secured.

6 Financial part

Budget breakdown categories	Total cost in €	Costs incurred from the start date to 30 Sept 2014 in €	% of total costs
1. Personnel	1,146,270	110,722.99	9.7
2. Travel and subsistence	148,855	3,960.75	3
3. External assistance	740,620	135,813.38	18
4. Durable goods			
Infrastructure			
Equipment	15,000		
Prototype			
5. Land purchase / long-term lease			
6. Consumables	68,000		
7. Other Costs	42,400		
8. Overheads	64,100	14,245.00	22
TOTAL	2,225,245	264,742.12	12

Overall, only 12% of the budget has been spent. The main contributors to this under-expenditure are monuments & habitats (B2) and conservation management (B3). For reasons already explained in the report, both these tasks were relatively slow to clarify into specific actions. However, now that the detailed programmes are clear and agreed, we hope to see better expenditure progress in the next period. In addition, time sheets from many partners have not yet been submitted for 2014, although work was done. Thus the expenditure is an under-statement.

Action number and name	Foreseen costs	Spent so far	Remaining	Projected final cost
B.1 Tourism enterprises	470,400	101,245	369,155	
B2 Monuments & habitats	753,810	8,302	745,508	
B3 Conservation management	380,015	26,719	353,296	
C1 Monitoring	80,000	11,986	68,014	
D1 Project web site	17,500	16,499	1,001	
D2 LIFE+ Information boards	29,000	0	29,000	
D3 Layman's report	5,000	0	5,000	
D4 Targeted communications	156,800	69,707	87,093	
E1 Project management & monitoring	254,620	17,481	237,139	
E2 Networking with other LIFE+ projects	14,000	0	14,000	
Overheads	64,100	12,803	51,297	
TOTAL	2,225,245	264,742	1,960,503	

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1
EXAMPLE OF DISSEMINATION MATERIAL

200 people attended the launch conference in October 2013



DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DESTINATIONS

*Balancing Tourism and Conservation
through Partnership*



17-18 October 2013
The Falls Hotel & Spa,
Ennistymon, Co. Clare



Developing Sustainable Tourism Destinations

BALANCING TOURISM & CONSERVATION THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

THURSDAY 17th OCTOBER

9.00-9.30 Registration & Refreshments.

9.30 **Welcome** by Cllr Joe Arkins, Mayor of Clare.

9.40 **Balancing Tourism & Conservation - Introducing the GeoparkLIFE project.**

Carol Gleeson, Manager, Burren & Cliffs of Moher GeoparkLIFE project.

9.50 **Mainstreaming Sustainable Tourism - Driving Change through Effective Policy**

Catalina Etcheverry, Partner Relationship Manager,

Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism, Paris, France.

10.30 **Tourism, Authenticity and Economics at Heritage Sites.**

Dr. Douglas Comer, President of Cultural Site Research & Management and the

CSR Foundation, Maryland, USA.

11.10 Tea/Coffee.

11.45 **The Transformative Power of Sustainable Tourism.**

Erika Harms, Vice President of Marketing Services, Solimar International, Washington DC, USA.

12.30 Questions & Answers session.

12.45 Lunch.

2.00 Delegate Group Work on the theme "Mainstreaming Sustainable Tourism".

3.00 Tea/Coffee.

3.15 Feedback and panel discussion (local and national perspectives on Sustainable Destination Development) chaired by Professor Gabriel Cooney, University College Dublin.

Panel Members:

Ger Dollard, Director of Services, Tourism & Community, Clare County Council.

Mark Henry, Director of Central Marketing, Tourism Ireland.

Birgitta Hedin-Curtin, Managing Director, Burren Smokehouse.

Kevin Kidney, Head of Destination Development, Fáilte Ireland.

Frank O'Grady, Burren Farmer, Farm Heritage Tours.

Paul McMahon, Senior Architect, Office of Public Works.

4.30 **Concluding Remarks** by Gerard Kennedy, Local Community Development Expert.

7.00 **Gather for Evening Meal featuring locally sourced produce.**

Address from Marian Harkin, MEP on Sustainable Destinations and the Green Economy.

Presentation to Dr. Pat O'Connor, Former Director of the Geological Survey of Ireland,
for his outstanding work in securing Global Geopark Status for the Burren & Cliffs of Moher region.

FRIDAY 18th OCTOBER

Geopark LIFE Field Trip.

Geopark LIFE Field Trip to review good sustainable tourism practice and to highlight visitor management, access and conservation issues in the landscape. The trip will include visits to a number of prominent visitor centres and natural attractions. Bus will depart the Falls Hotel at 10.00am and will return before 5pm. Spaces are limited and booking is essential.



ANNEX 2: B1 TOURISM ENTERPRISES

DETAILS OF TRAINING PROGRAMME		
	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"> 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. 2. Be familiar with the Code of Practice Toolkit, online resources and evaluation process. 3. Appreciate the purpose and recommended format of an effective Environmental Policy. 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. 5. Appreciate the critical importance of an Environmental Action Plan and understand its key components i.e. baselines, benchmarks and targets.
2.	Energy Management	<p>Upon completion of this workshop , the tourism enterprises will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have a strong awareness of the global, national and regional imperative for improved energy management. 2. Understand how reducing energy consumption will reduce their carbon emissions and know how to record this. 3. Know how to analyse their electricity bills, identify inappropriate charges and check if they are on the correct tariff. 4. Be able to record energy consumption in KWh and cost for their baseline year and each subsequent year. 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.

		6. Be able to set up a system for tracking energy consumption on a monthly/quarterly basis.
3.	Leave No Trace	<p>Upon completion of this workshop, the tourism enterprises will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have heard why they and visitors should ‘Leave No Trace’. 2. Understand the 7 Principles of Leave No Trace. 3. Understand the personal responsibility and choice-based approach of Leave No Trace. 4. Appreciate the ‘grey areas’ that arise in the drive to ‘make good choices’. 5. Know how they can spread and embed the Leave No Trace message amongst staff and visitors. 6. Be able to access Leave No Trace resources online and on the Geopark intranet.
4.	Green Purchasing & Sustainable Transport	<p>Upon completion of this workshop, the tourism enterprises will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand the economic, environmental and social dimensions and implications of company purchasing policies 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 3. Understand the opportunities and constraints associated with developing sustainable transport infrastructure and supports in the Geopark 4. Know the range and availability of sustainable transport options to and around the Geopark 5. Understand the range of ways in which they can integrate a sustainable transport message into their business communications 6. Know how to communicate sustainable transport options to visitors before and during their visit. 7. Understand how they can set appropriate, realistic and meaningful targets for continuous improvement in the areas of green purchasing and sustainable transport.
5.	Water Conservation	<p>Upon completion of this workshop, the tourism enterprises will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be aware of the national and regional context and relevant legislation for water conservation. 2. Understand how conserving water will contribute to reducing their carbon emissions. 3. Know how, why and when to analyse their water bills.

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Be able to establish water consumption in cubic metres (or litres) and cost for their baseline year and each subsequent year. 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. 6. Be able to set up a system for tracking water consumption on a periodic basis.
6.	Water Protection & Wastewater Management	<p>Upon completion of this workshop, the tourism enterprises will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be aware of the national and regional context and relevant legislation for water protection and wastewater management. 2. Understand the importance of water protection and learn ways that the business can help protect water quality in its area. 3. Understand the importance of adequately managing and maintaining their wastewater systems 4. Be equipped with an approach and resources to enable them to effectively manage and maintain their waste water systems.
7.	Waste Management	<p>Upon completion of this workshop, the tourism enterprises will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand how reducing consumption and associated waste will contribute to reducing their carbon emissions. 2. Be aware of the national and regional context and relevant legislation relating to waste management. 3. Know how to analyse their waste bills. 4. Be able to establish waste generation in kg and in cost for their baseline year and each subsequent year. 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. 6. Be able to set up a system for tracking waste generation on a monthly/quarterly basis.
8.	Visitor Education & Visitor Management	<p>Upon completion of this workshop, the tourism enterprises will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appreciate the importance of interpretation and education as a component of the tourism product in the Geopark. 2. Be able to explain the importance of conservation within the outdoor tourism product

		<p>in the region.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Be able to develop a formal interpretation policy that enables them interpret nature as an integral part of their outdoor experience. 4. Know the range of information resources available to them to enhance their knowledge of the Burren & Cliffs of Moher Geopark (geology, agriculture, archaeology, folklore, botany, biodiversity). 5. Have a bank of practical information for managing visitors in the region e.g. parking, transport options, walking routes, Leave No Trace principles... 6. When in the landscape, understand their responsibilities to visitors and sites, particularly in relation to visitor safety and quality of experience.
9.	Targets & Environmental Action Plans	<p>Upon completion of this workshop, the tourism enterprises will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand the critical importance of setting targets as part of their Environmental Management Systems. 2. Understand how targets as defined in an Environmental Action Plan provide the framework for continuous improvement and annual review. 3. Know how to develop appropriate and realistic targets based on defined baselines and benchmarks for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Energy Management/Consumption ○ Water Conservation ○ Water Protection & Wastewater Management ○ Waste reduction, re-use and recycling ○ Green Purchasing 4. Be able to articulate appropriate and realistic targets that provide incremental environmental benefit to the Geopark for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contribution to Conservation ○ Promotion & Development of Sustainable Transport ○ Visitor Education & Visitor Management ○ Enhanced Interpretation for Visitors
10.	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"> 1. Appreciate that the conservation of the region's landscape is critical to the long-term

		<p>environmental, economic and social sustainability of the Geopark.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Understand the Principle of Additionality in respect of conservation contributions by the enterprise. 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. 4. Be aware of the range of conservation-led programmes and organisations that are active in the Geopark. 5. Appreciate the particular contribution of the local farming community both to the visitor experience and the conservation of the region.
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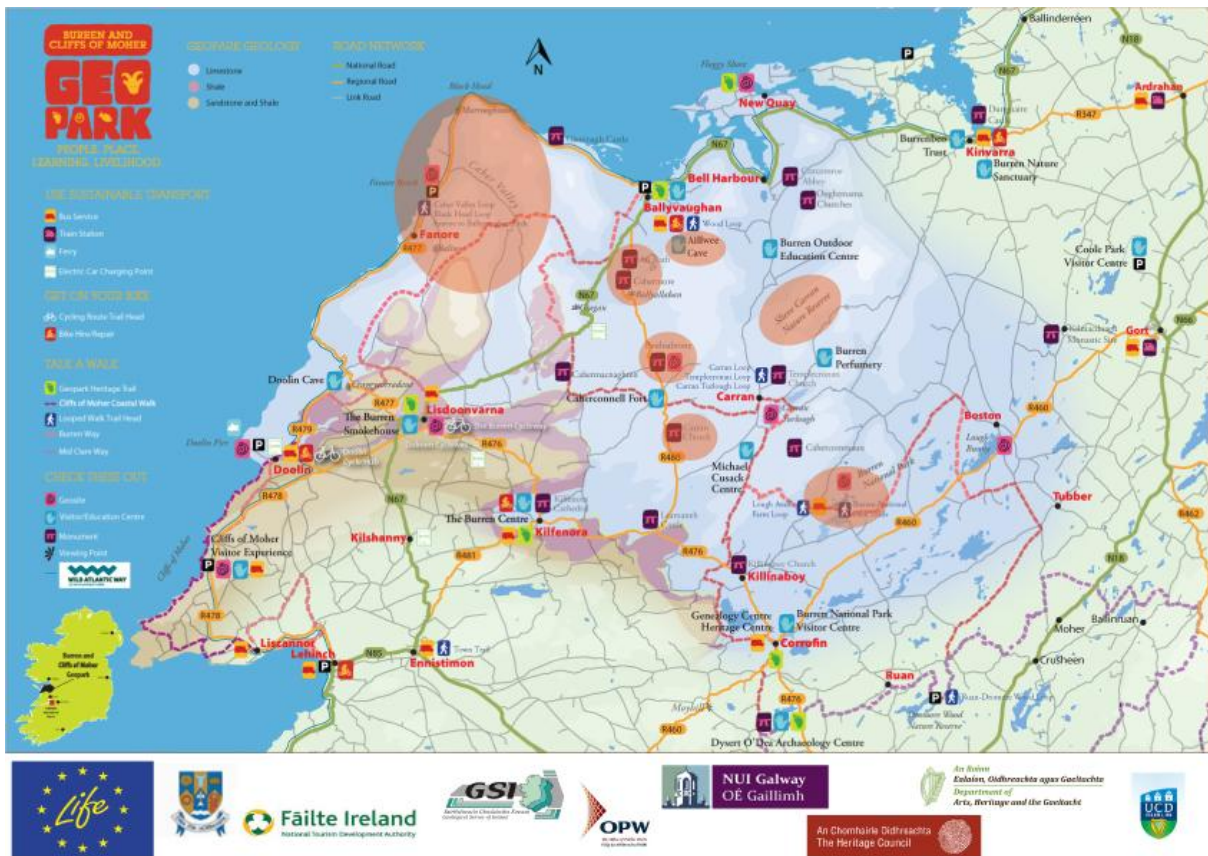
PARTICIPANTS ON TRAINING PROGRAMME

Person	Enterprise name	Enterprise type
Christy Sinclair	Adventure Burren	Activity
Tim O'Connell/ Terry Casserley	Backwest Adventures	Activity
Mary Gardiner	Ballinsheen House	Accommodation
Ben Benett	Lahinch Adventures	Activity
Cari Ryan/Sonia O'Brien	Boghill Centre	Eco-retreat
Alan Griffith	Burren angling guide	Activity
Francis Connolle	Burren Centre	Visitor Centre
Brian Farrell	Burren Coaches	Transport
Martine Waldron	Burren Escape	Accommodation
Marie McGuaran	Burren Experience	Activity
Cathleen Connolle	Burren Fine Wines & Food	Food
Eva Hegarty	Burren Free Range Pork	Food
Brendan and Nellake McGrath	Burren Journey	Activity
Mary and Roy Birmingham	Burren Nature Sanctuary	Activity
Joanna McInerney	Burren Outdoor Education Centre	Activity
Ralph Doyle	Burren Perfumery	Visitor centre

Brigitta Hedin-Curtin	Burren Smokehouse	Visitor centre and food business
John Connolly	Burren Wild Tours	Activity
David Brocklebank	Burren Yoga & Meditation Centre	Eco-retreat
Deborah Evers	Clareville House Kitchen Garden	Food
Katherine Webster	Cliffs of Moher	Visitor centre
Marie Neylon	Corofin Camping & Hostel	Accommodation
Helen Healy	Deelin More Lodge & Cottages	Accommodation
Jennie Brown	Doolin Cave	Visitor Centre
Anthony Moloney	Doolin Hostel	Accommodation
Doreen Drennan	Doreen Drennan Art Studio	Art studio
Janet Cavanagh	Ewhizz	Activity
Dermot Hogan	Falls Hotel	Accommodation
Patricia McMahon	Greenlawn B&B	Accommodation
Kasia Kolatorowicz	Hazel Mountain Chocolate	Visitor Centre and food business
Tony Kirby	Heart of Burren Walks	Activity
Donal Minihane/ Raquel Noboa	Hotel Doolin	Accommodation
Orla Vaughan	Kilfenora Hostel	Accommodation
Mary Butler / Aidan Galvin	Kilshanny House	Food
Joe Garrihy	Lahinch Seaworld and Leisure Centre	Activity
Roger and Brid Fahy	Linalla Ice Cream Cafe	Food
Eileen Finn Graham	Linnane Bar	Food
Patrick O'Regan; Kelly Humphries	North Clare Sea Kayaking Tours	Food
Peter Curtin	Roadside Tavern	Food
Ita McMahon & Noel Walsh	Rocky View Farmhouse	Accommodation
John Sheedy	Sheedy's Hotel	Accommodation
Karen Courtney/ Myles Duffy	Stonecutters Kitchen	Food
Stefania Russell	Russell Gallery	Art gallery
Niall Hughes	Seaview House	Accommodation
Oonagh O'Dwyer	Wild Kitchen	Food and activity
Grainne Casey	St Tola Irish Cheese	Food
Pete/Ali Hynes	Aloha Surf School	Activity
Mark Vaughan	Vaughans Pub	Food
Lynn Connolly	Rathbawn House Hotel	Accommodation

ANNEX 3:

MAP OF B2 'MONUMENTS AND HABITATS' DEMONSTRATION SITES



ANNEX 4:

**B3 CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT
POLICY IMPACT STUDY**

Draft report on desk study of current policies

Sustainable Tourism and Conservation Management: Mapping Policy (DRAFT)



Gabriel Cooney
Joanne Gaffrey
UCD School of Archaeology, University College Dublin

Preamble

The aim of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark LIFE project is to:

- Strengthen the integration of tourism and natural heritage, reconciling tourism development with conservation of biodiversity and cultural heritage in the Burren area of Ireland, an internationally renowned karst limestone area that supports a rich and diverse selection of flora and fauna, archaeological monuments and traditional cultural practices.
- Support the EU priority to promote the development of sustainable, responsible and high-quality tourism. The Burren project aims to stimulate a heritage community within its local partnership and enrich the heritage of the area. The Burren project will support the European landscape convention through the tourism conservation actions on the fragile landscape of the area.
- Develop the progressive work carried out to date in the Burren in areas such as farming for conservation through Burren Life (a very successful EU LIFE biodiversity project), sustainable tourism models through the "Burren Connect" partnership, as well as established initiatives in education and awareness through community participation with a focus on collaborative landscape management.

A key issue in achieving these aims is to address the policy implications of the project and the challenge of reconciling policy conflicts between sustainable tourism and other policies, especially regulatory environmental policies. It is clear that the problem is not a lack of policy but the need to recognize the applicability of a range of policy instruments which may not be in direct alignment. The challenge then is to balance and resolve inter-policy conflicts.

The background

The reality of the complexity of the relationship between tourism and conservation on the ground is indicated in the following extracts from policy-related documentation.

...The tourism industry on a whole considers itself well informed on environmental legislation and believes that the main drivers for improved environmental management in tourism are costs and customer needs...the majority of the industry does not see excellent environmental performance as a potential point-of-differentiation from its competition.

Fáilte Ireland (2007) *Review of good environmental policy and practice in the Tourism Sector*.

...Numerous national and sub-national organisations involved in tourism, including Fáilte Ireland, have endorsed the principles of sustainable tourism. These principles are compelling and eminently sensible. Their translation into practical policies however is much more challenging and difficult.

Flanagan, S. et al. (2007) *Sustainable Tourism Development: Towards the Mitigation of Tourism Destination Impacts*.

...Looking at strategic approaches and national policies, it is clear that nearly all countries (EU member states) mention sustainability as a key factor in tourism but hardly any state has a concrete sustainable tourism strategy

Surf Nature (2011) *Sustainable Tourism and Nature Conservation*

...There are several parts of Ireland where landscape possesses such a striking character that it also has national and international significance. This is landscape as national heritage, something to be treasured and safeguarded as a source of pride for future generations and also something that can be exploited as a tourism asset for short-term economic benefit. At this scale landscape cannot be managed by piecemeal local interventions but requires a national engagement. This has not happened in Ireland.

McGrath, B. (2013) *Landscape and Society in Contemporary Ireland*.

...A broad range of national and sectoral policies and activities can have considerable effects, positive and negative, on landscape character or quality...Landscape considerations have been included in some existing strategies, plans and policies but are not currently a requirement in many sectors.

DAHG (2014) *A Draft National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2014-24*.

Moving forward

One of the key strengths of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark LIFE project is the wide range and diversity of partners actively involved in the project. These encompass all the key stakeholders on the ground; national agencies, both in tourism and conservation management, the local authority, local businesses and the farming community and voluntary organizations dedicated to the conservation of the Burren landscape. The B2 element of the programme is focused on a series of demonstration sites which provide foci on the ground in different parts of the Burren for the achievement of the aims and objectives of the project.

The range and diversity of the project partners ensures that there is an opportunity to examine the range of national (and more local) policies that will impact on sustainable tourism. The B2 demonstration sites provide the opportunity to examine the operation of relevant policies on the ground, potential conflicts between them and foci to engage with project partners in thinking about achievable means of resolving policy conflicts.

It is suggested that there would be three phases to this work:

Phase 1 Mapping the policy framework(s)

This would be a desktop study providing the detail of the policies that operate in landscapes such as the Burren and their impact on sustainable tourism. This would be drawn from available documentary and digital sources and it is envisaged that all the partners on the project would be asked to provide a perspective on the key policy drivers on their work. The outcome would be an overview of the policies relevant to and influencing the Burren. A detailed mapping of these policies as they impact on the B2 demonstration sites would be drawn up.

Phase 2 Detailing the key policy conflicts

Drawing on the reality and detail of the B2 demonstration sites as case studies and the broader experience of project partners on the ground the conflicts between policies, and their impacts, would be detailed. The focus of this phase would be working with project partners (both regulators and regulated) to gain different perspectives on the conflicts and an understanding of the sources of conflict

Phase 3 Moving to reconciliation

This phase would involve identifying those issues or conflicts on the ground which could be resolved sustainably at local level by improving communication and support networks, in effect by strengthening the interfaces between policies. On the other hand Phases 1 and 2 of the project may also reveal and document that there are issues which are having a negative impact on the relationship between sustainable tourism and conservation management which need to be changed. Recommendations in this regard would be proposed for inclusion in the final report.

1. Introduction

This mapping report aims to provide an overview of the current policies which govern the various strands of activity being undertaken as part of the Burren and Geopark LIFE project and more broadly that govern and/or impact on, both in a direct and indirect way, the natural and built heritage, the environment and tourism in the Burren. The legislative context of these policies is outlined but the focus is more directly on the implementation of legislation through policy and the implications of this for practice on the ground. These policies can be as apparently simple as those affecting day to day activities or can be as wide ranging as those that underpin and determine large scale infrastructural projects. Within a specific area, such as cultural heritage (see Table 1) there are both a range of agencies and bodies involved in implementing policies and a large number of related policy instruments.

Individuals and agencies charged with implementing relevant policies in a specific field, such as natural or cultural heritage management, should be familiar with the policy drivers. What may not be considered important or relevant in implementation however is the impact of such policies on other relevant areas, such as sustainable tourism. At the same time on a national level both conservation management and sustainable tourism are seen as priorities.

At a broader level there is a clear link between legislation and the aims and targets agreed at world level through agreements such as the Rio Earth Summit and the Kyoto Protocol, which trickle through to eventually reach local level where they are played out in policy development and decision making. Hence there is a recognition at European and national level for legislation to be environment-proofed and/or to focus on improving environmental performance. These policy approaches impact on businesses, including those operating within the tourism and hospitality industry

It is clear then that this is a complex and broad topic which needs to be examined. Aside from formal, legislatively-derived policies, there is also a large quantity of best practice plans and guidance which are in place to attempt to complement existing policies or to fill gaps in areas where there is a lack of policy. Best practice and guidance documents tend to be more specific in nature and targeted to specific groups, but again can have impacts on the activities of a wide range of sectors. Relevant guidance and best practice codes are also considered in this mapping process.

This is a desktop report presenting information about legislation, policies, best practice and guidelines relating to environment, cultural heritage and tourism. As indicated above the second stage in the project will look at these processes on the ground, identifying the impact of policy in action through cases studies and identifying key issues that will be addressed, with an input from the project partners on their perspectives at how various policies impact on their work.

The report is formatted to map policy at different levels; European, national and regional/local. There is consideration of environmental, cultural heritage and sustainable tourism policies at each of these levels. Where appropriate and relevant global policies and conventions are referred to.

European Policy

EU Policy on Environment

NATURA 2000

NATURA 2000 sites are protected habitats for flora and fauna of European importance. They comprise Special Areas of Conservation, designated under the Habitats Directive and Special

Protection Areas, designated under the Birds Directive. The Habitats Directive was transposed into national legislation by the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997 S.I. No. 94 of 1997. NATURA 2000 sites comprise over ten per cent of the country. They have management implications for farmers with sites on their land, as well as onerous planning restrictions.

Environmental Impact Assessment

EIA Directive (85/337/EEC as amended by 97/11/EC and 2003/35/EC) requires that certain developments be assessed for likely environmental effects (commonly known as environmental impact assessment (EIA)) before planning permission can be granted. When submitting a planning application for such a development, the applicant must also submit an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Projects needing environmental impact assessment are listed in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001.

In the case of development which is under the relevant EIA threshold, planning authorities are required under article 103 of the 2001 Regulations to request an EIS where it considers that the proposed development is likely to have significant environmental effects. The decision as to whether a development is likely to have significant effects on the environment must be taken with reference to the criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001. In order to assist planning and other consent authorities in deciding if significant effects on the environment are likely to arise in the case of development below the national mandatory EIA thresholds, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government published a Guidance document in August 2003.

The EIA requirements under planning legislation have been consolidated into Part X of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and Part 10 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

SEA is an important mechanism in promoting sustainable development and in raising awareness of significant environmental issues and in ensuring that such issues are addressed within the capacity of the planning system. It seeks to inform the decision-making process before a decision is made to adopt the plan.

The overall aim of SEA is to:

- Provide a high level of protection to the environment;
- To integrate environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of Plans and Programmes;
- To promote sustainable development; and
- To increase public participation in environmental decision-making.

The European Community issued the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. This introduced the requirement that SEA be carried out on plans and programmes, including those of land use planning. Article 1 of the SEA Directive states:

“The objective of this directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out

of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment”.

The SEA Directive was transposed into Irish Law in 2004 becoming operational on the 21st July 2004, through the following Regulations:

- European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, S.I. No. 435 of 2004, and the
- Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004, S.I. No. 436 of 2004.

This assessment process is a key mechanism in promoting sustainable development; in raising awareness of significant environmental issues in County Clare and in ensuring that such issues are properly addressed within the capacity of the planning system. The SEA legislation and guidelines indicate that there should be complete integration between the preparation of the Plan, the SEA process and Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA). The SEA process ensured that the Plan was informed by environmental considerations from the outset.

The preparation of a County Development Plan (see below) requires a full Strategic Environmental Assessment. This statutory Environmental Report can be divided into a number of stages

- Screening
- Scoping
- Consultations with environmental authorities
- Scoping report
- Preparation of Environmental Report & Clare County Development Plan

This process involves a large amount of consultation with the various agencies within Ireland. The Environmental Protection Agency must be consulted (EPA), as should the Minister for the Environment Heritage and Local Government if the plan effects architectural or archaeological heritage or nature conservation. The Minister for Communications Energy and Natural Resources should be consulted if the plan might have significant effect on the fisheries or marine environment. Other non-statutory bodies, interested parties and Local Authorities may also be consulted as part of the process, providing a wide-ranging and well informed report . The SEA also needs to include assessment of Alternative Scenarios and Mitigation Measures.

Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) involves assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of plans and programmes prior to their adoption. SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) was adopted on 27 June 2001 and took effect in Member States on 21 July 2004. It provides for strategic environmental consideration at an early stage in the decision making process, and is designed to complement the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process which is project based.

The Directive applies across a wide range of sectors viz. agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and land use planning. The requirement to carry out SEA of plans/programmes in the sectors mentioned above arises where they "set the framework for future development consent of projects" which are listed in the EIA Directive (85/337/EEC, as amended by Directive 97/11/EC).

SEA is also necessary where plans/programmes are likely to have a significant effect on a site governed by the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

Responsibility for implementation of the Directive within each sector rests primarily with the relevant Government Department.

Appropriate Assessment

While SEA is the primary focus of the SEA Resource Manual, it also refers to two other environmental assessment processes which are now aligned in the plan-making process. They are:

- Appropriate Assessment (AA) which is a process which stems from Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC; and
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) which comes from the EU Floods Directive 2007/60/EC with procedures set out in Irish guidance ‘The Planning System and Flood Risk Management’.

EU Policy on Culture and Heritage

Cultural heritage enriches the lives of citizens as well as being an important resource for economic growth and social cohesion, offering the potential to revitalise urban and rural areas and promote sustainable tourism. While policy in this area is primarily the responsibility of Member States, regional and local authorities, the European Union's role is to assist and complement the actions of the Member States in preserving and promoting Europe's cultural heritage through a number of policies and programmes. The European Commission is committed to addressing common challenges such as limits to the mobility of cultural professionals, barriers to finance and skills deficits (Supporting Cultural Heritage http://ec.europa.eu/culture/policy/culture-policies/cultural-heritage_en.htm).

The Commission, whose role in Heritage is based on Article 3.3 of the Lisbon Treaty, has developed a number of relevant policies and programmes as well as supporting and promoting policy collaboration between Member States and heritage stakeholders. The Commission is also committed to promoting cultural diversity, protecting cultural heritage, and supporting the contribution of cultural and creative industries to boosting growth and jobs across the EU, in line with the principles of the European Agenda for Culture.

In May 2014 EU Culture Ministers called for the "mainstreaming of cultural heritage in national and European policies", and "the development of a strategic approach to cultural heritage". Responding to this call, in July 2014 the European Commission adopted a Communication: "Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe" and a mapping report published in parallel with this, which presents a wide range of useful information about EU policies, legislation, programmes and funding opportunities relevant to cultural heritage.

The focus of the 2014 mapping report is on policies concerned with the preservation and promotion of European Heritage. A number of incentives are highlighted, most notably European Heritage Days, which have been organised since 1999 as a joint action of the European Union and the Council of Europe. Another initiative highlighted here is ‘The European Heritage Label’, designed to highlight heritage sites that celebrate and symbolise European history, ideals, and integration. Funding is also an important and relevant part of this programme with funds such as the European Regional Development Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the 7th Framework Programme all feeding into Ireland's National Strategies.

The Directorate General for Education and Culture, or DG EAC, is the branch of the European Commission charged with Education, Training, Youth, Sport, Languages, and Culture. In addition to these, the DG manages a variety of initiatives of the cultural and creative sector. DG EAC's activities over the past few years have mainly focused on the implementation of the European Agenda for Culture, now replaced with the new 2014-2020 Creative Europe programme. Within this programme there is a sub-programme to promote the

culture sector, which will, among other things, work towards promoting cross-border cooperation and transnational policy cooperation. This programme provides a variety of opportunities for cultural sector organisations and professionals.

EU Policy on Tourism

Tourism is a major economic force whose development can have a fundamental impact on societies and the environment, both positive and negative. Many international declarations and guidelines have proved to be effective instruments for setting an agenda of what needs to be done in order to integrate sustainability into tourism policy to develop a sound and lasting industry. To support this, the United Nations Environment Programme together with the World Tourism Organisation conducted a two year programme and published a report in 2005, 'Making Tourism More Sustainable: A Guide for Policy Makers', which presents a comprehensive set of instruments for governments, ranging from planning regulations to economic instruments and the application of certification and indicators, and a set of 12 aims for sustainable tourism and their implications for policy. These aims are all given equal importance and relate to a combination of environmental, social and economic issues and impacts.

1. Economic viability
2. Local prosperity
3. Employment Quality
4. Social Equity
5. Visitor fulfilment
6. Local control
7. Community wellbeing
8. Cultural Richness
9. Physical integrity
10. Biological diversity
11. Resource efficiency
12. Environmental purity

The report also describes the collaborative structures and strategies that are needed at national and local level and identifies ways to influence the development and operation of tourism enterprises and the activities of tourists.

Movement towards these 12 aims of sustainable tourism is a well-established objective in Europe. Sustainable development has become a standard feature of the tourism industry, not just economical, but also cultural, environmental/eco-tourism and beach tourism. The European Commission refers to 'sustainability' as one of the 'four pillars of tourism development' (SURF, 2011), however, there is no universally acknowledged definition of what sustainable tourism actually is. Generally speaking, an unspoilt natural environment/landscape is a prerequisite for tourism into the future and it should be embedded in a sustainable, regionally-specific networking economy, with a focus on the people and local population.

All levels of political systems; regions, states and EU, and the source areas of the tourists, have to take responsibility for the effects and impacts of tourism in the respective destinations (SURF, 2011). While the Lisbon Treaty acknowledges the importance of tourism and the role of the EU in this field, article 195 specifies that the Union will 'compliment the action of the Member States in the tourism sector', therefore, the main competence still rests with the Member States who remain the principle driving forces. However, when looking at national

policies, while sustainability is mentioned as a key factor for tourism, a concrete strategy is lacking. Consequently, funds and subsidies, the biggest motivators for development, usually lack clear definitions of sustainable tourism (SURF, 2011).

The European Union provides a number of funds which can aid sustainable tourism and nature conservation, the interrelationship between which is extremely complex and dynamic. Successful integration of these two objectives is of increasing importance, requiring strategic planning. The main sources of funding are listed below:

- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) supports more sustainable patterns of tourism to enhance cultural and natural heritage and to develop accessibility and mobility related infrastructure.
- The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) encourages tourist activities as part of diversification of the rural economy. It also provides support for improving the environment and the countryside.
- The European Fisheries Fund (EFF) has already introduced as a priority theme for the period 2007-2013 the sustainable development of fisheries areas, including eco-tourism.
- 7th EU Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration and The Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) are two other funds that may enhance sustainable tourism.
- LIFE is the EU's financial instrument supporting environmental and nature conservation projects throughout the EU. LIFE encourages many direct biodiversity projects and nature promotion activities which help to find compromise between tourism and conservation goals.
- The Structural Funds (ERDF and Cohesion Fund) can fund nature conservation activities, and if well designed can reduce visitor pressure on natural areas.

The aim of the EU regional policy is to promote coherent development within the EU and reduce gaps between the poor and rich regions within the Community area; however, this regional policy has paid little attention to issues related to nature conservation and biodiversity. Furthermore, the initiatives supported by Structural and Cohesion Funds have frequently been criticized for having negative impacts on biodiversity (WWF 2006). Although many Regional Competitiveness and Employment Programmes identify nature as an asset for development, little co-financing for biodiversity and nature protection is provided. However, some programmes support indirect nature protection measures such as sustainable use of cultural and natural areas as regional resource. As investments are primarily focused on income generation and promotion of new economic activities, nature conservation is mainly addressed through promotional or awareness activities.

All levels of the political system; regions, states and the EU, and the source areas of the tourists, have to take responsibility for the effects and impacts of tourism in the respective destinations. (SURF, 2011)

National Policy

The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is the government department which has, among other missions, responsibility to contribute to the economic, social and cultural progress of Irish society and the enrichment of its quality of life through promoting sustainable tourism; while facilitating greater access to and preservation of Ireland's cultural inheritance. It is led by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht who is assisted by two Ministers of State. In carrying out its mandate the department undertakes a variety of functions including the protection of Ireland's heritage and cultural assets and the provision of financial resources and appropriate policy framework within the various cultural institutions, while at the same time facilitating the continued development by the tourism industry of an economic and environmentally sustainable and spatially balanced tourism sector.

National Policy on Heritage

It has been the direct intent of legislation dealing with the physical environment that both public and private stakeholders must take responsibility for their element of the heritage and put conservation measures in place, and apply those measures to best effect. Since the 1990s, the planning process has become a central element in the protection of immovable tangible heritage. Local authorities have direct legislative responsibility for protecting the architectural heritage under the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2011, which recognises the importance of preventing damage to architectural heritage as a result of development or due to endangerment. The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht has direct legislative responsibility for protecting the archaeological and natural heritage, and for supporting the national cultural institutions, with which the Heritage Council has common ground.

National Parks and Wildlife

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) section of the Department manages the Irish State's nature conservation responsibilities under national and European law. A particular responsibility of the NPWS is the designation and protection of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs).

National Monuments

The protection, preservation, conservation and presentation of Ireland's heritage and cultural assets are a major objective of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht through the National Monuments Services section. A number of state bodies and agencies with responsibilities relating to various aspects of the Department's remit are funded from within the Department and it works with these bodies to ensure a co-ordinated approach to fulfilling the Department's mandate. The main cultural institutions involved are the National Museum of Ireland and the Heritage Council. The policy of the Department is to legislate for the protection of the country's heritage through the provision of the National Monuments Act 1930 (and amendments);

AN ACT TO MAKE PROVISION FOR THE PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF NATIONAL MONUMENTS AND FOR THE PRESERVATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBJECTS IN SAORSTÁT EIREANN AND TO MAKE PROVISION FOR OTHER MATTERS CONNECTED WITH THE MATTERS AFORESAID. [26th February, 1930.]

This legislation dictates to a large extent the policies adapted by the National Monuments Service. At present monuments are protected by one of four ways, with each category providing a different level of protection. The four categories are; 1) It is recorded in the

Record of Monuments and Places; 2) It is registered in the Register of Historic Monuments; 3) It is a national monument subject to a preservation order (or temporary preservation order); 4) It is a national monument in the ownership or guardianship of the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht or a Local Authority. The enforcement of the legislation is the responsibility of the National Monuments Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht.

Specific policy on the Record of Monuments and Places:

It is the policy of the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands that the Record of Monuments and Places will be updated so as to take account of future results of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland.

Specific policy on the Register of Historic Monuments:

Areas containing no known archaeological monuments may be included in the Register of Historic Monuments as archaeological areas if the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands has reason to believe that such an area is of archaeological interest, including on the grounds of (i) its potential for containing archaeological monuments or objects, or (ii) its interest in respect of palaeo-environmental studies or (iii) its importance in respect of protecting the amenities of an archaeological monument.

Specific policy on preservation orders and temporary preservation orders:

While the Minister seeks the co-operation of all persons and bodies in protection of archaeological heritage, preservation orders and temporary preservation orders will be made whenever necessary to secure protection of national monuments of archaeological interest, such protection being in accordance with the provisions of the European Convention on the protection of the Archaeological Heritage and the policies set out in this document.

The Burren and National Monuments:

There are more than 120,000 monuments on the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) for Ireland. There are approximately 7,500 identified monuments in County Clare. Currently, 3235 of these monuments are on the Register of Historic Monuments. Nationally there are circa 740 monuments, (about 5% of total), in state care, which are managed by the National Monument Service (OPW). There are 37 such monument sites in County Clare. Recorded Monuments regarded as National Monuments, are considered of national importance by reason of historic, archaeological traditions, artistic or architectural interest. The County Clare Inventory of Archaeology is ongoing. Examples of all categories of archaeology are preserved in Clare.

Some areas of the Burren have remained relatively unchanged since the impact of the first farmers, some 6000 years ago; therefore, preserving a prehistoric landscape largely unchanged over time. The vast number of archaeological sites alone in the Burren make it of international importance, with 300 recorded Fulacht Fiadh, early cooking places, 450 ring forts and the densest concentration known of wedge tombs in Ireland. Many more sites have yet to be located and recorded. The Burren is being investigated as a possible world heritage site. It is also being investigated as a possible a geo-park. Today's farmers continue the tradition of preserving much of the landscape in Clare. Their co-operation and understanding contribute to the conservation and preservation of archaeological monuments and their settings.

Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage

The general policy mandate of the Department in relation to the protection of Irish archaeological heritage is set out in the document 'Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage' (1999). A set of broad policy principles is outlined in this document aimed at complimenting the National Monuments Acts and to encourage its fulfilment in protecting the archaeological heritage of the country. It also emphasises the

desire to avoid developmental impact on archaeological heritage and that the gathering of information should not destroy any more heritage than absolutely necessary. It presumes the preference of in situ preservation of archaeological sites and monuments but that if excavation is necessary, then preservation by record be applied. It addresses the topic of costs and encourages this to be a legitimate part of developmental costs. This document also looks at (Temporary) Preservation Orders, Underwater Heritage Orders, Licencing and Metal Detecting.

The Irish Framework and Principles is directly linked back to the 1992 European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (the ‘Valletta Convention’) which was ratified by Ireland in 1997. The aim of the Convention is to ‘protect the archaeological heritage as a source of the European collective memory and as an instrument for historical and scientific study’ (Article 1). Although now 15 years old, many of the policies set out in the 1999 document still apply today, and as no revision of this document or indeed alternative has been produced in recent years this policy document is the most widely referenced at present. It is heavily weighted towards development and construction and project specific works and while it impacts on such projects in the Burren, it is not very well tailored to suit the needs of the tourism sector as it fails to address the impacts of tourism on monuments and the archaeological landscape.

The Heritage Council

The Heritage Council was established in 1995 as a statutory body under the Heritage Act 1995, with a Council (the Board of the Body) appointed by the Minister. Its functions as set out in the act are to propose policies and priorities for the identification, protection, preservation and enhancement of the national heritage, both cultural and natural (including, inter alia, monuments, archaeological objects, landscapes and wrecks). The Heritage Council works to promote interest, education and knowledge and facilitate the appreciation and enjoyment of the national heritage. This is done through co-operation with public authorities, educational bodies and other organisations. It should be noted that the broad remit of the Act gives the Council a wide scope, greater than that of comparable statutory heritage bodies internationally. For example, the Council can establish committees with specific functions allocated to them.

HERITAGE ACT, 1995

AN ACT TO PROMOTE PUBLIC INTEREST IN AND KNOW LEDGE, APPRECIATION AND PROTECTION OF THE NATIONAL HERITAGE, TO ESTABLISH A BODY TO BE KNOWN AS AN CHOMHAIRLE OIDHREACHTA, TO DEFINE ITS FUNCTIONS, TO PROVIDE FOR THE EXERCISE BY THE MINISTER FOR ARTS, CULTURE AND THE GAELTACHT OF FUNCTIONS IN RELATION TO THE NATIONAL HERITAGE AND TO PROVIDE FOR OTHER MATTERS CONNECTED WITH THE MATTERS AFORESAID. [10th April, 1995]

One key advantage of the Heritage Council is its ability to address landscape issues. Until now, the national legislation and policy is focused on a site specific basis with an inability to deal with large areas or landscapes. The Heritage Council bridges this gap and while at developmental level it adheres to the same policy outlined above and legislative framework of the National Monuments Service, it has scope to take a more holistic approach.

Publication: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers

The Heritage Council’s role in relation to planning is to ensure that local, county, regional, national and trans-boundary planning policies, objectives and programmes include stipulations for the proper planning, conservation and management of our national heritage. To this end, and in accordance with the provisions set out by the Heritage Act, 1995, the Heritage Council provides policy advice to various levels of Government and prepares

detailed submissions to Local Authorities and An Bord Pleanála in relation to planning applications which impact on heritage assets. It also provides professional planning and multi-disciplinary landscape management training.

Heritage Officers

The Heritage Council operates at a local level through its 28 appointed Heritage Officers employed by the Local Authorities. County Heritage Officers provide a structured and co-ordinated approach to managing and promoting local heritage and have played an important role in Local Authorities since 1999. Heritage Officers ensure that heritage receives due consideration at local level and provide a valuable connection for the Heritage Council to local communities. They carry out strategic, operational, promotional, co-ordination and facilitation roles in both the Local Authority and in their county at large. Heritage Officers play a crucial role in drafting and implementing Heritage Plans for the County/City. These County Heritage Plans outline the policy and strategies being employed in a given area, which when successful can then be deployed at national level (e.g. Guidance for the Care, Conservation & Recording of Historic Graveyards [PDF 7.3MB]. This publication originated as a Heritage Plan Project under the Co. Waterford Heritage Plan, and was later developed into a National Guidance Document) . These are discussed in more detail in section XXX below.

Field Monument Adviser Scheme

It is key when applying an effective policy is the ability to reach the people who are ‘hands on’ and directly responsible for the day to day care of our cultural heritage. While there are many state institutions whose role is for this purpose (as outlined above) it is a fact that the day to day management of our landscape in rural Ireland is in the hands of private landowners and farmers and it is these people that are largely responsible for the majority of archaeological sites.

The Heritage Council works in partnership with Local Government and the farming community to provide advice to farmers on the management of archaeological monuments on privately owned land on foot of survey results pointing to significant damage due to land reclamation and intensive agriculture. Clare County Council is one such local authority which has employed a Field Monument Adviser under this scheme aimed at better preservation of our archaeological landscape. The role of the advisor is to support landowners in the care of archaeological monuments in their ownership by providing information and contributing to training programmes aimed at farmers. They actively visit farms to assist with management issues surrounding the archaeological monuments on the land with the intention to increase the farmers’ interest and enthusiasm so that the care of the sites becomes part of the day-to-day farming process.

While the Field Advisor is working under the legislation of the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004, there is an attempt to be more flexible to work in the best interest of both the farmer and the Minister. It works on the premise of raising the awareness, not only of the monument itself, but also its context within a given landscape. The Field Monument Adviser is a very useful tool between the RMP and the landscape of rural Ireland with its farming caretakers.

The Field Advisor is also capable of monitoring the status of Sites and Monuments on an ongoing basis within their area. These monuments can be under threat not only from agriculture, but also due to other factors such as climate change, erosion, weather events and flooding (Baker, 2013).

The Office of Public Works (OPW)

The Office of Public Works has responsibility for the day-to-day running of all National Monuments and National Historic Properties including some of Ireland's most iconic sites such as Poulnabrone Dolmen, Co. Clare. The Office maintains and operates the country's most important heritage sites with a duty to conserve as well as encourage the public to visit them. Some of these sites are staffed either on a full-time or seasonal basis while others are unmanned.

The OPW facilitate the millions of Irish and foreign tourists at these sites where they provide information about Ireland's culture and heritage through guided tours, interpretive signs and printed literature. It carries out its heritage function through specialist units in the National Monuments Service and the National Historic Properties Service. As well as working with local groups and societies, the OPW also works with other official agencies and partners who have key roles in promoting Ireland's heritage. These include:

- Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht
- Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government
- The Heritage Council
- Fáilte Ireland
- Local authorities
- Heritage officers

The only policy that the OPW has adopted as its own is its Child Protection Policy which underpins its commitment to the safety and welfare of children and young people who engage with it and its services. It also devised a sustainability policy which centres on operations within the service focusing on environmental sustainability. Therefore it seems clear that with regards to its work on the ground at the various heritage sites, the OPW works under existing policies and codes of practice of its partners.

In its most recent published report (2012) the Minister at the time stated:

'Heritage is a key component of OPW's portfolio both intrinsically as custodian of Ireland's cultural legacy and as a vital contributor to the socio-economic wellbeing of the state through tourism and regional development. Heritage sites are a major driver of national economic growth and employment through down-stream visitor demand for goods and services' (Hayes, 2012).

Since 2011 the OPW has operated an initiative called Free First Wednesday, which is a free access initiative to a number of OPW sites across the country which permits free entry on the first Wednesday of every month.

A strategic review in the 2012 report outlines the key objectives on heritage management as:

1. To adopt a sustainable approach to the management and conservation of the states heritage sites with an emphasis on quality and standards
2. To present our heritage sites to the best advantage ensuring that their potential contribution to tourism is maximised and that visitor enjoyment and education experiences are enhanced.

Planning and Development

The Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government is responsible for developing planning policy and legislation. The physical planning system in Ireland is operated on the ground by 88 local planning authorities: 29 County Councils, 5 County

Borough Corporations, 5 Borough Corporations and 49 Town Councils. Decisions of the planning authorities can, for the most part, be appealed to An Bord Pleanála, the planning appeals board. The Department is precluded from any interference in these decisions.

As well as the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, under the Planning and Development Regulations, any applications that might have a significant effect on either architectural heritage, archaeology and/or nature conservation, must also be referred to the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The Planning and Licensing Unit of the National Monuments Service provides input and advice in relation to the protection of the archaeological heritage to planning and other authorities in respect of individual planning and other development applications, projects and plans.

An Taisce

Any large or complex planning applications that may impact on natural or built heritage are referred to An Taisce, a largely voluntary group that pursues a public interest mandate. Its policy is to protect the Irish taxpayer from the long-term economic, social and environmental costs of bad planning.

Among An Taisce's key objectives in undertaking its statutory role in the planning system is ensuring the implementation of EU environmental law protecting habitats and biodiversity, particularly Natura 2000 sites. It also encourages reduction in Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions and protection of water quality and wetlands. An Taisce promotes a policy which prevents inappropriate development on floodplains and works towards conserving the Irish Landscape, archaeological monuments, built heritage and protected structures.

Planning and Development Acts & Built Heritage

Under the Planning and Development Act 2000 the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is a statutory consultee in relation to developmental impacts on the archaeological heritage. This allows the Minister to recommend that archaeological conditions be attached to grants of planning permission, or recommend refusal of planning permission by the planning authority to ensure the protection of the archaeological heritage. The Environmental Impact Assessment (process is central to the protection of the archaeological heritage in respect of large-scale development projects. The "Developer Pays" principle applies in relation to archaeological costs arising from a development. National Monuments Service provides expert advice from an archaeological perspective to planning and other relevant authorities in respect of individual planning, development applications and other projects and plans, making sure that every effort is made to ensure that developmental impacts on the archaeological heritage are mitigated. In recent years the Department has put in place Codes of Practice with agencies (see below) involved in the delivery of large-scale infrastructural projects which by their nature can have significant archaeological implications.

Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010

The core principal objectives of this Act are to amend the Planning Acts of 2000 – 2009 with specific regard given to supporting economic renewal and sustainable development. The Act envisages a closer alignment of the National Spatial Strategy with Regional Planning Guidelines, Development Plans and Local Area Plans, while also clarifying the key obligations required of Planning Authorities under the Birds and Habitats Directives. The Act also aims to improve the performance of An Bord Pleanála and strengthen the enforcement controls of Planning Authorities.

Built heritage is protected through the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and also some older properties are also protected through archaeological legislation. The County Development Plan is a key document, as it not only includes the Record of Protected

Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas but also includes objectives to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the architectural heritage through the planning process and specific objectives to protect the archaeological heritage.

International Role in Planning

UNESCO's Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage was drawn up in 1972 and ratified by Ireland in 1991. This convention notes that the cultural and natural heritage is increasingly threatened with destruction. Each state party to the convention recognises that the duty of ensuring identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of this heritage belongs primarily to that state. The Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, drawn up by the Council of Europe and signed at Granada in 1985, was ratified by Ireland in 1997. Commonly known as the Granada Convention, it provides the basis for our national commitment to the protection of the architectural heritage. The convention is a means of proclaiming conservation principles, including a definition of what is meant by architectural heritage such as monuments, groups of buildings and sites. It seeks to define a European standard of protection for architectural heritage and to create legal obligations that the signatories undertake to implement. It stresses the importance of 'handing down to future generations a system of cultural references'. It relies for its effectiveness on its signatory countries implementing their own national protective regimes.

It is in the context of international initiatives such as the Granada Convention, as well as increasing awareness nationally, that Ireland has legislated for the increased protection of the architectural heritage. This wider acknowledgement of the need to conserve the built heritage recognises the social and economic benefits of conserving this part of our common inheritance and also the place of conservation in policies of sustainable development.

National Spatial Strategy

The National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 (published on 28th November 2002) is a 20-year coherent national planning framework for Ireland. It aims to achieve a better balance of social, economic and physical development across Ireland, supported by more effective and integrated planning. The Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government leads the Strategy's implementation. The commitment to prepare the NSS was included in the National Development Plan 2000 – 2006.

Sustainable development requires a combination of a dynamic economy with social inclusion, giving opportunities for all in a high quality environment. The National Spatial Strategy, through its focus on economic, social and environmental issues and on inter-linkages between them, is a key policy instrument in the pursuit of sustainable development (NSS 2002-2020, page 13).

The National Spatial Strategy set out broad policies to be adopted by regional and local bodies to address aspects such as urban/rural interdependency, strengthening the rural economy, communities and environmental quality. It identifies various types of rural areas and suggests policy responses as appropriate. Strong areas are identified in the South and East of the country where agriculture is strong but there is also the added stress of the pressure for development. The NSS supports farming, strengthens villages and small towns to make them attractive for residential and employment purposes and reduces urban sprawl. Areas identified as 'changing rural areas' in the NSS have seen a decrease in population and agriculture. Here, the NSS supports communities through diversification in enterprise, local services and tourism. Areas that have been classified as 'weak' or 'remote' occur mainly in western coastal

parts, midlands and the islands. The policies for these areas aim to build rural communities through spatially targeted and integrated measures, development of new tourism resources such as inland waterways and enhancement of technology in an attempt to overcome distance barriers. Finally, there is the 'Culturally Distinct Area' which includes parts of the west, the Gaeltacht and areas which have distinctive cultural heritage. The policies suggested in the NSS for these areas enhance accessibility, strengthen existing settlements and conserve cultural identity.

Under the National Spatial Strategy classification system, the Burren is seen to fall under two different types of rural areas; it is a culturally distinct area while at the same time being a changing area where agriculture and environment are under increasing stress. The NSS recommends policy to be developed for the success of established tourism areas to manage and sustain the natural and cultural heritage. The development and implementation of this policy is intended to be at regional, local and area specific level, with strategies and agendas tailored to suit specific needs.

Within the National Spatial Strategy County Clare is identified as being within the Mid-West Region comprising County Clare, County Tipperary North and Limerick City and County. The National Spatial Strategy presents key concepts as the tools implementing the strategy. These concepts are potential, critical mass, gateways, hubs, complementary roles and linkages. Implementation of the National Spatial Strategy in County Clare is through regional planning guidelines and the preparation of integrated spatial planning frameworks. The Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG) were adopted in May 2004 and implement the aims and objectives of the National Spatial Strategy in the region. This regional aspect of the NSS is discussed further below.

National Environmental Policy

The National Spatial Strategy does not replace or re-state environmental policies generally. However, development arising from the NSS will be implemented within the framework of strong and ambitious policies for protection of the environment and policies to integrate environmental considerations in sectoral policies (NSS 2002-2020, pp114).

The quality and character of Ireland's environment make a major contribution to national identity and to the 'green' image of the country. Ireland's national aims for achieving sustainable development point to three policy issues relating to environment:

- An International responsibility to present and future generations which combines the concepts of sustainability and good stewardship
- The role of the environment in economic development
- The role of the environment in contributing to the quality of life of people

The environment is a strategic and valuable asset for Ireland and as such it must be protected and proactively managed to ensure it forms the basis of Ireland's economic wellbeing and a healthy society, now and into the future. The EPA produces an assessment every 4 years, most recent in 2012. Although the overall finding of *Ireland's Environment 2012: An Assessment* shows that Ireland's environment remains in a good condition, Ireland faces a number of key challenges in the coming years.

2012 report has identified 4 key challenges for Ireland. These points from the EPA report are listed below:

1. Valuing and protecting our natural environment.

A good environment is a critical component of high quality of life, with clean air and safe water being two of our most basic human needs. Abundant biodiversity and healthy soil are other aspects of our natural environment that are essential to humanity. Meeting the

requirements of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and protecting our water resources in a changing climate are pressing challenges for Ireland. Maintaining our clean air and healthy soil will also require continuing attention, as will protecting biodiversity and nature from further loss and damage. Ireland's natural environment and resources have a great intrinsic worth. It is critical to value these resources as key assets for the State and to protect this wealth to provide for future generations

2. Building a resource efficient low carbon economy

The recent economic downturn has curbed, for the present, the type of growth in Ireland that was unsustainable. There is now an opportunity to ensure that future development is based on highly efficient processes and improved resource efficiency. From waste prevention to efficient and renewable energy, investment now in this area will position Ireland as a competitive economy into the future and help to provide protection from future economic shocks as well as allowing us to meet our targets under international climate change agreements. Meeting the 2020 targets on GHG emissions is a major task for Ireland. Domestic mitigation action is imperative, so that Ireland reduces greenhouse gases while also availing of the wider opportunities in terms of new and sustainable growth in the emerging global green economy

3. Implementing environmental legislation

In the coming years Ireland faces formidable challenges in meeting international obligations including for example on water quality, air quality, GHG emissions and waste management. Ireland also faces a number of EU infringement proceedings in relation to the transposition or implementation of a range of EU directives. It is important that Ireland complies with international commitments and ensures that legislation is implemented in a timely and appropriate manner. Similarly, the EPA and other regulators have an important role to play to ensure that a healthy, safe environment is delivered for Ireland through effective enforcement of environmental legislation at national and local levels. These actions are necessary not only to prevent avoidable environmental damage, but also to protect Ireland's reputation and green image, which is important to many of our economic sectors, in particular the agri-food and tourism sectors

4. Putting our Environment at the centre of our decision making

Achieving development and growth that is sustainable means that environmental considerations need to be placed at the centre of policy and decision making at national, regional and local levels. There is a shared responsibility for achieving and maintaining a healthy environment. Clear leadership and co-ordinated efforts from Government and public bodies are needed to ensure that existing and future activities maintain and improve the quality of the environment, businesses, industry and farmers responsible.

EPA Biodiversity Action Plan 2011-2013

Ireland has international and legal obligations to protect biodiversity. These include a commitment to halt biodiversity loss by 2020. Protection of biodiversity within and outside protected areas is necessary and will require greater integration of biodiversity concerns in sectoral policy development and implementation, at local and national levels. Ireland's second National Biodiversity Plan (2011–2016) includes a programme of measures aimed at meeting Ireland's biodiversity obligations. Full implementation of the plan will help ensure the sustainable management of biological resources and protection of biodiversity for future generations. Establishing a sustainable pattern of development is a key challenge for Ireland, and improving resource efficiency is a top priority to achieve this goal. Resource efficiency is also one of the key environmental priorities at EU level and is one of the seven flagship

initiatives within the Europe 2020 Strategy. The challenge is to utilise resources in a sustainable manner throughout their life-cycle, avoiding over-exploitation and reducing the environmental and social impacts of their use. Transforming the economy onto a resource-efficient path requires policies that recognise the interdependencies between the economy, wellbeing and natural capital and the removal of barriers to improved resource efficiency. To achieve a resource-efficient and green economy, there is a need to make a transition across all sectors of the economy and, in particular, the energy, agricultural and transport systems, as well as changing behaviours of producers and consumers.

The Current Situation

Globally, species are currently being lost at up to 1,000 times faster than the natural rate, primarily as a result of human activities (MEA, 2005). It is estimated that in the EU, only 17% of habitats and 17% of species protected under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) are in a favourable state (EEA, 2010). Recent evidence indicates that Ireland's biodiversity capital is still dwindling rapidly (EPA STRIVE, 2011).

The majority of Ireland's habitats that are listed under the Habitats Directive are reported to be of poor or bad conservation status (source?). Only 7% of listed habitats are considered to be in a favourable state (NPWS, 2008).

The key pressures on Ireland's habitats and species are direct habitat damage such as peat cutting, wetland drainage/reclamation and infrastructural development; overgrazing and undergrazing; water pollution particularly from nutrients and silt; unsustainable exploitation such as over-fishing and peat extraction; invasive alien species; and recreational pressure (NPWS, 2008).

Indirect pressures such as population growth, limited awareness about biodiversity, and the fact that biodiversity's economic value is often not reflected in decision making are also threats to biodiversity. Climate change is likely to bring additional pressures on a number of species and habitats in Ireland (EPA CCRP, 2009).

At EU level the Habitats Directive and Birds Directive create a comprehensive scheme of protection for wild species and habitats. While designation of protected areas in recent years has advanced substantially, the European Commission still considers Ireland's list of designated Natura 2000 sites as incomplete (EC, 2010). The full implementation of these Directives, along with other Directives including the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC), will contribute significantly to biodiversity protection. The Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (85/337/EEC) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC) require the consideration of potential development impacts on biodiversity. The most important pieces of national legislation on nature conservation are the Wildlife Act, 1976, the Wildlife (Amendment) Acts, 2000–2010, and the EU (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997–2011. Under the Wildlife Acts nearly all bird species and some 60 other animal species are afforded protected status, as are some 90 plant species. Substantial changes were made to the planning code in 2010, which included obligations on local authorities to ensure protection of Natura 2000 sites and species listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives.

The National Biodiversity Plan 2011–2016 (DAHG, 2011) is the main tool by which Ireland seeks to meet its commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the EU Biodiversity Strategy. Reviews of implementation of the previous National Biodiversity Plan have reported mixed success (DEHLG, 2005, 2010). Local and public authorities and Government departments were required under the previous plan to make local/ sectoral biodiversity action plans.

The EPA and Bord na Móna published biodiversity action plans in 2010 (Bord na Móna, 2010; EPA, 2012), and 26 local authority biodiversity action plans are complete or in the final stages of preparation. As part of Ireland's response to a European Court of Justice ruling action/threat response plans have been published for 18 species of high conservation concern and a conservation plan for cetaceans has also been published, however it should be noted that much of our biodiversity lies outside protected areas and effective conservation.

There are some 630 proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs), comprising 65,000 ha, which were published on a non-statutory basis in 1995 but have not since been statutorily proposed or designated and therefore currently receive limited protection. It is imperative that undesignated nationally important sites of biodiversity significance be designated as NHAs by the NPWS as soon as possible to afford them better protection. The NPWS Farm Plan Scheme was launched in 2006 but curtailed in April 2010 due to budgetary constraints. To date 658 NPWS farm plans on Natura 2000 sites have been approved. NPWS farm plans include specifically targeted measures towards the conservation and enhancement of suitable ecological conditions for various species of fauna.

Due to its obligations under the European Landscape Convention, Ireland is preparing a National Landscape Strategy which will also have significant implications for biodiversity.

National Landscape Strategy

The National Landscape Strategy will promote increased public awareness and understanding about landscapes including its value as a cultural and visual resource and its role in promoting Ireland's attractiveness as a tourist destination. It is an interdepartmental agenda between DECLG, HC, DAHG and Planning Authorities and is largely influenced by the European Landscape Convention (Florence 2000).

Codes of Practice

Codes of practice have been developed as a means to strengthen the management and protection of our archaeological heritage while at the same time allowing infrastructure providers in the state to progress with their work as efficiently as possible. These infrastructural bodies are:

- Irish Concrete Federation
- ESB Networks
- EirGrid
- Bord Gais Networks
- Coillte
- National Roads Authority
- Railway Procurement Agency
- Iarnrod Eireann
- Bord na Mona

The management of the required archaeological research in the planning stages of the infrastructural projects undertaken by these partners is an integral part to project design. The respective roles of the people involved, the consideration of archaeological implications, the effective mitigation and the costs involved are all considered at the earliest stage to provide the best opportunity to ensure appropriate archaeological investigation and mitigation.

Regional Policy

Regional Planning Guidelines

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) sets out the policies on spatial planning adopted by the Government at national level. At regional level, a key policy bridge between national development priorities and local planning has been put in place with the adoption in mid-2004 of Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs). RPGs put in place policies to translate the overall national approach of the NSS into policies at regional and local level. While working within the national framework of gateways, hubs, other towns, villages and rural areas, the RPGs provide more detailed regional level guidance, assisting planning authorities in framing County, City and Local Area Development Plans. As well as overseeing the implementation of RPGs, the Department monitors the preparation of County, City and Local Area Development Plans to ensure that they are consistent with the objectives of the NSS. The RPGs, when drawn up, are statutorily valid for a period of 6 years.

The importance of other plans and programmes and their relevance to achieving the aims of the NSS are also recognised. In addressing spatial issues for the island of Ireland as a whole and strengthening cross-border co-operation, the NSS acknowledges the importance of Shaping Our Future, the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland. The NSS in the South and the Regional Development Strategy in the North are becoming more embedded in policy-making on both sides of the border. A framework of collaboration on spatial policy between North and South is being progressed in order to create enhanced, globally competitive and dynamic economic conditions on the island of Ireland by providing strategic, forward-looking planning frameworks which will assist in targeting appropriate investment in infrastructure and lead to better co-ordination of public services improving the quality of life on both sides of the border.

Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022

The Mid West Regional Planning Guidelines⁵ (MWRPG's) 2010-2022 give effect, at a Regional level, to the National Planning Framework put forward in the National Spatial Strategy (NSS), first adopted in 2002 and updated in 2010, and National Development Plan (NDP) 2007-2013. They also reflect other national social, economic and environmental policies which affect the Mid-West Region, as well as a range of existing regional strategies such as the regional Climate Change Strategy and the regional Waste Management Strategies. The MWRPG's provide a Regional framework for the formulation of policies and strategy in the County Development Plan and seek to ensure the proper balance between the different settlements in the region with regard to development, population and services. The Guidelines present an updated Regional settlement strategy and outline a range of criteria for Development Plans in the context of population and settlement and identify strategic infrastructure investments for the region. This Regional guidance has influenced the development of the settlement strategy for County Clare. The MWRPG's 2010-2022 continue the 'Zone' based strategy (Zone 1 – Zone 8) that was employed in the 2004 Guidelines, outlining the development potential and needs of each zone in turn. North Clare falls into Zone 1 and 3.

Renewable and sustainable energy lie at the heart of the Government's environmental and economic policies. The Guidelines proposes that the Mid-West Region has high potential for the provision of renewable energy including bio-energy and other green technologies that would benefit the economy and environment alike. The Mid-West region is particularly well placed to make use of these policies with a wide range of renewable resources such as wind and wave power, forestry and at a smaller scale the potential use of farm waste for anaerobic

digestion in some regions. A number of key strategy documents exist which address these such as the Regional Climate Change Strategy and the Clare Wind Energy Strategy. With these policies in mind, planning Authorities such make provisions for new uses of agricultural land and all development plans should identify such areas where renewable energy proposals should be considered. Those areas which lie within the Natura 2000 will be subject to Habitat Directive Assessments (see above).

The MWRPG identifies a need for a common approach to landscape management across the region which will identify landscapes of similar character and adopt policies as appropriate to them. Landscape protection policies should take into account protection of ecological sites, habitats and species of ecological value and ecological corridors and networks to ensure the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network. Development Plans should include policies for linear landscapes such as water courses and hedgerows, which provide pathways for the dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species. The common approaches should be adopted while the detailed management of individual landscape units are the responsibility of the individual Planning Authorities and local circumstances as well as shared approaches will inform specific decisions.

The implementation of the RPG lies largely with the semi-state bodies charged with the provision of social, economic and physical infrastructure and the protection and enhancement of our natural and human resources. These include:

- Regional Authority and its operational committee
- Local Authorities
- County and City Development Boards
- Other standing and ad hoc committees

The Mid-West Regional Authority takes responsibility for the establishment, management and facilitation of these arrangements. Coordination Groups for Specialist Areas identified in the MWRPG document include a specialist group for the Burren Area which has responsibility to set criteria and parameters for Local Authorities and other bodies that will be charged with the operational procedures and policies in the MWRPG document. These groups are designed to provide policy consistency across administrative boundaries that arise in these special areas. There are also specialist groups for cross-county policies relating to renewable energy, landscape management and transport integration.

Operational implementation of the strategy and RPGs require the cooperation of a range of executive agencies throughout the region, including for the purpose of this report;

- Local Authorities
- Shannon Development
- IDA
- Bus Eireann
- Iarnrod Eireann
- Failte Ireland
- Enterprise Ireland
- Tourism Ireland
- County and City Enterprise Boards
- Chamber of Commerce

There are also some nationally based organisations such as the NRA and Government Departments which need to be involved. Most of the bodies listed above do not fall within the

control of any structure but it is hoped that they would be given some weight in any decision making process.

Development Plans

The main instrument for regulation and control of development is the Development Plan, which must be renewed every 6 years. The plan states the authority's policies for land use and for development control and promotion in its area. In general, the Plan shows the authority's objectives for the sole or primary use of particular areas (eg residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural), for road improvements, for development and renewal of obsolete areas, and for preserving, improving and extending amenities. The public can become involved in the making of the development plan, at the initial stage, when the planning authority publishes its intention to review the plan, at the draft plan stage and if applicable, at the amended draft plan stage. Before a plan is adopted, copies of the draft must be sent to various statutory and voluntary bodies who may be able to give the authority specialist advice.

Clare County Development Plan

The Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 nestles within a clear hierarchy of spatial policy documents. This hierarchy of strategies, policies, plans, etc., follows a format which commences with high level International and/or EU documents feeding progressively downwards into site specific local plans and policies. As this is a County Development Plan, it is at an important level in terms of the development of County Clare, though it must adhere to policy and strategic options which are pre-determined by higher level plans and guidelines. The Plan is affected by, and will affect a wide range of other relevant plans and programmes, and environmental objectives.

The main development goals for the Clare County Development Plan that are deemed relevant to the GeoPark Programme include the following:

- A County Clare that drives local and Regional growth through harnessing the potential of its unique location, quality of life, natural resources and other competitive advantages.
- A County Clare whereby the sustainable growth of the County is developed and integrated with the timely delivery of a wide range of community, educational and cultural facilities and where through a commitment to equality, accessibility and social inclusion, the County develops as a unique location with an enhanced quality of life for its citizens and visitors.
- A County Clare which protects and develops the County's water and wastewater infrastructure, integrating their provision with the County's overall land use strategies whilst having regard to environmental responsibilities and complying with European and National legislation.
- A County Clare which manages and protects its natural resources, groundwater and air quality, manages flood risk, promotes the concepts of reducing, re-using and recycling and facilitates the reduction of greenhouse emissions and promotes sustainable development in full conformance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- A County Clare which facilitates and encourages sustainable forms of movement and transport in our towns, villages and rural areas, promotes the delivery of local transport links, provides safe and efficient road and rail access within the County and to other regions and achieves its full potential and attractiveness for International air and marine transport and connectivity.

- A County Clare in which tourism growth continues to play a major role in the future development of the County, adapting to the challenges of competing markets by maximising the development of a high quality diverse tourist product throughout County Clare.
- A County Clare with diverse and strong rural communities and economy, where its natural resources are harnessed in a manner that is compatible with the sensitivity of rural areas and the existing quality of life.
- A County Clare of ‘living landscapes’ where people live, work, recreate and visit while respecting, managing and taking pride in the unique landscape of County Clare.
- A County Clare which protects and enhances the County’s unique natural heritage and biodiversity, while promoting and developing its cultural, educational and eco-tourism potential in a sustainable manner.
- A County Clare that affords adequate protection and conservation to buildings, areas, structures, sites and features of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest and recognises them as a social, cultural and economic asset to the County.

(Extracts From Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017
<http://www.clarecoco.ie/planning/planning-strategy/development-plans/clare-county-development-plan-2011-2017/>*)*

The Development Plan is the single most important policy document for the County as it represents an agreed economic, social, cultural and environmental blueprint for the future planning, growth and development of County Clare. The County Development Plan has been proofed to ensure that all aspects of its goals and objectives reinforce a commitment to equality, accessibility and social inclusion. Among the key goals of the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 is the commitment to promote tourism development and maintain a high quality environment.

Tourism will continue to be one of the key sectors in the future economic development of County Clare over the period 2011-2017. The tourism product is built on the bedrock of a unique and diverse built and natural landscape, including the Burren, Atlantic coastline, Shannon Estuary and Lough Derg, together with a network of vibrant and attractive historic towns and villages. The County is also home to some of Ireland’s premier tourist attractions, including Bunratty Castle and Folk Park and The Cliffs of Moher. The Clare County Development Plan recognises that these resources must be supported by excellent transportation infrastructure, including Shannon International Airport and an accessible road and rail network, and by a cohesive well-marketed and high quality tourism product. The goal will be to capitalise on the County’s diversity to try and ensure a strong year-round tourist economy. The Cliffs of Moher will be maintained as one of the country’s premier tourist attractions. All of these objectives of the tourism sector depend on safeguarding the built and natural environment, ensuring the highest quality in all new development and also affording appropriate protection to structures, sites and landscapes of intrinsic heritage value. To this end there is a need to strike an optimum balance between facilitating future development while managing the built and natural environment. This is achieved through enhancing awareness of the County’s outstanding built, natural and cultural heritage. It is proposed that the final phase of the GeoPark Project will work towards how best to achieve this with sustainability and conservation as its core objectives.

North Clare Local Area Plan

The administrative area of the Mid-West Regional Authority comprises County Clare, North Tipperary, Limerick City and County. The North Clare Local Area Plan 2011-2017 sets out

the land use plan for the proper planning and sustainable development of each settlement in the area of the Plan in accordance with the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 which acts as a 'parent' document. North Clare has both a distinct topography and geology due primarily to the location of the Burren within the Area. The Plan provides a framework for the development of the North Clare area over the period 2011-2017, incorporating the relevant strategic objectives at a National and Regional level into a format specific to the Plan area. This is for the purpose of guiding development in the Plan area in terms of the provision of residential accommodation, adequate services and infrastructure and how this can be balanced with the protection of the local environment.

Good Farming Practice

Until the late 1990's Ireland's nature conservation policy concentrated almost exclusively on site-based conservation initiatives. With the transposition of the European Union's Habitat Directive into Irish law (XXXX), and the signing of the Convention on Biological Diversity, all sectors of the economy, including agriculture, became linked to nature conservation objectives.

Agriculture is the principal land use in Ireland and is of vital importance for maintaining much of Ireland's biological and landscape diversity and the primary carers of the rural landscape are our farmers. With that in mind, it is necessary to look at farming practices in County Clare and the Burren Geopark region and also the policies which influence them. The previous LIFE project [name] dealt in detail with this aspect of farming for conservation.

Farming is closely associated with challenges facing society including the use of natural resources and the preservation of the continuity of the farming sector which is vital to our rural economies and heritage. There is an increased need for incentives for farmers to adopt sustainable farming methods and to meet these challenges the EU has created and implemented the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) while the Department of Agriculture and Food established the Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS), also in response to EU legislation.

The stated objectives of the REPS are:

- To establish farming practices and controlled production methods which reflect the increasing concerns for conservation, landscape protection and wider environmental problems;
- To protect wildlife habitats and endangered species of flora and fauna;
- To produce quality food in an extensive and environmentally friendly manner.

Our countryside is not in its original natural state. It has been shaped by farming over the centuries, which has created our diverse environment and its varied landscapes. Our countryside provides the habitat for a great diversity of fauna and flora. This biodiversity is critical for the sustainable development of the countryside. Farmers are the first to realise the need to care for our natural resources and to avoid negative side-effects of some farming practices, the EU provides incentives to farmers to work in a sustainable and environmentally-friendly manner, mainly through income support payments for the adoption of environmentally sustainable farming methods. In addition, the CAP promotes agricultural practices such as maintaining permanent grassland and safeguarding the scenic value of the landscape. Protecting biodiversity and wildlife habitats, managing water resources and dealing with climate change are other priorities that farmers are required to respect. In this regard, the EU's Natura 2000 programme is relevant.

Other policies impacting on farming include the EU Rural Development policy 2014-2020 and the EU Forest Strategy, all intended with a view meeting the challenges faced by our rural

areas, and unlocking their potential economically and socially while at the same time improving the quality of the environment and life through diversification.

Tidy Towns

The national Tidy Towns initiative was launched by Bord Fáilte, the Irish Tourist Board (now Fáilte Ireland), in 1958 as part of the 'Tostal', a nationwide festival celebrating all things Irish. A step-up from the original National Spring Clean Campaign which ran between 1953 and 1957, Tidy Towns rapidly developed its own identity and has gone on to become Ireland's most well known and popular local environmental initiative.

Following the restructuring of Bord Fáilte in 1995, the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government assumed responsibility for Tidy Towns and now organises the initiative with the support of national sponsor SuperValu and a number of other agencies. Its success continues, and while it has moved with the times, it still retains the same core principle of its founders- "make your place a better place."

There are publications available on the Tidy Towns website which detail how the competition operates. A Tidy Towns Handbook was prepared by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government in 2002, with an update on Sustainable Waste and Resource Management in a document prepared last year (2013). These documents don't outline specific policy per se but the handbook does suggest that any group should discuss the scope of the Local Area Plan (or Village Design Statement if one exists) with the Local Authority, to see where synergy between work programmes and actions can be realised.

The Heritage Council publication with Tidy Towns and the Department on Conserving and Enhancing Wildlife in Towns and Villages (2002) suggests the preparation of a wildlife conservation plan as part of any project undertaken and also provides useful information on common habitats in Ireland and practical guidelines for their management.

Apart from this, it is expected that the Tidy Towns competition would operate under existing legislation and policy from EU to Local level.

Section to be include on the work of the Burren & Cliffs of Moher Geopark and Burrenbeo Trust.

Policy and Tourism

National Tourism Policy

The Government White Paper on Tourism Policy 1985 was the first comprehensive statement on tourism policy in Ireland and set the following objectives:

"To optimise the economic and social benefits to Ireland of the promotion and development of tourism both to and within the country consistent with ensuring an acceptable economic rate of return on the resources employed and taking account of tourism's potential for job creation; the quality of life and development of the community; the enhancement and preservation of the nation's cultural heritage; the conservation of the physical resources of the country; and tourism's contribution to regional development."

The White Paper gave rise to a response from the key industry representative groups. The industry recommended ambitious targets for the sector that were subsequently adopted by Government. Since the late eighties, the prime objectives of national tourism policy were clearly articulated in successive national partnership development plans, and within the EU Community Support Framework for Ireland.

Since 2003 there has been a vision that Ireland would be a destination of choice for discerning international and domestic tourists and it would exceed their expectations in terms of friendliness, quality of environment, diversity and depth of culture. The objectives were to see customers of the tourism experience in Ireland repeat that experience and to communicate it positively to friends and acquaintances and if this was met then Irish tourism would be a major source and opportunity for profitable enterprise and a powerful social and economic tool for development at national and regional level.

However, in 2013, the Limerick Chamber quite bluntly puts it that 'Government involvement in Ireland's tourism model is uniquely centralised and statist' (Limerick Chamber, 2013). 'Ireland is the only developed country that gives responsibility for tourism development and local marketing to a centralized state organisation. In all other developed countries responsibility for tourism development and local marketing is given to local community-based organisations. These organisations typically involve the local authorities and the local tourism industry' (Casey & O'Rourke, 2013).

The policy objective set for the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism is to facilitate the continued development of an economic and environmentally sustainable and spatially balanced tourism sector, through formulating, monitoring and reviewing a range of supporting policies and programmes, particularly within the framework of the National Development Plan and North/South co-operation. Policy is implemented by state-sponsored bodies and executive agencies. The principal State Agencies are Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, Shannon Development and the Regional Tourism Authorities (OECD, 2004).

Government policy for the development of the tourism sector in Ireland has focused on supporting sustainable growth in visitor expenditure with an emphasis on a wider regional and seasonal spread of business. The Programme for Government Annual Report 2014 states that 'the tourism sector offers the potential of tens of thousands of extra jobs across the country. Building on the success of The Gathering, the lower VAT rate and new airline routes established as a result of the abolition of the travel tax, we will publish a new tourism strategy before the summer' (Programme For Government Annual Report, 2014). The recently published review of the Government Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy sets out a 'new market approach' for Ireland's priority markets and updates targets for growth in exports, investment, tourism and jobs.

The recently published review of the Government Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy sets out a 'new market approach' for Ireland's priority markets and updates targets for growth

in exports, investment, tourism and jobs (Programme For Government Annual Report, 2014). The programme also highlights the success of event tourism such as ‘The Gathering’ and its potential in the future. Capital investment will still be put into large projects including the development of ‘The Wild Atlantic Way’ and initiatives such as Culture Night and International Week of Irish Culture will continue to be supported (Programme For Government Annual Report, 2014).

The North South Ministerial Council continues to progress economic co-operation and advance job creation on an all-Ireland basis with key developments including Tourism Ireland, and its partners, are implementing the GB Pathway to Growth plan which aims to grow the number of British visitors to the island of Ireland by 20% by 2016 (Programme For Government Annual Report, 2014).

There is a complex two-way relationship between tourism and the environment. There is a need for tourism that is compatible with the image of beautiful scenery and an unspoilt environment. Tourism does not operate in isolation. Given the diverse nature of tourism-related economic activity, it is affected by a wide range of policies, both at domestic and EU level. The policies, for example, that impact on the natural and built environment, impact on the prospects for the sector. The government’s Fiscal policy has had both positive and negative impacts on tourism in the past number of years. Benefits include setting the Air Travel Tax to zero this year which has seen a growth in airline capacity into Ireland. There is a need for more positive fiscal policy in relation to tourism in the future development programme.

The players in tourism:

- The Visitors
- The Industry
- The Host Community
- The Environment/Location

Destinations seek to find a balance between their economic, social and environmental aspirations and the cooperate plans of tourism agencies, the actions by the public and private tourism industry and the policy priorities of this Government (discussed below) come together to form ‘destination management’ at a national level.

The Operators

The main body responsible for domestic tourism in Ireland is Fáilte Ireland. Fáilte Ireland was established under the National Tourism Development Authority Act 2003 to encourage, promote and support tourism as a leading indigenous component of the Irish economy. . Under the Tourist Traffic Acts 1939-2003, Fáilte Ireland is assigned responsibility for regulation of the various categories of accommodation. In addition to statutory regulation, there are also voluntary non-statutory listings for accommodation. There are also other aspects to the regulatory environment for the tourist sector with various Acts and EU and domestic legislation having both direct and indirect impacts on the tourism industry.

Tourism Ireland Ltd., the all Island tourist marketing company, was formally incorporated in 2000, following designation of tourism as an area for cooperation under the Good Friday Agreement (1998). Its function is to deal more with Ireland’s tourist economy abroad as well as acting as a North-South cross border body developing the whole island of Ireland in tourism terms. The company has responsibility for all-island destination marketing, Tourism Brand Ireland, the delivery of regional and product marketing and promotion activity on behalf of Fáilte Ireland and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, and overseas office network.

July 2014: Draft Policy for Tourism in Ireland

There is currently a programme with a 2025 deadline for Ireland in relation to marketing which aims at putting tourism at the centre of an economic strategy for Ireland. Planning the preservation and presentation of our assets, i.e. Landscape, Seascape and Built Heritage, as discussed above, will be a major aspect of this programme.

In 2011, the newly elected government decided to place tourism at the centre of its economic recovery plan. Now that the tourism sector is considered by the government to have stabilised and in recovery, the government has mapped out its long term vision for the sector. Tourism is not only important in economic terms; it also supports jobs and encourages social inclusion and access to the labour market. With Ireland being a small island economy, we are heavily dependent on exporting sectors to generate revenue, and tourism will be no exception, with a vision of maximising the benefits from overseas tourist. This is the most heavily weighted aspect of this new draft tourist policy statement published in July 2014.

In 2025 the aim is to have a ‘vibrant, attractive sector that makes a significant contribution to employment across the country, helps promote a positive image of Ireland overseas and is a sector that people wish to work... [With the ambition that]...revenue will reach €5 Billion...and employment in the sector will reach 250,000 (Dept. of Transport, Tourism and Sport, 2014, pp3).

In order to achieve this, it is important that overseas and visitors expectations are met and that any marketing employed will attract a balance of visitors from both mature and developing markets and that our heritage assets will be protected. The Government, State Agencies, Local Authorities and the tourism industry and all stakeholders need to have a clear understanding of the responsibilities and expectations on them, with increased emphasis at community and local level for this. The draft policy statement also addresses the need for a dynamic tourism industry which can meet the changing needs of visitors, but is underpinned by a clear and coherent framework for development and that the highest standards of environmental and economic sustainability will be placed at the centre of the strategy.

Tourism is an export service and one of the primary issues is how to entice residents from other countries to visit Ireland, at a national level. AT this level, we are not looking at individual tour operators or competing accommodation; instead we are marketing the destination, the quality of tourism offering natural scenery, culture and visitor attractions and events. These all contribute to the overall attractiveness of the destination.

There is a time lag between generating interest in a destination and the ultimate holiday purchase; therefore there is little incentive for huge investment in marketing the destination alone. Instead, the role of Tourism Ireland is to funnel and move potential visitors through active planning. Fáilte Ireland also works with Tourism Ireland on international marketing activities for certain specialist areas of tourism and the two bodies coordinate to ensure no duplication.

Visitors to Ireland come with certain expectations, most notably the perceived friendly hospitable people, the quality of our environment, the range of activities to see and do and our history and culture (Source: Fáilte Ireland Visitor Attitudes Surveys). The State has a key role to play in preserving our natural scenery, heritage and range of activities as these are the irreplaceable assets that are needed to enhance the visitors overall experience. The measures required for this are discussed at depth in previous sections of this document. The policy on tourism recognises that preservation and conservation of our natural and built heritage are crucial for continued growth of this aspect tourism and it looks to the legislative and regulatory role of the planning process and associated departments and public bodies to formulate their own strategies in this area. The NPWS and the OPW both work closely with Fáilte Ireland to manage state owned nature reserves, national parks and heritage sites, optimising these assets for the benefit of visitors. In addition to this, the DAHLG and the

Heritage Council also have important roles in protecting landscapes and historic sites and the National Landscape Strategy as discussed above aims to promote the sustainable management and planning of our landscape until 2024. The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, along with the various tourism agencies will be key partners in the implementation of this strategy. Tourism is also a key component of the new National Culture Policy.

There has been substantial capital investment in tourism in Ireland over the past decade or more and this has dramatically improved the range and quality of activities for both overseas and domestic tourists. Various walkways, forest recreational infrastructure, new destination frameworks such as the Wild Atlantic Way and improved signage in historic areas are to name but a few of the investments. Current funding to 2016 has already been assigned to prior commitments but it is the Government's intention to fund a further Tourism Capital Investment Programme in 2016. It is also a key issue that these large public tourism infrastructural projects require upkeep which is beyond the initial capital investment and the policy here is leaning towards upkeep funded projects from non-tourism funding streams such as community and voluntary sectors. There is also a shift taking place from the previous notion of 'capital investment in physical assets' to the idea of the 'visitor experience' in the worldwide tourism industry. *'Therefore, the full range of tourism investments, that can improve the overall visitor experience, must be considered in the design of any future Tourism Capital Investment Programme'* (DTTS: A National Tourism Policy for Ireland (draft), 2014, pp13).

Education and Training, Lack of Irish speaking foreign Language, broader tourism sector skills, other emerging needs. If the quality of the Irish welcome and hospitality as a key asset is to be marketed and met by the visitors, particularly the overseas visitor, then it is critical for the staff of public bodies and private enterprises to communicate with visitors in a way that is representative of the Irish Welcome.

The Irish tourism industry has shown an increasing ability to innovate and co-operation between State bodies, public agencies and private landowners to develop national products such as the Wild Atlantic Way, which is now a product at a scale that can be marketed internationally. The economic difficulties of recent years have also encouraged private enterprises to devise more efficient ways to operate and converge with other areas of economic activity giving rise to new forms of tourism, for example of food tourism. These trends reflect the sectors ability to adapt to a changing environment, something that can be transposed across the industry as changes are needed to meet the challenges faced in the Burren.

Local Authorities play a very active part in many aspects of tourism and often work closely with Fáilte Ireland in development of projects that benefit the local community and visitors alike. Local communities have contributed to tourism over the years with community initiatives such as Tidy Towns benefiting the localities for the people living there and the visitors. The success of the Gathering showed how local communities can contribute to tourism in rural communities, bringing some economic sustainability at a local level throughout the country. As a result of this there will be an enhanced role for Local Authorities in the management of their respective tourism destination and the tourism experience in their areas, with integration of new spatial and economic strategies across regions and administrative boundaries.

'The EU Commission has developed a number of tourism-related initiatives to be implemented in collaboration with national, regional and local public authorities, for example the European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN) awards. While the EU is no longer a source of major funding for capital investment in tourism, funding for rural development, provided under the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), continues to provide opportunities for

diversification of the rural economy into areas such as tourism' (DTTS: A National Tourism Policy for Ireland (draft), 2014, pp29).

At a national level, the reduction to two agencies has majorly reformed the tourism structure in Ireland for the better. The oversight of the two agencies must meet the highest standards of corporate governance. Government policy means that no group or region should expect favourable consideration with regard to representation.

While the agencies are bound by overarching Government policy, they exercise discretion and operational independence, as provided for in legislation, in the execution of their responsibilities. They work together and with other State agencies where appropriate to maximise efficiencies and provide the best possible service in line with Government policy priorities.

Tourism at Regional and Local Level

Tourism plays a significant role in the economy of the Mid-west. The Region contains a number of key tourism zones, including several attractions of national and international significance. The locations of existing attractions are poorly distributed throughout the region with the focus primarily west of the Shannon. As a result, diversification and regeneration of the rural economy in the eastern and southern peripheries has suffered. While there is a need to secure and maintain the established tourist resources and locations around heritage and landscape, there is also a need to explore alternative tourist proposals for other rural areas as recommended by the NSS.

The Local Authority can have a key role to play in developing and delivering tourism products. As authors of development plans as well as influencers of regional area strategic plans, the local authority plays a key role in aligning policies at a local and regional level. The Local Authority also has a vested interest in promoting its Municipal District as the tourism sector is not only key contributors through commercial rates, but also play a pivotal role in making a city region an attractive and living destination. As stated above (Limerick Chamber, 2013), Ireland's tourism model is uniquely centralised and statist' and this is not a good model for success, therefore while there is need for a national strategic direction to be adopted, it can be implemented at a local level from bottom up. The Government has already seen the benefit of this from events such as 'The Gathering'. However, if Local Authorities are to be tasked with playing a more pro-active role in tourism product development they must be given the adequate resources to deliver this in a manner that facilitates streamlining, not duplication of existing services.

Tourism is an industry that is intimately linked to community. When a tourist visits any destination the holiday experience will be based on all his/her experiences at the destination. A single business cannot control the totality of the holiday experience in the same way as a single manufacturing business can control product quality. Tourism needs the support of the entire community and of all the institutions of the community.

Leave No Trace

'Leave No Trace is an Outdoor Ethics Education Programme designed to promote and inspire responsible outdoor recreation through education, research, and partnerships'. The idea of an 'ethics' programme is that there is an intrinsic knowledge about knowing what the right thing to do is. The Leave No Trace programme depends on this attitude and awareness rather than trying to enforce rules and regulations. The programme operates under 7 principles designed to minimise the social and environmental impacts left by people, litter, vegetation, wildlife and livestock disturbance and water pollution to areas of outdoor recreation. These principles to protect our natural and cultural heritage are;

- Plan ahead and prepare

- Be considerate of others
- Respect farm animals and wildlife
- Travel and camp on durable ground
- Leave what you find
- Dispose of waste properly
- Minimise the effects of fire

Leave No Trace Ireland is a network of organisations and individuals with an interest in promoting the responsible recreational use of the countryside and wild places. Partners in the campaign include:

- Coillte
- Environmental Heritage Services
- Department of Communication, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
- Fáilte Ireland
- Department of Agriculture and Food
- Heritage Council
- Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government
- National Trails Office

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ANNEX 5

MINUTES OF MEETINGS



Project	Geopark LIFE Partners Meetings	
Date	18/9/2013	
Location	Clare County Council Offices, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare	

Attendance	Person	Organisation	Abbr.
Yes	Ruairi Deane	Failte Ireland	RD
Apologies	Sarah Gatley	Geological Survey of Ireland	SG
Yes	Michael Fitzsimons	Failte Ireland	MF
Yes	Carleton Jones	NUIG	CJ
Apologies	Gabriel Cooney	UCD	GC
Yes	Beatrice Kelly	Heritage Council	BK
Apologies	Margaret Keane	National Monuments Service	MK
Yes	Christine Grant	National Monuments Service	CHG
Yes	Hugh Carey	National Monuments Service	HC
Apologies	Paul McMahan	Office of Public Works	PMcM
Apologies	Ken Curley	Office of Public Works	KC
Yes	Enda Mooney	National Parks & Wildlife Service	EM
Apologies	Emma Glanville	National Parks & Wildlife Service	EG
Yes (Part)	Congella McGuire	Clare County Council	CMcG
Apologies	Shane Casey	Clare County Council	SC
Yes	Mary Burke	Clare County Council	MB
Yes	Tracey Duffy	Clare County Council	TD
Yes	Joan Tarmey	Clare County Council	JT
Apologies	Sean Lenihan	Clare County Council	SL
Yes	Tina O'Dwyer	Consultant to Geopark	TO'D
Yes	Brian Callinan	Consultant	BC
Yes	Carol Gleeson	Burren Geopark/Clare County Council	CG
Yes	Eamon Doyle	Burren Geopark	ED
Yes	Richard Morrison	Burrenbeo Trust	RM
Yes	Siobain O'Brien	Burren Geopark	SOB
Yes	Pat O'Connor	Ex-Geological Survey of Ireland	POC
Yes	Katherine Webster	Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience	KW

No	Christy Sinclair	Burren Ecotourism Network	CS
No	Michael McGrath	Farmer Representative	MMcG
Yes	Monica Meehan	Clare County Council	MM
Yes	Helen Quinn	Clare County Council	HQ
Yes	Caroline Balfe	Clare County Council	CB
Yes (Part)	Ger Dollard	Clare County Council	GD
Yes (Part)	Greg Davidson	Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience	GRD
1.0	Welcome and introductions Second combined meeting of GeoparkLIFE Steering Group. Review of minutes of April 17 meeting – proposed by MM and seconded by RM.		
2.0	<p>General Progress Report on Geopark Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CG circulated one-page Progress Report on Geopark Activities. (attached) - <u>Egn/GGN Activities:</u> Query on whether there was progress on formal UNESCO designation. CG outlined the political background to this and the hesitation on behalf of UNESCO. Slow progress but going in the right direction - <u>Strategic Development Planning:</u> KW gave update on B.E.N. perspective on Memorandum of Understanding. - <u>Education & Research Programme:</u> ED circulated an update and presented to team. Particular discussion around the Burren Geology School at Caherconnell and the Burren Archive. It was agreed that the archive will be a very comprehensive, accessible and welcome resource. BK: Heritage Council eager to co-operate and promote it. Query on the archive – how will people know it's there. MB: suggested adding County Council links to the archive. Clare County Library will also link to it. - <u>Trail & Geosites Development:</u> Discussion on launch of Heritage Trails – CG wondering what group thought about ideas for launch. RD suggested launching as a suite in order to maximise publicity. Tentatively looking at Spring depending on the planning process for remaining trails to be completed. Proposal to complete work already done on a definitive process/advice/guidelines on trail development. BK and CG informed the meeting that a lot of work has been done on this and highlighted some work done with CMcG and Emer McCarthy (RRO) <p>MB: highlighted good practice process relating to Article 6 Screening Document for trail development and other aspects of the LIFE programme. Transparency, due process and funding criteria require these. Need to be readily accessible according to requirements of AA. Group agreed with benefits of compiling these from the outset in a standardised, accessible way. MB has already done work on a presentation method for this and will liaise with ED to progress this. It was also agreed that this approach should be transferred throughout the project (EM) and that this in itself could be a key outcome of the project i.e. a transferable template (BK).</p> <p><u>Communications:</u></p>		

	<p>Website: SOB updated the group on website developments (design, archive, intranet). Following discussion, following agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project should adopt a policy of openness and publish minutes and proceedings on the website. - Highlight copyright laws and associated restrictions. - Seek advice to ensure data protection and data management regulations are not infringed. <p>Visitor Leaflet: Should be either DL or A4 size. MF will check if this can be linked to the regional pocket guide. CG and MF to liaise on design and publication.</p> <p>Birds of Fanore: Now sold out and very well received. BK suggested working with commercial printers for a reprint, to benefit from distribution, marketing and editing. Discussions around idea of a box set and common design across different publications. CG to follow up.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Transtourism</u>: CG: Programme will be finalised this year. All reporting to be completed in Dec, with all costs to be paid by Oct 31st. CG recommends commissioning analysis on coach tourism in the Burren to conclude the project. KW will participate. Communication and animation of results n.b. - <u>Signage Plan</u>: RD: if funding allows, the whole Burren will be done as part of the Wild Atlantic Way project. Nothing confirmed at this point. EM highlighted complaints received regarding the lack of signage for the Burren National Park and indicated that NPWS may have to proceed unilaterally if Fáilte Ireland do not take the initiative on this. 	
3.0	<p>LIFE Conference 17-18 October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Draft of the conference programme was presented. Final programme to be circulated shortly after the meeting. All partners asked to publicise this and circulate it within their own organisations. Important to ensure local people know they are welcome to attend. <p>Tourism Policy Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Geopark and B.E.N. will be making submissions to the Tourism Policy Review currently underway. 	
4.0	<p>Administrative Matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GRD presented updated timesheets - CG highlighted importance of this system working – payment depends on it. No release of funds unless recorded contributions in kind is complete. - PO'C reminded to include travel time, meeting preparation time and meeting follow-up time. - CG reported that the Inception Report was delivered to the LIFE Team in Brussels on 28th of June. 	
	GEOPARKLIFE Programme	
1.0	Action B1	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TO'D presented the Geopark Code of Practice and the Training Programme Schedule for November 2013 through to March 2014 (attached) - TO'D also outlined the current applicants, noting that the programme is seeking to increase the quota of accommodation providers. - TO'D also presented the programme on product and experience development: Food Trail & Activity Trail plus.. - the Surveys conducted for the GeoparkLIFE/ETIS measurements and linkages with FI survey programme. <p>Steering Committee recommended that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We record the reasons a small number of previous BEN members have left the network - We record the economic impacts of training and sustainable practice through savings and revenue, in energy ratings and in environmental savings. Programme should facilitate templating sustainable planning with businesses. - Look at Origin Green developed by Bord Bia. 	
2.0	<p>Action B2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CG presented Site Selection Proposal (attached) which is based on previous tourism reports summarised in <i>Tourism in the Burren; Summary of Literature and Policy Documents</i> by Joe Saunders (attached) and on the work of Burren Connect (2007 -2012) - The proposal outlined how experience and research to date have identified 3 zones of influence attracting 3 types of visitor and recommends using this characteristic as the guiding principle behind the selection of suitable demonstration sites. The zones were identified with accompanying site profiles. Criteria for the selection of sites was proposed, based on previous discussions with the committee. An outline work programme for each zone was also presented. - The committee agreed with the proposal and proceeded to utilise the agreed criteria to shortlist a number of demonstration sites, in order of preference, for each zone. These are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Zone 1: 1. Blackhead/Fanore, 2. Flagggy Shore, 3. Ballyreen Commonage. - Zone 2: 1. Poul nabrone, 2. Carran Church, 3. An Rath/Cahermore - Zone 3: As all proposed sites are under NPWS management, we will investigate the possibility of an integrated approach to all 3 locations. - It was also proposed to transfer some of the locations into B3 as case studies in community and landowner engagement in conservation and access management. It was agreed that Sheshymore Pavement should retain its status as a research site with access limited to research groups, agreed in advance with the landowner. Public liability insurance for this activity would be provided by the Geopark. - It was agreed to liaise with the FI Wild Atlantic Way (WWW) programme in relation to Zone 1 and to ensure that both LIFE and 	

	WWW projects work together.	
3.0	<p>Action B3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of this action was not discussed at the meeting as the lead partner (UCD) was unable to attend. However, please note that there have been exploratory meetings with Leave No Trace, Burrenbeo Trust, Fetac, GMIT and Burren Outdoor Education Centre on this, and we have also had preliminary discussion with NUIG and OPW on potential training programmes. 	
	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BC clarified that if a 3rd party wants to contribute funding to the project, the process is that they give that to one of the partners who then manage the funds. - Next Meeting Monday 25th November in Ennis. 10am – 1.30pm followed by lunch. 	



LIFE11 ENV/IE/922

Minutes of Meeting

Project	Geopark LIFE Partners Meetings	
Date	2/4/2013	
Location	Burren College of Art	

Attendance	Person	Organisation	Abbr.
Apologies	Pat O'Connor	Ex-Geological Survey of Ireland	POC
Apologies	Sarah Gatley	Geological Survey of Ireland	SG
Apologies	Michael Fitzsimons	Fáilte Ireland	MF
Yes	Flan Quilligan	Fáilte Ireland	FQ
Apologies	Carleton Jones	NUIG	CJ
Yes	Gabriel Cooney	UCD	GC
Apologies	Beatrice Kelly	Heritage Council	BK
Apologies	Margaret Keane	National Monuments Service	MK
Yes	Christine Grant	National Monuments Service	CHG
Yes	Hugh Carey	National Monuments Service	HC
Apologies	Paul McMahon	Office of Public Works	PMcM
Yes	Ken Curley	Office of Public Works	KC
Yes	Enda Mooney	National Parks & Wildlife Service	EM
Yes	Emma Glanville	National Parks & Wildlife Service	EG
Yes	Katherine Webster	Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience	KW
Yes	Christy Sinclair	Burren Ecotourism Network	CS
Yes	Richard Morrison	Burrenbeo Trust	RM
No	Michael McGrath	Farmer Representative	MMcG
Apologies	Ger Dollard	Clare County Council	GD
Yes (Chair)	Monica Meehan	Clare County Council	MM
No	Caroline Balfe	Clare County Council	CB
Yes	Congella McGuire	Clare County Council	CMcG
Yes	Shane Casey	Clare County Council	SC
Apologies	Helen Quinn	Clare County Council	HQ
No	Tracey Duffy	Clare County Council	TD
Yes	Joan Tarmey	Clare County Council	JT
Yes	Risteard Cronin	Clare County Council	RC
Yes	Brian Callinan	Consultant	BC
Yes	Carol Gleeson	Geopark/Clare County Council	CG
Yes	Eamon Doyle	Burren Geopark Geologist	ED
Yes	Tina O'Dwyer	Geopark LIFE Tourism Co-ordinator	TO'D
Apologies	Siobain O'Brien	GeoparkLIFE Admin support	SO'B

Yes	Laura Cotter	GeoparkLIFE Communications Co-ordinator	LC
1.0	Review of Minutes Minutes Accepted. Proposed by Katherine Webster and Seconded by Tina O'Dwyer Joining us was Mary Hawkes Green, Director of the Burren College of Art and Advisor to the GeoparkLIFE project.		
2.0	Geopark Progress Report - CG introduced Laura Cotter as the new Communications coordinator - KW enquired about the Tourism for tomorrow award and when we'd hear the results. CG confirmed winners would be notified prior to travel and highlighted the benefits each nominated destination receives - EM asked about Burren Signage Plan and FQ confirmed that we can't speak publicly about it just yet but it is signed off and approved - KW asked about a target date completion date for analysis of coach tourism part of the transtourism project. CG confirmed that it is being amalgamated with the LIFE programme and that the deadline has been extended to end of this summer to capture this tourist season's data. KW confirmed that there has been a shift towards coach tourism at the Cliffs from their own analysis.		
3.0	LIFE Administrative Matters CG reinforced the importance of time sheets.		
	Geopark LIFE Action B1 Tourism Enterprises The Burren Tourism Story event - TO'D gave an overview of the Burren tourism story event that was held in the pavilion in Lisdoonvarna in March and the background to it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The event showcased the tourism products that have been developed by the network for the Burren. o The event reflected all the work the network had undertaken in the winter in terms of training and cooperation and it showed the economic value and benefit that has been brought o 22 new businesses joined the network during the winter and it was a chance for all the BEN member old and new to network and present as a united front o KW highlighted that the event was great for the stakeholders and consolidated their work over the winter and brought it to the point where they can speak to the visitor o A number of new membership enquires came from the event - TO'D took the group through the new products (the Activity trail, food trail and the supporting events, the walking programme, the hostel hop and the heritage trails) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Tina highlighted the important elements of the sustainable transport 		

elements to the walking programme and the hostel hop and the sustainability of being guided by a member of the network

- CG, TO'D and KW updated the group on the feedback from the B.E.N members regarding network membership; the target is 100 businesses, now at 49 with 1 partner and many friends that are still in the process of being confirmed for this year; figure will be well into the 60's. The group is developing a destination lead mentality through being in the network

B.E.N Training

- TO'D advised that all of the B.E.N members had undertaken training in the areas of waste, water and energy management, leave no trace and a number of guest speakers had provided content through LAPN (Local Authority Prevention Network working with Environmental Protection Agency)
- JT stated that the trainings given to date only scratching the surface of environmental education, it's an ongoing learning and BEN members are starting at different points. A lot of expertise in the group in different areas is coming through. SEI have some communities grant coming up and now the business have an energy action plan and could put in an action plan to take advantage of grants as a group. Also noted that the process is not asking business enough and we haven't approached training from a statutory point of view.
- TO'D advised not to underestimate the effort required from the BEN members in engaging with the Code of Practice, that we are requiring a lot from them environmentally, that there are destinations asking less while presenting themselves as 'green', and we need to encourage and promote the commitment and effort of the members to the process itself.
- KW/TO'D noted that universities are undertaking studies on the network and its work in this area (UL, and universities in Canada and Germany), university vetted reports on our efforts is valuable for GeoparkLIFE.

B.E.N Initiatives

- EM enquired if there is there a discount scheme between BEN businesses for referrals
- TO'D responded that business shied away from money discount and more were more interested in offering added value
- KW spoke about how the network have talked about tracking referrals but are encountering difficulty with being able to do this. But a university group are looking at this and coming up with a model for BEN to use.
- CG/TO'D highlighted how there is major interest from the group in sustainable transport and supporting the national park bus; that SO'B collated a lot of sustainable transport data on the web site and app and that training on Sustainable Transport with Roisin Garvey from An Taisce Green Schools has produced lots of actions and a BEN sub-group has been created for this.

ETIS

- TO'D gave a presentation on ETIS as a framework, not a solution. The presentation is available on the GeoparkLIFE web site link:

	<p>http://www.burrengeopark.ie/geopark-life/partner-meetings/</p> <p>CG is promoting the ETIS system to the European Geopark Network</p>	
	<p>Geopark LIFE Action B2 Habitats & Monuments</p> <p>Project Overview</p> <p>CG began this section with a project overview of GeoparkLIFE project;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - B1 is progressing well and with modifications should become a transferrable model; it has a very focused programme and the full co-operation of BEN and the Environment Section of CCC, is very well co-ordinated by TO'D, but as noted by JT, has involved a lot more focused attention from CCC Env section as partners than was initially envisaged. - B2 and B3 requires more focused attention from all stakeholders in the programme. Most agencies are experiencing changes internally and it may be opportune for all agencies to now reassess their aspirations for the project and their input into it. Recommended a facilitated workshop where all stakeholders would agree a vision for the overall project and what each agency would like to achieve through the various actions, and how this would affect the overall development of the Geopark as a sustainable destination. The key to the development of these aspects was the level of commitment to engaging with the development and implementation of the work programmes by the relevant agencies. - Much discussion ensued which would take pages to record; however the agreed outcomes are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Dedicated working groups will be created to deal with the 3 main actions (B1, B2 and B3) ➤ Project Management will make recommendations to the working groups and the results will be brought back to the Steering Committee for approval. <p>CG presented B2 proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CG presented the current B2 proposal (attached) which generated a lot of discussion and for expediency, only the outcomes are recorded: - The final selection of demonstration sites and their priority are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zone 1: Blackhead/Fanore (Flaggy Shore will be monitored under the FI Wild Atlantic Way Programme) Zone 2: (1) Aillwee Cave (2) Poulabrone (3) Carran Church (4) An Rath/Cahermore (Noted: as discussions with landowners at Carran Church and An Rath are ongoing it is still uncertain if a programme of works can be carried out. However, survey and monitoring can proceed) Zone 3: (1) National Park (2) Slieve Carran Nature Reserve <p>This brings to total 7 sites, as per the original application.</p> <p>It was agreed that survey and monitoring at these sites would commence as soon as possible.</p>	

	<p>Three aspects of survey and monitoring are required:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishing baselines and condition reports for each site; work to be carried out by experts in association with the relevant agencies 2. Monitoring of visitor impacts to these locations; templates to be produced in association with relevant agencies and monitoring to be carried out by volunteers and/or students. 3. Economic and Social surveys of the impact of tourism in the 3 zones. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CG also proposed that the project considers the integration of tourism/visitor impacts as part of the scoring criteria for the Burren Farming for Conservation programme (formally BurrenLIFE), utilising the farmland associated with the Demonstration Sites as pilots. This proposal (initially put forward by Brendan Dunford at a consultation meeting with CG) met with general agreement; certainly worth assessing. - Also agreed to liaise with the Rural Recreation Officer Eoin Hogan to get advice on monitoring of visitors on walks and counters. CG proposed that he join the steering committee. - Agreed to try to develop survey templates through Direct Personnel contributions and utilise External Expertise for carrying out the monitoring. - Agreed to collate existing data on each location and assess the resources required to fill in the gaps in knowledge. Each partner would send on any existing relevant data and what information they want from each site by April 11th. - GC noted that a role of UCD in the project would be the collation of data and the development of a system for future input. There are models in existence for measuring. Queried if we look for same data from each site. Also noted the need to train whoever was to be used to monitor and survey. - EM advised on assessing the availability, skills and commitment of volunteers - Agreed that comparable data would be most beneficial, from both heavily and rarely visited sites, core issues may exist for all sites, and each site may have its distinctive issue that would need to be recorded. - KC/CHG recommended that monitoring footfall begins as soon as possible - Draft templates to be produced by the end of April and circulated to relevant partners for comment/approval. <p>Action: CG to circulate email tomorrow (3rd April) and answers to be returned by 11th April. Draft templates to be produced for comment by end of April.</p> <p>Agreements reached</p>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agreed sites - Agreed need a template around monitoring - Agreed feedback to template by 11th April - Agreed to collect baseline data - CG to produce draft monitoring templates for review by end of April - CG to produce and circulate guidance on surveys. 	
3.0	<p>Geopark LIFE Action B3 Conservation Management</p> <p>CG provided an update on the B3 proposals, which is the outcome of further consultation with a number of partners and stakeholders (attached). Reiterated that the key objective of B3 <i>is to develop the skills base of all stakeholders in the understanding, management and conservation of natural and cultural heritage and to reinforce Actions B1 and B2.</i></p> <p>GC proposed that B2 sites be integrated into the B3 programme as much as possible.</p> <p>CG elaborated on the proposed programmes, including proposals involving Clare Pilgrim Group (Mapping pilgrimage sites), Brothers of Charity (Universal Access), Ballyvaughan Tidy Towns (Habitat Mapping), Burren Farming for Conservation (utilising farm structures as interpretative mediums, and a farm repair meitheal during the Winterage Festival involving farmers and tourism businesses) and BEN (Adopt a Road proposal). CG also outlined the shift away from a formal taught/accredited course towards Community Knowledge Initiative approach which focuses more on community based projects and the learning that can be gained through these.</p> <p>CG/TO'D clarified that <i>Training the Trainer</i> would be used to develop the training skills of experts and as a useful mechanism of strengthening the mentoring role of businesses with each other in areas where it is feasible, such as Leave No Trace. However, the waste/ energy topic requires expertise and we cannot expect the businesses to be trainers in these areas.</p> <p>CG clarified the Visitor centre surveys as a review of the visitor centre's effectiveness in communicating, in a positive way, the conservation ethos.</p> <p>Michael Lynch's role as FMA should be reinforced under the Conservation Skills programme.</p> <p>General concern was expressed over the scale and quantity of the items proposed in the programme. GC suggested focusing on one item per category.</p> <p>KW suggested that the committee be asked to rank the proposed programmes according to importance.</p> <p>Agreed to circulate the proposed programme to all partners and request</p>	

	ranking before the 11 th April.	
	CG to set up meetings of sub groups on B2 and B3 in May	
	<p>Next Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Next meetings in May to be focused workshops on B2 and B3 - Next steering committee Wednesday 25th June 	

ANNEX 6: EXAMPLE OF A MANAGEMENT REPORT TO THE STEERING GROUP



GeoparkLIFE Progress Report

October 2014

The following is a brief synopsis of progress in the areas of the GeoparkLIFE programme. Please review this prior to the Steering Committee meeting on Wednesday 22nd. To save time we will not repeat this report but will instead focus on matters arising from the report.

B1 Training Programme

A comprehensive training and networking programme for B.E.N. members commenced on 23rd September 2014. 10 workshops will be delivered to support tourism enterprises in meeting the requirements of the Geopark Sustainable Code of Practice for Tourism. In addition, a series of workshops designed to support Network integration and capacity building amongst the enterprises will take place. There will be a strong focus on relationship-led marketing through networking and referral generation. There is also a strong emphasis on ensuring and protecting the integrity and credibility of the Network members in terms of environmental good practice.

Outcomes of an Enterprise Survey of the 47 enterprises that completed the Code of Practice training in 2013-14 showed significant impact in terms of behaviour change in the areas of waste, water, energy management and sustainable transport. It highlighted needs for further supports in the areas of water protection and wastewater management, conservation contributions, target-setting and business planning. Overall confidence amongst the tourism enterprises is high with 80% indicating that they felt their business had been generally strengthened as a result of the programme.

At this point, a target of 100 enterprises in the Network by 2018 (as envisaged in the original application) seems optimistic. It is perhaps advisable from now to focus on 'quality over quantity' in terms of Network membership and also on enhancing good practice and awareness amongst existing members. In 2014, the Network expects 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 are expected to join e.g. Aillwee Cave, Caherconnell Stone Fort as well as the Michael Cusack Centre and Doolin 2 Aran Ferries.

B2 Site Assessments

After agreeing the selection of the Demonstration Sites, the next phase of the B2 Sites and Monuments programme is **Site Assessment**. This commenced in July. Zena Hctor was commissioned to co-ordinate the elements of the assessment of all 7 demonstration sites and meetings of the B2 Working Group.

Slieve Carran Nature Reserve was chosen as the first site to be assessed collectively by the Working Group and is being used as a **pilot site** to produce a methodology for the other demonstration sites. This methodology will be completed by mid-December. The overall approach in 2014 to the B2 element of the programme includes the following:

1. On site appraisal: Approach, facilities, information on site. Identify how visitors are directed. Condition of site and identification of visible recreational pressure points.
2. Observation studies (see C Monitoring) Visitor movement and activities.
3. Visitor Surveys (see C Monitoring) including visitor attitudes to the site, previous and present knowledge and perception of conservation issues, behavioural influences (if any).
4. Agency reports; condition reports, management structures, plans and strategies.
5. Landowner interviews on issues at the site and attitude towards visitors and their behaviour
6. Coach Tourism survey (see C Monitoring); use of sites, ecological impacts at 3 demonstration sites, bus driver's attitudes.
7. Agency interviews on site issues, policy implications (UCD) and steps forward.
8. Selection of specific, measurable physical, environmental and social indicators
9. Development of on-going monitoring programme. (see C Monitoring).
10. Development of Working Programme for each site.

B3 Conservation Training

The B3 Working Group have agreed to shift the focus on accredited modules towards a series of Case Studies which test training supports developed to increase conservation activism amongst a range of stakeholder. The group have agreed co-ordination and developed a methodology to record the process. All programme co-ordinators will liaise with UCD on Policy issues that arise in the course of the programme.

Burren Ecotourism Network (BEN): (a) Training in conservation awareness and contribution and Leave No Trace under Code of Practice_(b) Enhancing BEN Conservation Activism: Adopt a Road, Adopt a Monument and Meitheal_(c) Reading the Landscape programme for guides; developing interpretation skills, appropriate use, safety, and visitor management at the B2 Demonstration Sites_(d) Training the trainers and mentors. *Co-ordinated by Geopark (In Progress)*

Burren Conservation Volunteers (BCV): (a) Training of Supervisors in observation, monitoring, survey, reporting and response techniques.(b) Minor repairs to walls using the B2 Demonstration Sites as case studies. *Co-ordinated by Burrenbeo Trust*

Landowners: Linking elements of BEN and BCV training to provide supports for farming families in conservation and visitor management (a) Meitheal, (b) Adopt a Monument (c) Information and awareness of relevant legislation, rights and responsibilities. *Co-ordinated by Burrenbeo Trust (In Progress)*

Local Historical/ Conservation Groups: Developing Monument Conservation Teams: Skills training, monitoring around processes, methodologies on essential minor repairs to structures; Kilinaboy group and An Cabhail Mor as a case study, with elements of Carran Church included. *Co-ordinated by Dick Cronin, CCC Conservation Officer*

Tidy Towns Groups: Engaging Tidy Towns groups to nourish and highlight biodiversity in more urbanised environments. Introducing issues around Climate Change and impact on biodiversity, using Ballyvaughan Tidy Towns as a Case Study.

Co-ordinated by Burrenbeo Trust (In Progress)

Community Tourism Development Group: Using Lisdoonvarna Failte as a case study for developing knowledge and visitor information around local landscape and heritage (geological/hydrology/water/Spa tourism). *Co-ordinated by Geopark*

Engaging local schools: Lisdoonvarna Secondary School Transition Year (a) research and communication to Primary Schools on an environmental theme (Water) and (b) Resident's Survey on attitudes to tourism. *Co-ordinated by Geopark (In Progress)*

Project Partners: Steering Committee, B1, B2 and B3 Sub committees and Advisory Panel developing partnership working models. *Co-ordinated by UCD (In Progress)*

C

Monitoring

The monitoring element of the GeoparkLIFE programme is established and will produce benchmarks and methodologies on measuring and monitoring the environmental and economic impacts of tourism in the region.

An **enterprise survey** of the BEN members was carried out in May/June on the profile of members and the impact of the Code of Practice training on their business.

People counters have been installed at 6 demonstration sites, we are awaiting agreement on locations with landowner at the Blackhead site.

Caas have been commissioned by Failte Ireland to pilot **observation studies** of environmental impacts of the Wild Atlantic Way and have agreed to utilise the GeoparkLIFE demonstration sites to produce a survey methodology for assessing environmental impacts on sites and monuments. The observation programme was carried out on the 5th/6th and 7th of September. Two drafts of a report have been produced and commented on.

Millward Brown were commissioned by GeoparkLIFE to develop and carry out a **visitor survey** methodology at all demonstration sites. The visitor surveys were carried out throughout September and early October. Analysis will be concluded in November and the results will be available on the web site.

Joe Saunders and Paul Murphy have been commissioned to carry out an assessment of the environmental and economic impact of **Coach Tourism** in the Geopark. The period spans a full year (Jan – Dec 2014) and the results will be available in January 2015.

We are working with Lisdoonvarna Secondary School on the development of a **resident's survey** on attitudes to tourism in the Burren, to be rolled out in November and December, with results available in January. This is part of the Young Scientist Programme.

Policy.

This aspect of the programme is managed by UCD. The following summary is provided by Gabriel Cooney and Joanne Gaffrey, University College Dublin, with advice from Brian Callanan.

Introduction

The assessment and analysis of current policies that impact on the relationship of sustainable tourism and conservation management, and the proposal of recommendations on the integration of policies is a key element in achieving the aims of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher LIFE project. Furthermore it has the potential to make a contribution to the wider discussion at European level of the challenge of developing a sustainable tourism strategy which has the conservation and management of natural and cultural heritage at its core.

Moving forward

One of the key strengths of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark LIFE project is the wide range and diversity of partners actively involved in the project. The B2 element of

the programme is focused on a series of demonstration sites which provide foci on the ground in different parts of the Burren for the achievement of the aims and objectives of the project. The B3 element involves local actors in conservation management. The range and diversity of the project partners ensures that there is an opportunity to examine the range of international, national and regional/local policies that impact on sustainable tourism. The B2 demonstration sites provide the opportunity to examine the operation of relevant policies on the ground, potential conflicts between them and foci to engage with project partners in thinking about achievable means of resolving policy conflicts. The B3 conservation management actions provide a complementary opportunity for policy impact study.

The Policy Review

Phase 1 Mapping the policy framework(s)

A desktop study providing the detail of the policies that operate in landscapes such as the Burren and their impact on conservation management and sustainable tourism. This will drawn from documentary and digital sources and encompass the key policy drivers of all the project partners on their work. The outcome would be an overview of the relevant policies. Full draft by end of October 2014.

Phase 2 Detailing the key policy conflicts

Drawing on the reality and detail of the B2 demonstration sites as case studies and the broader experience of project partners on the ground, the conflicts between policies, and their impacts, would be detailed. The focus of this phase would be working with project partners (both regulators and regulated) to gain different perspectives on the conflicts and an understanding of the sources of conflict. Interviews will be held with key actors in the B3 conservation management to gather their experiences on policy conflict issues. *Full draft to be completed by March 2015*

Phase 3 Moving to reconciliation

This phase would involve identifying those issues or conflicts on the ground which could be resolved sustainably at local level by improving communication and support networks, in effect by strengthening the interfaces between policies. On the other hand Phases 1 and 2 of the project may also reveal and document that there are issues which are having a negative impact on the relationship between sustainable tourism and conservation management which need to be changed. Recommendations in this regard would be proposed for inclusion in the final report. There will be three possible levels of recommendations, all around the reconciliation of tourism and conservation policies for sustainable tourism:

Level 1 (Local): Improvement of local management to reconcile tourism and conservation

Level 2 (National): Strengthening of national programmes to address the policy interaction between tourism and conservation

Level 3 (International): Development of a new policy framework at European level, including guidelines to the member-states, on sustainable tourism through joint implementation of tourism and conservation policies

It is likely that recommendations will need to be made at all three levels.

The full report (all phases 1-2-3) should be ready during the project life-time so that it can inform the development of pilot initiatives as an integral part of the project. The report should therefore be complete by December 2015. This will allow pilot initiatives on conservation/tourism reconciliation to be implemented and evaluated over the final two years of the project.

D Communications

Targeted Communications

We are in the process of developing a methodology that will identify needs and produce tailored communication tools on sustainable tourism through the key people and locations where visitors receive information. These are:

- Demonstration site signage
- Farm infrastructure along trails
- Visitor Centres and information points
- Accommodation providers
- Coach and taxi drivers

Site signage is underway and the information points are currently being re branded. The Cliffs of Moher visitor centre will soon open an information point that showcases the Geopark.

2015 communications plan

A communications plan for 2015 GeoparkLIFE has been developed, and will be positioning the Geopark as an authority on sustainable tourism destination development. Initially, the content that will be used to showcase this is the results of the Code of Practice training and the Enterprise Survey that was conducted this summer. Case studies showcasing the standout results of this programme will be developed along with supporting video clips and press releases. As the B2 and B3 elements of the programme progresses, we will also highlight these case studies and achievements.

Product development and marketing

The product development and marketing programme in partnership with BEN for 2015 will continue to focus on food, activity, walking and will also begin to develop products that focus on heritage, accommodation providers and visitor centres.

Social media

The Facebook page has continually grown throughout the year. From January 1st to October 17th our Page Likes have increased from 514 to 875, an increase of 361. On numerous occasions our posts have reached over 1400 people, and it has proved an effective way to promote and inform of Geopark activities and events. The Twitter page has also continued to grow throughout the year from 397 at the beginning of February to 969 mid October, we are nearing 1000 followers.

Website update

We are currently undergoing a process of updating and reorganising **www.burrengeopark.ie** to ensure that the communications plan above can be clearly presented and that the work of the GeoparkLIFE programme is woven in more effectively into the promotion of the Geopark as a destination.

The website is going to be reconstructed to provide easier navigation and more detailed and regularly updated information on the GeoparkLIFE project.

Google Analytics for www.burrengeopark.ie Jan - Sep 2014

	Visitors 2013	Visitors 2014	Percentage increase	Page per visit	Visit duration	Bounce Rate*	By Desktop	By Mobile	By Tablet
Jan	n/a	1,938	n/a	3.29	02:55	49.90%	1,529	223	186

Feb	n/a	1,804	n/a	3.42	02:55	47.56%	1,455	194	155
Mar	n/a	2,527	n/a	3.06	02:45	50.73%	1,960	306	261
Apr	n/a	3,962	n/a	3.04	02:27	60.37%	2,180	1,267	515
May	386	2,377	516%	2.61	02:24	54.27%	1,735	324	318
Jun	713	2,439	242%	2.65	02:22	54.65%	1,683	397	359
Jul	747	3,078	312%	2.65	02:25	55.23%	2,011	571	496
Aug	837	3,194	282%	2.63	02:20	55.48%	1,915	673	606
Sep	885	2,191	148%	2.45	02:11	57.87%	1,500	374	317

*Most of the bounce rate is referred traffic to the BEN visitor site www.burren.ie

Press coverage

11 press releases issued to date in 2014 with over 100 pieces of coverage across radio, printed and online media. Press releases covered awards nominations, and festival and events sponsored by the Geopark along with the GeoparkLIFE Universal access pilot programme.

Awards in 2014

- 1. World Travel & Tourism Council – Tourism for Tomorrow Awards – Shortlisted**
- 2. World Responsible Tourism Awards – Best Destination - Longlisted**
- 3. Geological Society UK – Top 100 Geosites in UK & Ireland – Top Geosite Landscape**
- 4. Green Hospitality – Responsible Travel & Tourism Awards – Winner of Best Destination, Winner of Overall Responsible Travel & Tourism Business**

Upcoming Awards

- 1. National Geographics World Legacy Awards – Destination Leadership – Shortlist to be announced end of October at ITB Asia with Winners announced at the ITB in Berlin in March 2015**
- 2. Irish Centre for Responsible Tourism – Responsible Tourism Awards - Best Destination for Responsible Tourism – Shortlist to be announced March 2015 with Winners announced at the World Travel Market in November 2015**

International coverage in 2014: Aside from the opportunities provided by Award nominations, the GeoparkLIFE programme has been presented at European and Irish Geopark conferences and seminars and at the ETIS pilot meetings in Brussels. The programme is also showcased in the UN Environmental programme ‘Global Clearing House’ <http://www.scpclearinghouse.org/scp-initiatives/730-geopark-sustainable-code-of-practice-for-tourism-wttc-tourism-for-tomorrow-finalist-2014.html>

Intranet & website:

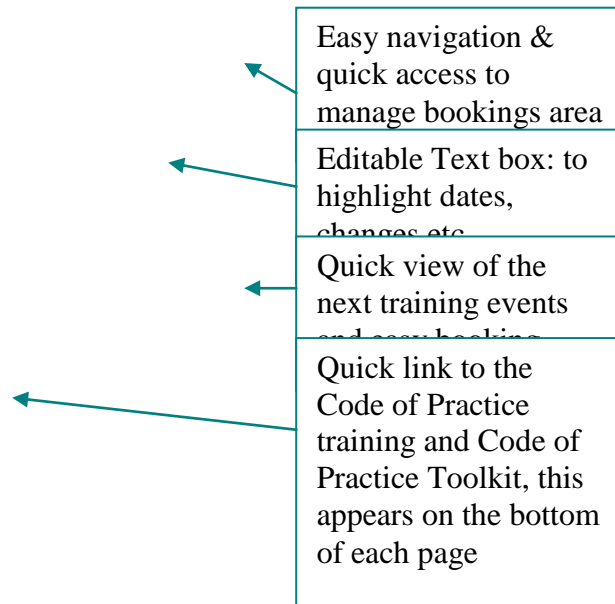
B1. The Tourism Enterprise Programme (Geopark Intranet)

The Geopark Intranet went live last year for the Code of Practice Training Programme.

From the start a lot of users found it fairly difficult to navigate and the booking system, although altered a couple of times, was too complicated.

A year on we had a better idea of how the Intranet should work and where the problem areas were. The Intranet was redesigned to be more intuitive with a very easy booking system.

Below is a screen shot of the landing page:



E Project Management

Time Sheets

2012 - All correct

2013 - Missing time sheets from 1 partner

2014 - Missing time sheets from 22 partners

We have developed an efficient system of coding and filing invoices on a monthly basis.

Time sheets are recorded in soft copy and are filled in hard copy. As time sheets are received the hours are recorded in each partner's financial report. However, it has been very difficult to give clear monthly financial reports as time sheets are still not being submitted on time.

Feedback from Commission

Lynne Barratt, our monitor, paid a site visit in June and reported on progress to the Commission. We then received a letter from the Commission commending the project on its progress in the areas of B1, our financial and admin systems and our communications programme. However, the Commission expressed concern over the level of progress on B2 and B3 and on establishing baselines. The above progress report

will show that significant progress has been made in these areas since then.

Proposed changes in Partnership structure

Our partner NUIG is proposing to withdraw from the project. Initially, NUIG involvement was to provide archaeological work on the B2 monuments. As the programme developed, the focus on the B2 sites shifted away from research to more direct visitor management interventions. NUIG was then considered a suitable partner to develop and manage a series of accredited modules as part of the B3 programme. When researched further, it became apparent that this level of training provision would not attract the individuals and groups targeted and the focus moved towards more targeted training provision on a case by case basis. At this stage NUIG feels that its role is not clear and proposes that the funding allocated to its partnership could be best used by other partners in other areas of the project.

Proposal on the role and function of the Advisory Group

The composition and reporting mechanisms of the Advisory Committee to the project have not been addressed to date. The members of the original Burren Connect Advisory Committee are willing to continue their function as advisors and have nominated several other community and sectoral representatives to join the committee. The size of both the Steering and Advisory Committee will pose serious challenges for effective engagement at meetings. A proposed solution is to restructure the Advisory Committee into an Advisory PANEL and allocate relevant people on that panel to be available as advisors to the Working Groups. Seminars, workshops and conferences will provide opportunities for both the Steering and Advisory representatives to meet and engage as a group.

Progress Report

A progress report on the project is due to be submitted to the Commission by October 30th. Brian Callanan is helping the management team prepare the report, which will be submitted to Lynne Barratt for review before it is sent to the Commission.

Modification application

Given the changes in approach to the various work programmes, and to the original partnership structure, we will have to prepare a Modification Request after the Commission has evaluated the Progress Report.