Burren Geopark LIFE Project: approach to selection of monuments and habitats

Following the recent discussion at the steering group, eleven criteria are proposed: ownership, planning, heritage, tourism, community, conservation, access, visitor management, visitor capacity, facilities and demonstration effect. These are supported by the Global Sustainable Tourism Destination criteria and the UN.

The suggestion is to 'score' each of potential sites as 'high', 'medium' or 'low' under these criteria.

Each of the possible sites could be described and scored separately, using the chart set out.

Finally, summary chart at the end could be used to bring together the overall picture.

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(1) Possible criteria for selection of the monument/habitat

1. Ownership

Is land-owner agreeable to granting access?

2. Planning

Are there planning issues that could delay or otherwise hinder potential outcomes?

3. Heritage impact

Is the site of academic/cultural important locally, nationally, internationally? Would inclusion add knowledge? Is it special, unique? Is the site of interest to visitors, especially international visitors (including holiday-makers and educational/research)?

4. Tourism impact

Should highest marks be awarded to sites actually or potentially attracting international visitors?

5. Community impact

Would site conservation/development be supported by most of the community? Would it add value to the local community? Is there a commitment to becoming involved in LIFE?

6. Conservation impact

What type of conservation impact will there be? Is the site highly sensitive? Does it have the capacity to absorb extra users? Is it in imminent danger of collapse, destruction, erosion? Can the cost of actions and interventions be accommodated within the LIFE budget? Can the conservation actions be transferrable to other locations?

7. Access

Is access to site physically easy? Would it be a suitable site for disabled access?
Are there any significant costs associated with provision of access? Are there health and safety issues? Would visitors have to be guided?

8. Visitor management

Does it help to manage existing visitor flows? Does this help to reduce congestion and over-use in tourism? What may be the future management requirements? Can landowners and local communities get involved?

9. Visitor capacity

Does this attract visitors into underutilised areas and possibly reduce pressure points elsewhere?

10. Facilities

Is there the benefit of existing facilities on site? Would the project capitalise on previous works or investment?

11. Demonstration effect

An overall criterion that brings much of the others together: will this demonstrate the positive interaction between tourism and conservation? Will it be highly visible? Will there be high added value? Is there a positive linkage with other aspects of the project?

(2) Possible scoring system

High

Very positive possibilities, such as: land owner will give access; of strong interest to locals and tourists; positive conservation outcomes; physical access is easy; good visitor management in heavily used location; will attract visitors to an under-used location; existing facilities present; overall strong demonstration effect.

Low

Not so positive possibilities, such as: land owner will not easily give access; not such strong interest to tourists; conservation outcomes not so positive; physical access not easy; not managing existing visitors; not attracting visitors to under-used location; no existing facilities; not as strong a demonstration effect as other sites.

Medium

Intermediate outcomes

(3) Sample sheet: Review of potential sites

SITE: Name		
CRITERION	**COMMENT**	**SCORE**
Ownership		
Planning		
Heritage impact		
Tourism impact		
Community impact		
Conservation impact		
Access		
Visitor management		
Visitor capacity		
Facilities		
Demonstration effect		

(4) Sample sheet: Overall summary

Location names	CRITERIA											
	O'ship	Planning	Heritage	Tourism	Community	Conservation	Access	Management	Capacity	Facilities	Demo	Short list ? ✓
eg Flaggy Shore												

Each box above would be scored H or M or L