DECEMBER 2022

WEST CORK COAST DESTINATION AND EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Cósta Iarthair Chorcaí Plean Forbartha Ceann Scíbe agus Eispéiris



Fáilte Ireland

WILD ATLANTIC WAY
SLÍ AN ATLANTAIGH FHIÁIN



This page: Galley Head Lighthouse, Rosscarbery, Co Cork
Cover: Baltimore Beacon, Baltimore, Co Cork

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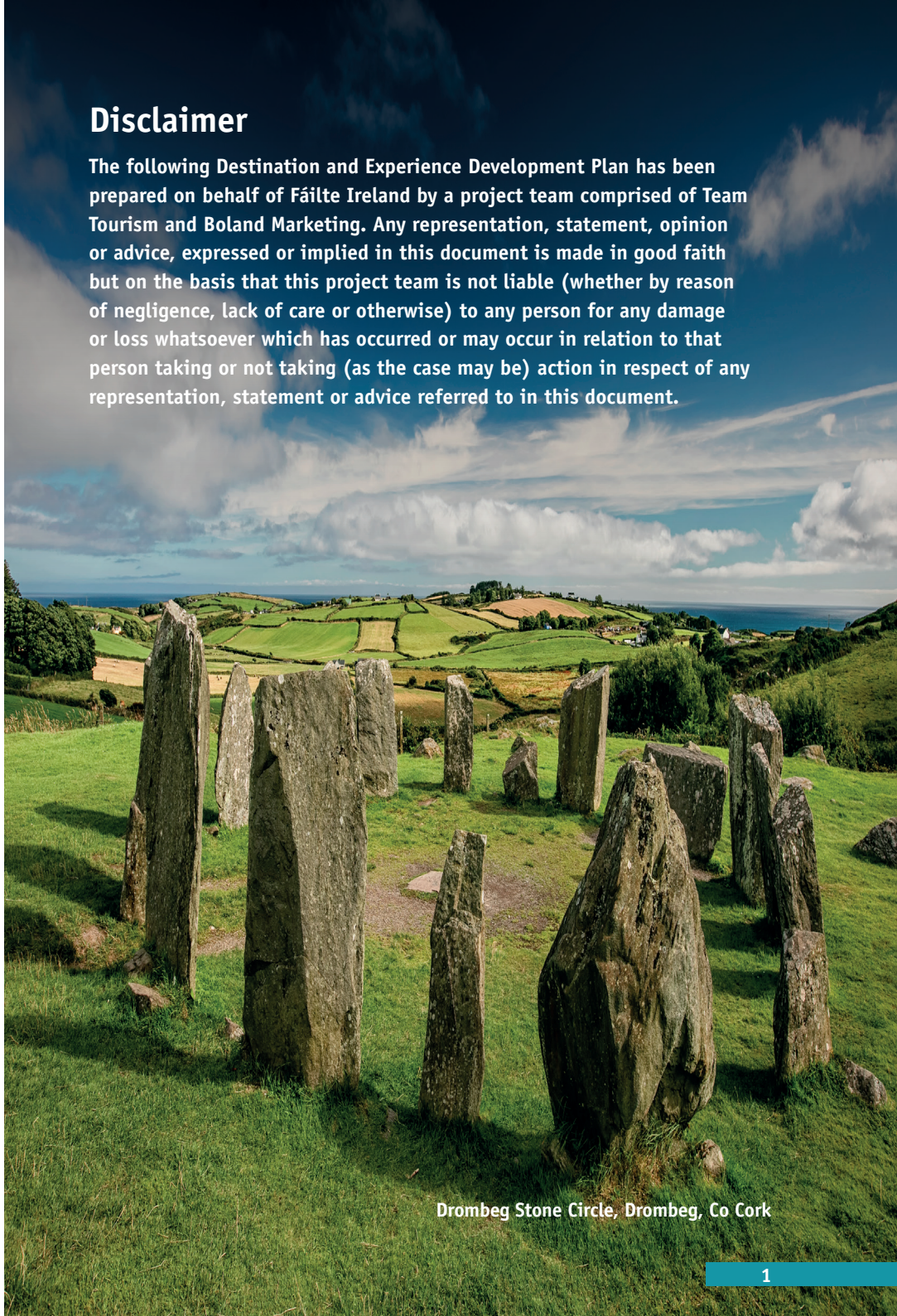
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Disclaimer

The following Destination and Experience Development Plan has been prepared on behalf of Fáilte Ireland by a project team comprised of Team Tourism and Boland Marketing. Any representation, statement, opinion or advice, expressed or implied in this document is made in good faith but on the basis that this project team is not liable (whether by reason of negligence, lack of care or otherwise) to any person for any damage or loss whatsoever which has occurred or may occur in relation to that person taking or not taking (as the case may be) action in respect of any representation, statement or advice referred to in this document.



Drombeg Stone Circle, Drombeg, Co Cork

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

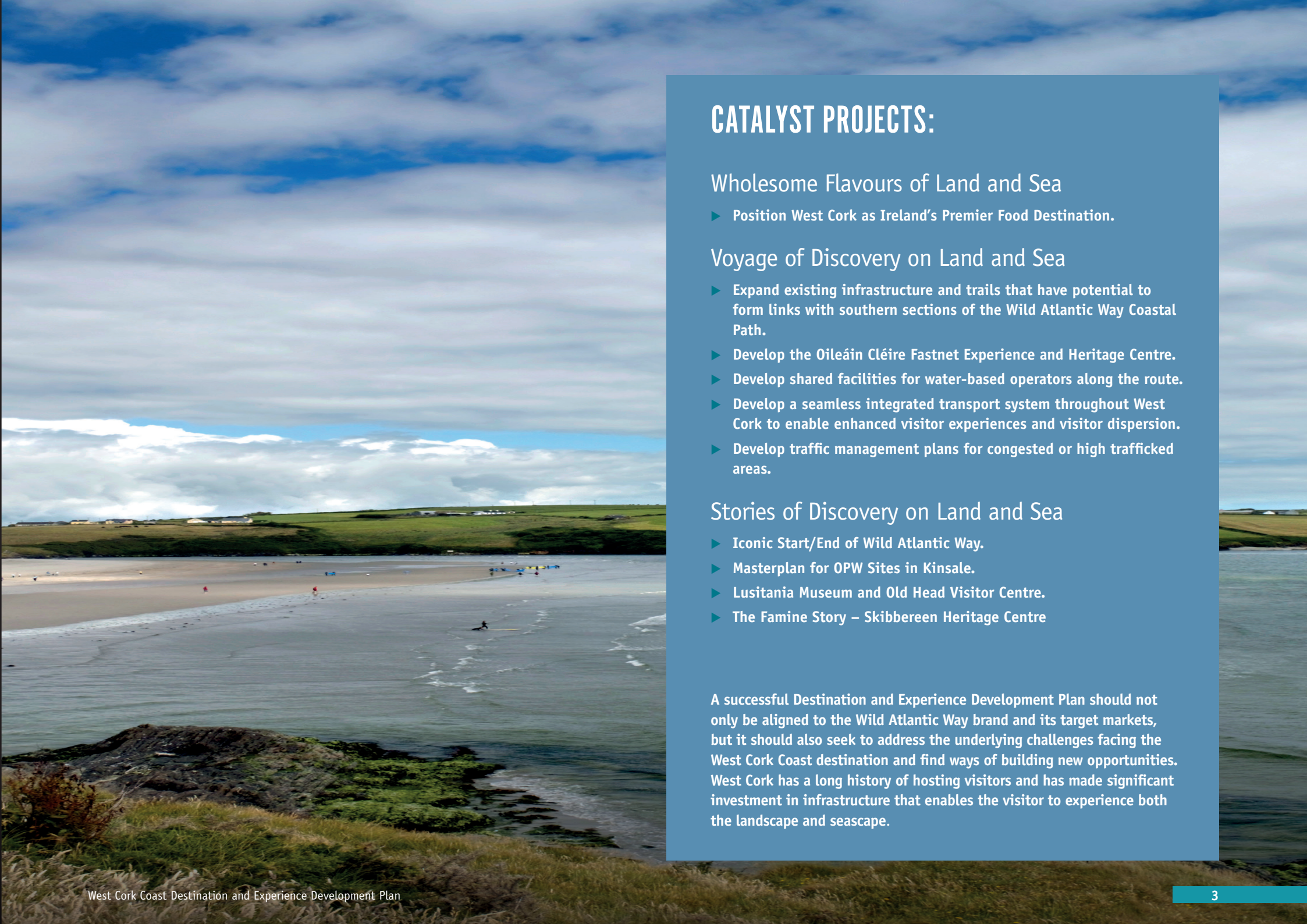
DESTINATION PROMISE

A year round, well managed, internationally renowned tourist destination delivering, unique sustainable and timeless visitor experiences, where living in the moment promises a kaleidoscope of flavour, colour, culture and adventure.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

Grounded in consumer insight, the key objectives of the West Cork Coast Destination and Experience Development Plan (DEDP) are to develop compelling experiences on this stretch of the Wild Atlantic Way that will:

- **Position the West Cork Coast as a 'must visit' destination**, by ensuring that local experiences are brought to life through the optimal mix of HERO and ancillary products that **motivate people to visit the destination, stay overnight and spend more.**
- **Unlock the economic growth potential** of the destination and communities through strengthening individual businesses, **creating new entrepreneurial opportunities,** sustaining, and increasing job creation, and increasing the attractiveness of the area for other forms of economic growth.
- Improve the market mix of the destination by growing international visitors while retaining a good domestic and overseas visitor balance.
- Grow awareness of the area through an **improved digital** footprint.
- Support **enhancement of 'sense of place'** by creating the conditions **that encourage international and domestic visitors to immerse themselves actively in the locale**, interact with local people, and engage the senses by immersing themselves in the destination.
- Promote **collaboration and partnership**, support business engagement, and build lasting links between national and regional partners, local agencies and associations and local tourism experiences.
- Protect the natural heritage and special environmental character of the region.
- Improve access to and within the West Cork Coast, ensuring that infrastructure and traffic management systems are in place to help visitors move freely in the destination.
- The recommendations on implementation and monitoring processes will be critical to ensuring success in delivering the plan and in assessing its impact.



CATALYST PROJECTS:

Wholesome Flavours of Land and Sea

- **Position West Cork as Ireland's Premier Food Destination.**

Voyage of Discovery on Land and Sea

- **Expand existing infrastructure and trails that have potential to form links with southern sections of the Wild Atlantic Way Coastal Path.**
- **Develop the Oileáin Cléire Fastnet Experience and Heritage Centre.**
- **Develop shared facilities for water-based operators along the route.**
- **Develop a seamless integrated transport system throughout West Cork to enable enhanced visitor experiences and visitor dispersion.**
- **Develop traffic management plans for congested or high trafficked areas.**

Stories of Discovery on Land and Sea

- **Iconic Start/End of Wild Atlantic Way.**
- **Masterplan for OPW Sites in Kinsale.**
- **Lusitania Museum and Old Head Visitor Centre.**
- **The Famine Story – Skibbereen Heritage Centre**

A successful Destination and Experience Development Plan should not only be aligned to the Wild Atlantic Way brand and its target markets, but it should also seek to address the underlying challenges facing the West Cork Coast destination and find ways of building new opportunities. West Cork has a long history of hosting visitors and has made significant investment in infrastructure that enables the visitor to experience both the landscape and seascape.

CHALLENGES

- Seasonality
- Limited public transport
- Reduction of sea routes
- Roads not suited to high volumes / signage to towns
- Traffic congestion during peak season in key areas
- Insufficient focus on the strengths of the area – its potential for 'slow' travel
- Insufficient marine infrastructure for visiting boating vessels
- Lack of coordination in industry development
- Insufficient understanding of tourism needs by planning department
- Accommodation – varied needs of visitors
- Insufficient experiences, particularly in non-peak periods
- Staff shortages and issues relating to affordable housing for staff
- Parking and traffic management in areas and parking for camper vans close to amenities
- Internet and phone connectivity
- Marketing and positioning of West Cork experiences
- Sustainability of island life and smaller fishing communities
- Night-time economy offering

OPPORTUNITIES / STRENGTHS

- Diversity of coastal landscapes and ecosystem
- Unique and welcoming small towns in close proximity to each other
- An array of opportunities to build 'slow' tourism
- Sense of intimacy balanced with a 'cosmopolitan' feel
- Energy and commitment to sustainability and maintaining local traditions and values
- Quality of the food, diversity of local artisan food producers – highest numbers in Ireland
- Well established recognition for local foods and food specialities such as Clonakilty Black Pudding
- Rich depth and colour in local stories – layers of history
- Distinctive and vibrant maritime heritage
- Strong local passion to building new experiences that will differentiate the region which can be used to market and promote West Cork
- Potential to build on the region's creativity
- Recognised as one of Europe's top sailing destinations
- Nature as a playground – land and water-based activities
- Cork Airport as overseas gateway
- Towns with strong credentials eg;
  - Transition Town Kinsale
  - Clonakilty 1st Fair Trade Town
- Traffic management plans
- Variety of accommodation types

INTRODUCTION



Fastnet Rock Twilight tour, Cape Clear Ferries, Co Cork

INTRODUCTION

The West Cork Coast Destination and Experience Development Plan (DEDP) is a five-year destination development plan. It is designed to be a roadmap for enhancing the existing West Cork visitor proposition to achieve the objectives of addressing seasonality, increasing visitor numbers and spend, and increasing dwell time and visitor dispersion across the destination.

An intricate series of hidden inlets, coves, headlands and islands set against the backdrop of a rich rural landscape of rolling hills characterises the West Cork Coast. This DEDP will be completed over a five-year period and is focused on the area stretching from Kinsale to Ballydehob with its boundary being the R586 on the Northern side and the coastline on the Southern side. The Plan also includes the inhabited islands of Cape Clear, Sherkin, Heir and Long. This coastline offers the visitor the opportunity to slow down and to take the time to explore the most sheltered part of the entire Wild Atlantic Way.

For visitors travelling west and northwards, this is the starting point for this journey of discovery along one of the world's most renowned long-distance coastal routes - the Wild Atlantic Way. It is a gentle stretch of coastline, and the visitor needs time to explore its back roads and to take in the alluring lifestyle of the islands. There is a sense of lushness and diversity to the ecosystem that sets the West Cork coast apart, and an underlying passion is the essence of what makes this area distinctive.

The stories of the region's maritime heritage are everywhere – from piracy, sackings and battles that shaped Ireland as it is known today, to the resilience of coastal communities which are committed to preserving and celebrating this heritage. While this is an area that bears the hallmarks of poignant times, nowadays its communities take great pleasure in offering visitors the opportunity to sample the wholesome flavours of land and sea and to experience the vibrancy of their living culture.

Recognising the need for improved development and promotion of the area's unique features to achieve increased international cut-through, Fáilte Ireland has developed a Destination and Experience Development Plan for the West Cork Coast. This Plan provides a clear direction towards strengthening and growing the destination's international market share through the delivery of HERO/CORE experiences. The primary market segments for the West Cork Coast are the Culturally Curious, Great Escapers and Social Energisers – and each segment has its own expectations.

This Plan has been developed in conjunction with local stakeholders and industry to develop and grow the value of tourism in West Cork – whether you are an individual business, a cluster of businesses, a tourism group, a community organisation, a tourism-related agency, or you simply have an interest in understanding more about tourism. It is designed to give a fresh insight into what makes the West Cork Coast stand out in consumers' minds as a destination on the Wild Atlantic Way and it reminds us of the stories that are an important part of our heritage and how these stories can be core to an unforgettable visitor experience. The Plan highlights the personality of the area through a creative or a narrative framework that helps identify the challenges and accentuate the strengths which can be used to develop, animate and strengthen the destination in a collaborative and cohesive manner.

The Plan provides a destination-wide tourism development focus, harnessing existing plans and examining new projects to create a world-class destination. It also ensures that those plans and projects are fully aligned with the destination, its stories and with the Wild Atlantic Way proposition.

This 'structured' approach seeks to build strategically on recognised strengths and responds to what the market is looking for, without compromising on local values, so that the destination, can accelerate growth in the value of tourism to communities as a whole and to individual businesses.

Based on consumer and buyer insights, this Plan represents a shared vision for what tourism in West Cork will look like and it seeks to capture proposed projects within one plan and maximise their potential over the next five years. These projects and destination development activities are organised into an experience development framework to be adopted as a five-year action plan. This framework will provide a context for tourism operators and stakeholders in which they can work collaboratively, develop new and improve existing visitor experiences and communicate coherent and unified destination stories for both the domestic and international visitors.



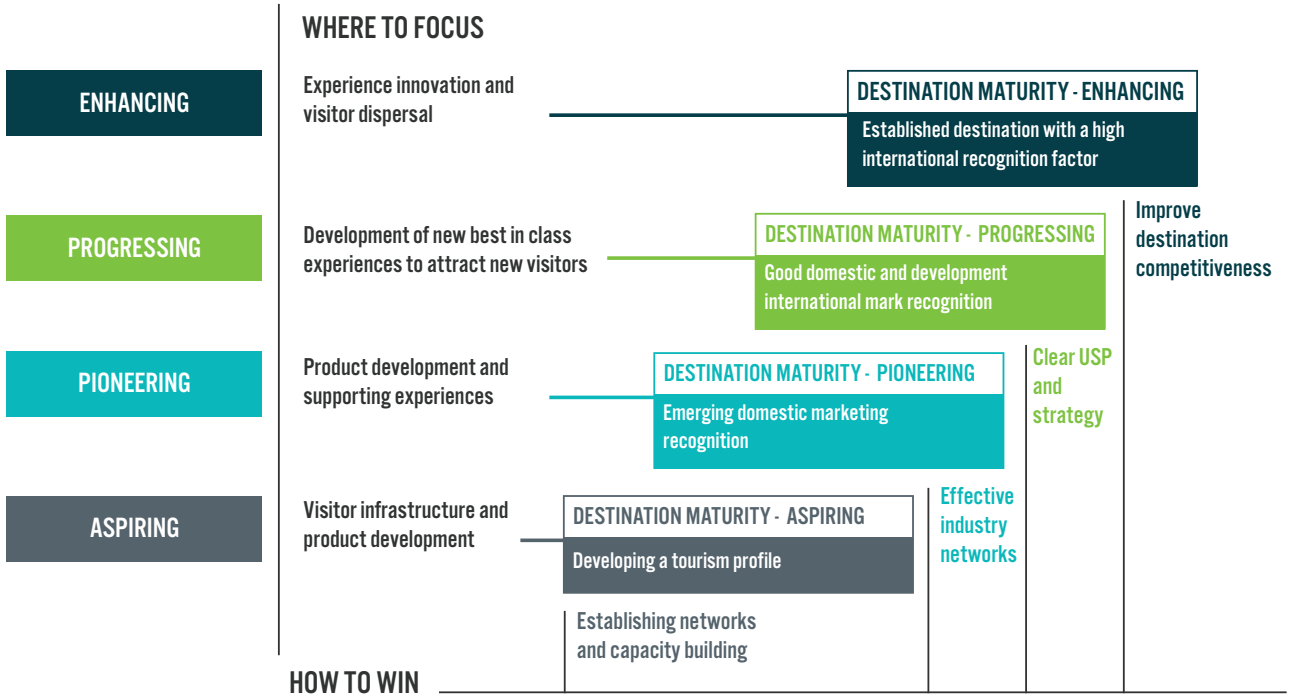
DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

RATIONALE

Fáilte Ireland's approach to destination development is predicated on a couple of key considerations:

- The destinations within the Wild Atlantic Way region are not homogenous in terms of their maturity; and this means that tourism development plans must be nuanced to reflect the needs and growth opportunities in each destination.
- A destination is shaped by the thinking and actions of many different stakeholders who are serving the needs of different target audiences and a shared vision is required if the tourism potential of a destination is to be realised.

The approach to destination development is based on a destination maturity model set out below.



Four levels of destination maturity are featured within this model. The destination development strategies and interventions proposed for particular destinations are appropriate to the level of maturity of the destination.

Fáilte Ireland has been developing Destination Plans in a collaborative way with local stakeholders for a number of years. These plans are the detailed action plans through which the strategic objectives of the Regional Tourism Strategies will be implemented. They set out the challenges and opportunities for tourism in a destination and present an action plan for the sustainable development of tourism over a 5 year period. All these plans are organised around the VICE model. Crucially, the actions and interventions that are set out in each destination plan are informed by the life stage or maturity level of that particular destination. Destinations that are at an early stage of development require a different set of interventions and supports to those that are more mature and established.

The West Cork Coast area is at **Destination Maturity – Progressing** and Kinsale is at **Destination Maturity – Enhancing.** The Big Ideas "Catalyst Projects" in this Destination and Experience Development Plan are therefore focusing on:

1. Experience Innovation and Visitor Dispersal and
2. Development of Best-in-class Experiences to attract new visitors both Domestic and International.

A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM APPROACH

Against the backdrop of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Governments commitments under the Climate Action Plan 2021 and the recent Report of the Sustainable Tourism Working Group, 2021-2023, tourism must adopt a much more sustainable approach. The principles of sustainable tourism have been instrumental in the development and vision for the WCCDEDP through the adoption of the VICE model. Sustainability is at the core of all projects within this plan contributing to the development of the West Cork Coast as a destination recognised internationally for its approach to responsible tourism.

Sustainability in tourism required striking the right balance between the needs of the visitor, the industry, the community and the environment in any given destination, urban or rural. It will require a rethink of tourism success and mainstreaming sustainable tourism policies and practices.

It requires an approach that "takes full account of it current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of the visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities" (UNWTO, 2019).



The Covid19 global pandemic has accelerated the level of visitor consciousness of their role in sustainability and responsible tourism. Sustainable destination development is moving towards a new approach in the organisation and delivery of tourism experiences. Future tourism development must be aligned with these paradigm shifts. There will be new expectations with shifts in visitor expectations in re-defining the value of an experience combined with new levels of environmental awareness. At the same time, visitors expect tourism providers to set standards and create the opportunities for responsible tourism to be co-created. There is an increased requirement to understand how destinations, the tourism industry and local communities will respond to what the visitor now expects and a greater emphasis on new types of experiences directly linked to sustainability.



Kinsale Colourful Shopping, Co Cork

TOURISM RECOVERY

The target forecast for the Wild Atlantic Way within the Regional Tourism Strategy is to achieve growth in revenue levels to return to 2019 levels of tourism income by 2025. In addition, we will seek to ensure the region has the capacity to achieve up to 5% ahead of that target. Forecasting is very difficult in the current economic environment. While we have made the recovery and growth forecast for the Wild Atlantic Way using best available data to hand, we will ensure that we keep these predications under periodic review, and we will update them regularly.

During the pandemic domestic trip taking by the Irish population remained resilient when travel was permitted, greatly helping the industry to survive the crisis. Hence, the upside potential of the home market is less than that of the overseas market. While there is a risk that the domestic marketing may experience a dip in 2022 and/or 2023 due to the international travel re-opening and Irish people taking the opportunity to travel overseas, over the medium term we believe that domestic trips will reach a new peak. The opportunity now exists to convert these into loyal repeat visitors to the Wild Atlantic Way taking more annual breaks.

Given Ireland's high reliance on overseas tourists for earning, real recovery to pre-pandemic levels will only be possible when international tourism returns. The overseas market is likely to recover relatively slowly as connectivity returns, with demand back to 2019 level by 2025 or 2026. In the early days of international re-opening, overseas tourists are more likely to return to the traditional hotspots in Ireland first, before exploring the lesser-known areas in greater numbers.

KEY RESULTS ARE

The overarching objective of the DEDP is to sustainably increase the economic benefit of tourism to the area. Specific KPIs will be baselined and monitored throughout the lifecycle of the Plan. The impact of the DEDP will be measured through the monitoring of key metrics that examine the commercial development of tourism across the area. The Plan framework adopts the VICE model as a means of measuring success. The VICE framework identifies sustainable tourism as the interaction between Visitors, the Industry that serves them, the Community and culture that hosts them and their collective impact on and response to the Environment where it all takes place. What will successful implementation look like?

THE KEY FOCUS AREAS OF THE WEST CORK COAST DEDP PLAN ARE:

- Deliver a Destination and Experience Development Plan (DEDP) as a 5-year Destination development plan for an area.
- Ensure the local experiences are brought to life through the development of the optimal mix of catalysts and enabling projects that attract visitors to the West Cork Coast.
- Unlock the economic growth potential of the West Cork Coast by progressing a range of key initiatives that will motivate and facilitate potential tourists to increase overnight visitation and spend in the local area.
- Develop a sustainable basis for commercial development centred on creating strong signature, supporting and ancillary experiences that are commoditised through the creation of saleable experiences that excite consumers and buyers alike.
- Create the conditions to encourage domestic and international visitors to immerse themselves actively in the locale, to interact with the local community, to engage in the local heritage and culture of the area with the stories of land and sea and to activate their senses with wholesome flavours of this land and sea. The focus is to deliver memorable moments that inspire tourists to not only share their experience with others but also makes them want to return.
- Developing a strategic approach to growing the value of tourism to the West Cork Coast.
- Achieve spatial dispersion of visitors on the West Cork Coast during peak season.
- Development of HERO experiences to grow domestic and international market share and extend the season.
- Increase and promote environmental protection and enhancement through sustainable tourism.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The measurement of success will include analysis of the following areas of performance over the course of the West Cork Coast DEDP.

1. Demand side conditions
2. Supply side conditions
3. Destination development
4. Environment

DEMAND SIDE - VISITOR

- Sustainably increase tourism revenue, extend the season.
- Disperse visitors within West Cork - minimising any adverse impacts on local communities and maximising benefits for them.
- Increase year-round visitor demand through new approaches to marketing and selling the West Cork Coast particularly in off peak season.
- Increase the value of visitors to the West Cork Coast over volume (grow the luxury/high-end market).
- Increase the mix of domestic and overseas visitors.
- Increased visitor satisfaction.

SUPPLY SIDE - INDUSTRY

- Grow the commercial capacity of our tourism industry to realise economic benefits and a tailor-made distribution plan for the area - five new or improved saleable experiences per annum.
- Season Extension: create compelling and marketable experiences for the off season - HERO experiences that will differentiate West Cork Coast and attract new markets from overseas.

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

- Develop global recognition for West Cork Coast as a Foodie destination.
- Heighten market awareness of the range and diversity of sustainable HERO experiences that the West Cork Coast has to offer.
- Improve access to and within the region.
- Animate the destination and storytelling.
- Work with communities in the area to develop new ways for them to interact with visitors and continue to be an integral part of the visitor experience.

ENVIRONMENT

- Develop effective management of the environment, including natural, cultural and heritage assets through the progression of a DEDP Monitoring Programme.



Inish Beg Estate, Baltimore, West Cork

1. SETTING THE SCENE

"I always want to see what's on the other side of the hill "

Response to Captain Scott when asked why he wanted to join the Antartic Expedition



Old Head Lighthouse, Old Head, Kinsale

SETTING THE SCENE

Ireland's Experience Brands **are at the heart of 'Tourism Brand Ireland'. They bring it to life, create the motivation for visitors to visit the Island of Ireland by defining its diverse character in a way our potential visitors can understand. The Experience Brands provide the competitive advantage that separates us from our competitors.**

An Experience Brand therefore must be unique enough to stand out in the international marketplace and stimulate demand. Each *Experience Brand* must have a clear consumer-led proposition which ensures that a consistent approach is taken to the identification and development of memorable tourism experiences within these Brands. Each Experience Brand must be distinctive in the international marketplace and differentiate itself from other Experience Brands within the Island of Ireland and in other destinations.

An Experience Brand must:

- Be grounded in the consumer (travel values, social values, behaviours).
- Be motivational for international visitors.
- Be of scale – made up of a critical mass of related attractions and supporting experiences which are purchasable and accessible – supported by appropriate tourism infrastructure.
- Be more than one experience, and usually a combination of supporting experiences which underpin one or two lead experiences.
- Be unified by a compelling story – one which has international relevance.
- Be capable of increasing dwell-time and/or driving economic benefit.
- Have a consumer led proposition, values, and theme(s).
- Be market-led and tested.



Kinsale Harbour, West Cork, Co Cork

THE EXPERIENCE BRANDS OF IRELAND

Ireland's four key propositions or experience brands which represent the country's areas of strategic importance are: Wild Atlantic Way – "Experience one of the wildest, most enchanting and culturally rich coastal touring routes in the world. Wherever you travel along the Wild Atlantic Way you'll find magic, adventure, history and beauty in abundance." Ireland's Ancient East – "When you explore Ireland's Ancient East, you wander through 5,000 years of history. In these lush, green lands, tales of feuding dynasties hide behind crumbling Gothic architecture; ghostly tombs predate the pyramids; and knights, kings, monks and Vikings loom large in incredible stories." Dublin – "Visiting Dublin is like taking a great big breath of fresh air. Always invigorating, this Viking city is at once modern and historic, exciting and relaxing." Ireland's Hidden Heartlands – "Explore the lush green heartlands of Ireland's natural rural beauty... where activity and relaxation are centred around rural communities and their lifestyles, that can be discovered across a lattice work of land and water trails showcased by the iconic River Shannon and the Beara-Breifne Way.

WILD ATLANTIC WAY
SLÍ AN ATLANTAIGH FHIÁIN

Wild Atlantic Way – "Experience one of the wildest, most enchanting and culturally rich coastal touring routes in the world. Wherever you travel along the Wild Atlantic Way you'll find magic, adventure, history and beauty in abundance."

IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST®
Wander Through Time

Ireland's Ancient East – "When you explore Ireland's Ancient East, you wander through 5,000 years of history. In these lush, green lands, tales of feuding dynasties hide behind crumbling Gothic architecture; ghostly tombs predate the pyramids; and knights, kings, monks and Vikings loom large in incredible stories."

Dublin
Surprising by Nature

Dublin – "Dublin is the vibrant capital city bursting with a variety of surprising experiences – where city living thrives side by side with the natural outdoors."

Ireland's Hidden HEARTLANDS

Ireland's Hidden Heartlands – "Explore the lush green heartlands of Ireland's natural rural beauty... where activity and relaxation are centred around rural communities and their lifestyles, that can be discovered across a lattice work of land and water trails showcased by the iconic River Shannon and the Beara-Breifne Way."

THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY BRAND

The Wild Atlantic Way on Ireland's west coast leads you through one of the **world's most dramatic coastal landscapes**, a landscape on the edge of Europe that has shaped the development of its people, communities and settlements, a landscape that has inspired its own particular culture, literature, art, song and dance. It's a place of many natural features – seascapes, sea-life, cliffs, mountains, glens, loughs, trails and pathways. It's a place to experience nature at its wildest; a place to explore the history of the Gaels and their religion; a place to experience great events, great food and drink, great music and the craic.

The Wild Atlantic Way is the over-arching proposition for the West Cork Coast and delivers the Brand Ireland pillars.

WILD ATLANTIC WAY BRAND PROMISE

The Wild Atlantic Way on Ireland's Western Coast off the Western ***Edge of Europe*** *captivates you with its* ***wild landscape*** *that continuously shapes its* ***living history;*** *and engages you with its creative and* ***vibrant communities,*** *whose* ***stories and culture*** *stimulate you, so you are freed up to relax, enjoy and* ***leave feeling refreshed, renewed and uplifted.***

This brand promise is delivered through three themes which highlight the unique features of the Wild Atlantic Way. Key to the success of the Wild Atlantic Way as an Experience Brand is that we deliver on the brand promise at every point of interaction with the visitor. The promise needs to be:

Real based on genuine and authentic assets. It needs to be truly delivered by the tourism businesses included in the brand. The industry needs to buy-into the brand and 'live it' to truly deliver on its promise.

Relevant developed with the potential visitor in mind and able to satisfy their needs and motivations

Related to the other Experience Brands on the Island of Ireland but unique enough to stand out alongside them individually.

WILD ATLANTIC WAY THEMES

Life Shaped by the Atlantic – you can get up close and personal with traditions and spiritual Gaelic Ireland and immerse yourself in the real Ireland where the traditions of the past are very much alive in the music, the song, the dance, storytelling, games and the Irish language.

Where Land Meets Sea – on the very edge of Europe, the ocean's force has carved a coast of wild, raw beauty. Huge Atlantic rollers crash and churn, shaping jagged ocean crags, islands and the sheer granite of Europe's tallest sea cliffs. It provides a breath-taking backdrop for active exploration of untamed land and seascapes. Enjoy up close encounters with the elements.

Connectedness – the feeling of connecting to the people and the landscape, of being a part of something 'bigger.' Feeling renewed and energised by the place, its people and its story. Your reward from a journey of discovery, challenge and being immersed in an ancient landscape. If the potential visitor to the Island of Ireland is offered a clear menu of distinctive but equally appealing Experience Brands, the likelihood of them choosing to visit for longer is increased.

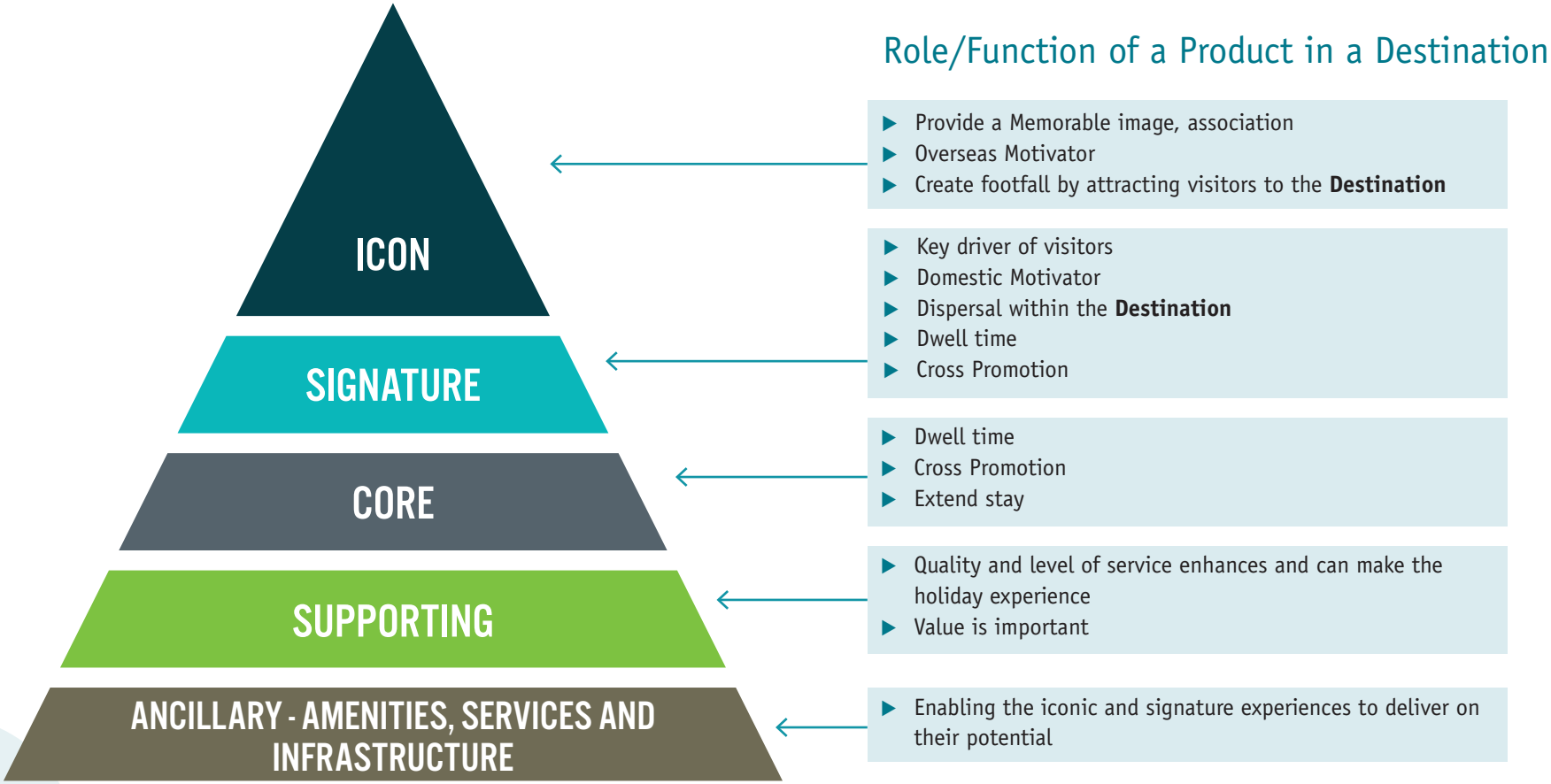
It's up to each business to embrace the themes of the Wild Atlantic Way and strengthen the overall appeal of the Experience Brand

WHAT IS EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT / PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT?

Developing an experience requires a shift away from the traditional product versus price mentality. It's about delivering life-changing moments that inspire visitors to not only share their experience with others, but also makes them want to return.

Experience Development is the art and science of delivering a consistent message that inspires consumers throughout their travel experience – providing something that not only motivates visitors to become ambassadors for your destination, but also gives them the tools to help tell your message.

The concept of experience development extends beyond just simply providing an enjoyable experience for visitors. To achieve international cut-through in today's 'sharing economy', experiences need to utilise thematic interpretation techniques that evoke a positive emotional response in visitors, making them want to brag about their experience with family and friends and to experience it again and again. By embedding an experience with the unique selling features, or 'signatures', of a destination, visitors will associate that experience specifically with the destination and become advocates for these experiences with others.



Role/Function of a Product in a Destination

- Provide a Memorable image, association
- Overseas Motivator
- Create footfall by attracting visitors to the **Destination**

- Key driver of visitors
- Domestic Motivator
- Dispersal within the **Destination**
- Dwell time
- Cross Promotion

- Dwell time
- Cross Promotion
- Extend stay

- Quality and level of service enhances and can make the holiday experience
- Value is important

- Enabling the iconic and signature experiences to deliver on their potential

For many businesses, the opportunity to develop HERO/Core Experiences is about doing things differently. It is about creating a sense of adventure and 'micro' adventure moments where the visitor feels totally absorbed in the setting, the story, and feels a sense of accomplishment. Even the traditional concept of outdoor adventure has changed and moved away from simply the activity. Today, it is about getting off the beaten track, connecting with locals and feeling immersed in the moment. It is a sensory and an intellectual experience – one that touches the visitor emotionally and intellectually, as well as physically.

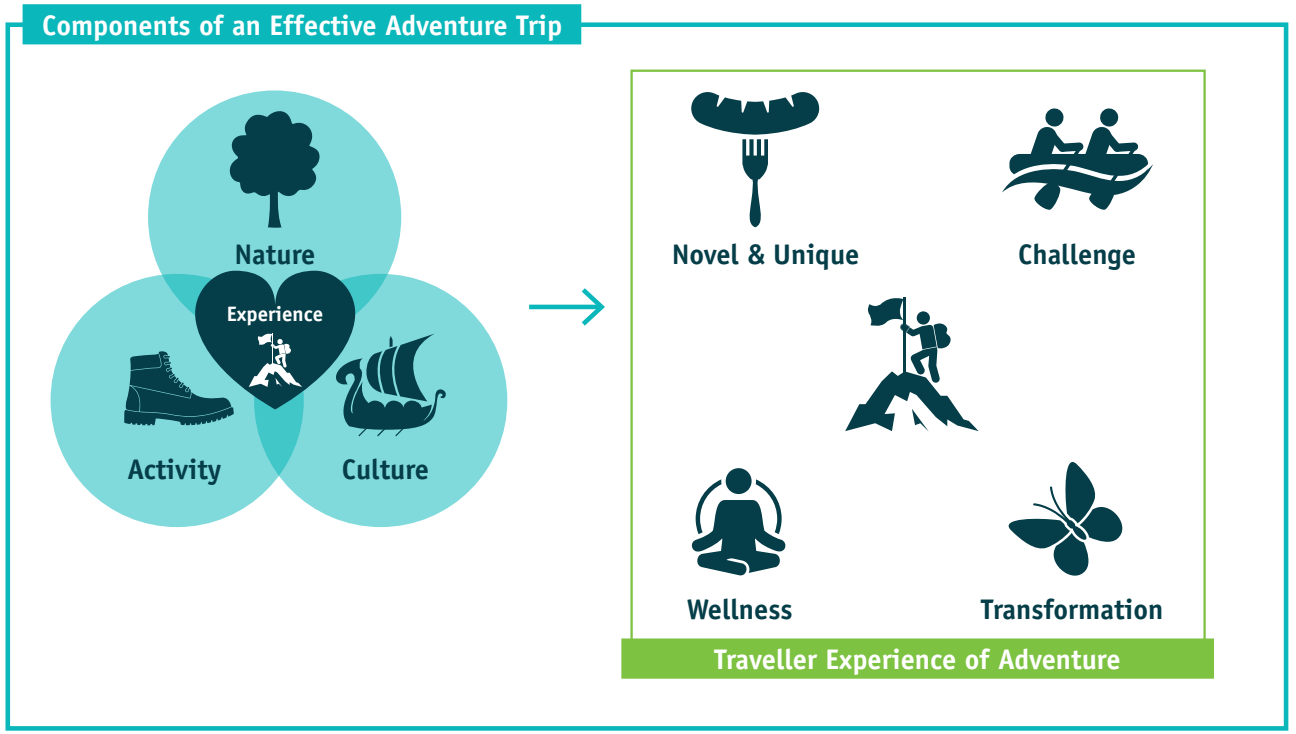
This realignment of activities and products to experiences is a direct response to market trends. The visitors in the target segments are looking to discover the essence of a place and to connect with it in as authentic a way as possible. The sense of discovery can just as easily be in the ordinary moment – the encounter with the owner of the small high street artisan store, the exchange of stories with the local in the bar, or the conversation at breakfast in the B&B. With this perspective in mind, the entire community is in the business of delivering the destination experience and of ensuring that the visitor truly appreciates what makes West Cork Coast distinctive and memorable.

H Holistic

E Experiential

R Reinvigorating

O Outstanding





Riders exercising their horses on Red Strand, Co Cork

HOW WAS THE PLAN DEVELOPED?

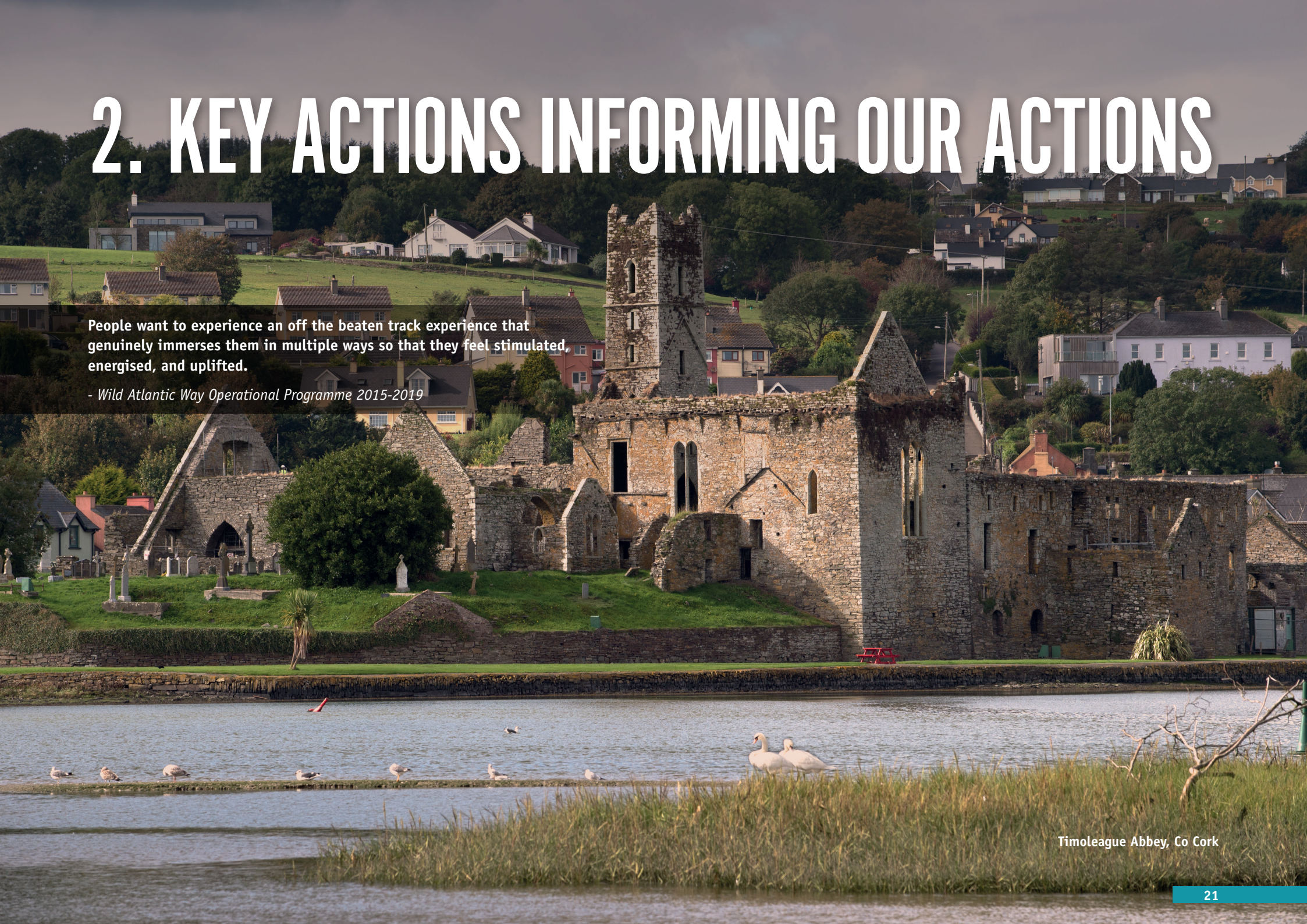
The planning process involved the following seven steps:

1. Formation of a Working Group – this group was put in place by Fáilte Ireland with representatives from all the key agencies and local tourism groups involved in influencing or delivering tourism.
2. Desk research to review on-line presence of destination; relevant best practices; and existing plans and strategies of stakeholders.
3. In-region consultation phase 1 – site visits; discussions with related operators; Working Group workshop; a series of community workshops to discuss the essence of place, the underlying stories and the opportunities; and a general appraisal of the overall area – followed by an analysis of the findings.
4. Industry survey to assess issues constraining the sustainable development of tourism, aspirations, opportunities for developing new experiences, key markets, and approaches to online distribution.
5. In-region consultation phase 2 – themed experience development community workshops; Working Group presentation; analysis of findings.
6. Destination Attitude Survey – Survey of international visitors during peak season on their expectations vs experience.
7. Development of Plan and presentation to Working Group.

2. KEY ACTIONS INFORMING OUR ACTIONS

People want to experience an off the beaten track experience that genuinely immerses them in multiple ways so that they feel stimulated, energised, and uplifted.

- Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme 2015-2019



Timoleague Abbey, Co Cork

THE WEST CORK COAST - WHERE ARE WE NOW

The South West Region of Ireland attributes over two-thirds of its visitor spend to overseas visitors. However, a survey of local businesses in the West Cork Coast would suggest that this area does not enjoy the same level of benefit. Seventy-one percent of respondents indicated that domestic markets represented at least 51% of total business with 32% having at least 71% of their business from Irish residents. Clearly, there is a need to strengthen the offering and create reasons to visit that will appeal to the overseas markets. Understanding the challenges that need to be addressed and strengthening local opportunities will be key in attracting new markets and additional spend.

The 2019 data from Fáilte Ireland indicates that the South West region (Cork and Kerry) received 4.7 million tourists in 2019 (of which 50% are overseas) and €1,506 million in tourist spend (of which 64% is from overseas tourists).

Looking at all tourists, 12% are from Britain, 19% from Mainland Europe, and 16% are from North America, with a further 1% from N. Ireland. Domestic tourists account for 49% of all tourists. It is interesting to note that the tourists spend from the North American tourists amounts to 22% of total tourist spend. These markets remain key target markets for the region – particularly the United States, the UK, Germany and France. At present, there is no data available which specifically relates to the West Cork Coast region. Data for County Cork and County Kerry as a whole has been used as an indicator of international visitor patterns within the area.

- The main **reason for an overseas visit** to the South West is for a **holiday (73%)**. Just over one-third of tourists to the South West are **couples** and 35% of tourists are **travelling alone.**
- 52% are **first time visitors to the region**. This increases to 70% when only holiday makers are considered.
- **Overseas** visitors to the South West spend on average **€415 per person** and **domestic** visitors spend an average of **€221 per person.** 47% of **international holidaymakers** stay in a **hotel** accounting for
  - 30% of bed-nights and 32% stay in a **guest house or B&B** accounting for 23% of bed-nights.Fáilte Ireland:
    Key Tourism Facts 2019, July 2019; 2019 Fáilte Ireland's Survey of Overseas Travellers, 2018; Analysis of Visitor Accommodation in Cork, **Additional Baseline Indicators**

In 2019, County Cork attracted 1.5 million overseas visitors, generating €617 million. An additional 1.2 million domestic trips generated €225 million. Taken together, tourism created a visitor spend of €842 million.

- In 2019, according to STR, a CoStar Group company, hotel occupancy for County Cork was 77%, Average Daily Rate (ADR) was €113.46 and Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR) was €88.83
- 2019 – Cork International Airport handled 2.6 million passengers (in comparison to 1.6 million at Shannon, 0.4 million at Kerry, 0.8 million at Knock and 32.9 million at Dublin.)
- Passenger cars through Cork Ferry Port in 2019 was 39,000.
- Overseas €s per 10,000 population – 11.62 m (4 /26 counties).
- Broadband connectivity within the county – 66.1% (8/26 counties – the national average is 70.4%).



Garretstown Beach, Kinsale, Co. Cork

DESTINATION ATTITUDE SURVEY

Most first time Visitors, had moderate expectation, but no standout reason to visit.

- Overseas (47%)
- Relatively high number of day trippers, travelling from Cork (43%) or Kinsale (47%)
- Using a car (79%) 49% rented car
- Alone or as a couple (64%)
- Not having enough time was the primary reason for not visiting sites they were aware of (53%)

West Cork Coast's Conversion rates to visitation are the highest in all of the Wild Atlantic Way – raising awareness will boost visitor numbers.

What were the visitor expectations for the experience below prior to visiting destination?	Three Peninsulas	West Cork Coast
Culture / Experiential	66%	61%
Nature / Scenery	98%	80%
Social	57%	56%
Relaxation	74%	50%
Nostalgia*	41%	18%

* Nostalgia: Have a nostalgic experience + Experience somewhere different but familiar.

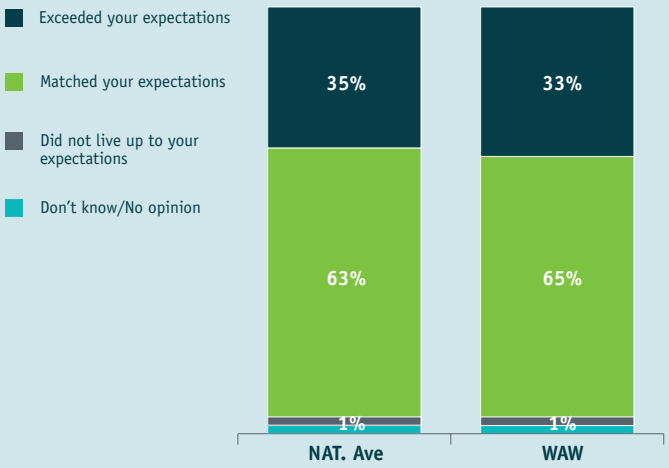
Visitors have certain fundamental needs:

- Getting to the destination safely and with little hassle.
- Having information on what to do when they arrive.
- A measure of variety in any food provided.

The visitors surveyed were asked questions re Travel, Food, Evening Activities, Outdoor Activities and Sightseeing and what areas under each topic needs improvement.

TRAVEL	FOOD	EVENING ACTIVITIES	OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES	SIGHTSEEING
The quality of the roads (18%)	The variety of food available (13%)	The availability of other things to do (12%)	The information available on activities (14%)	The range of sites in the area (8%)
The quality of the Signposting (17%)	Healthy food options available (13%)	Places closing too early (11%)	The equipment available to hire for activities (7%)	The information available on sites (7%)
Slow traffic/traffic congestion (16%)	The opening hours (12%)	The quality of things to do in the evening (9%)		The stories presented being interesting at the sites (6%)
Quality of signs for local tourist attractions (15%)				

Visitors were asked what they would say re their visit to this area v their expectations



57% of respondents to the West Cork Coast said their visit to the area exceeded expectations which is well above the national average and Wild Atlantic Way as a whole.

The reasons expectations were exceeded are captured in this word cloud.



Destination Attitudes Survey (DAS), Fáilte Ireland, February 2019



Old Head Lighthouse, Old Head, Kinsale, Co Cork

THE EMERGING CRUISE MARKET

In 2018 over 157,000 passengers and 69,000 crew members visited the Port of Cork. The ongoing growth of cruise visitation to Cork and the regeneration of Bantry Harbour create a further market opportunity for new experiences. Trends indicate that passengers are increasingly looking for shorter cruises which attracts the Millennial markets. This segment is about value over volume and there may be an opportunity for West Cork to grow this end of the market by growing its luxury product offering.



Cape Clear Ferry, Co Cork

THE EXPERIENCES OUR VISITORS ARE SEEKING

Having a detailed understanding of what motivates visitors to travel to Ireland, not just their needs, can help to grow market share through more effective destination and experience development and targeted marketing.

Recognising the benefits of global consumer market segmentation, Fáilte Ireland has undertaken significant research on the country's key consumer segments, including their travel motivations, lifestyle, values, interests, and travel information sources.

Through this research, two key market segments have been identified for the Wild Atlantic Way – the Culturally Curious and the Great Escapers. In addition to these primary segments, the West Cork Coast has the capacity to attract a third segment – the Social Energisers, particularly with a growing emphasis on activity tourism.

The following tables highlight what these segments are seeking from a holiday in Ireland:

Culturally Curious

are very independently minded and are interested in places of historic and cultural interest.

- Want to learn about Irish culture, customs, and traditions.
- Looking for authentic local experiences.
- Interested in history being brought to life by storytelling and re-enactment.
- Seek to venture off the beaten track – often by hiking, walking or biking.
- Curious to explore natural landscapes and seascapes, small towns and villages, castles, ancient sites and historic houses.
- Seek quality, fresh, well-prepared local food.
- They want to hear the insider perspective through local stories.

Great Escapers

want to get away from it all, renewing family bonds and spending time together in a beautiful place.

- Feel connected to nature – travel in autumn and/or spring when nature is going through a transformative phase.
- Seek value for money.
- Rural touring holidays with a promise of local, authentic communities, and activities.
- Meeting authentic local people to learn about the Irish way of life.
- Little interest in formal cultural artefacts, e.g., museums.
- Seek an urban-rural experience, but will want to experience the less touristy parts of the cities.

Social Energisers

have a passion to experience new things – the more unique and exciting, the better.

- Socially energetic; young at heart spanning all age groups.
- Seek fun, social interaction, and excitement, and want to engage fully with the destination – looking for areas frequented by the locals and quirky, spontaneous, unplanned experiences.
- Want to visit the top attractions and activities, particularly if they are presented in an energetic, engaging, and unusual way.
- Professionals with a busy life – can be a more lucrative segment than others.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

A successful Destination and Experience Development Plan should not only be aligned to the Wild Atlantic Way brand and its target markets, but it should also seek to address the underlying challenges and threats facing the destination, while building on core strengths and finding ways of leveraging new opportunities. The key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as identified in community discussions and site visits are presented below. This SWOT analysis has been used to guide the direction of the strategic initiatives outlined in the Action Plan.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
▶ Diversity of coastal landscapes and ecosystems. ▶ Unique and welcoming small towns in close proximity to each other. ▶ Array of opportunities to build 'slow' tourism. ▶ Sense of intimacy balanced with a 'cosmopolitan' feel. ▶ Energy and commitment to sustainability and maintaining local traditions and values. ▶ Quality of the food, diversity of local artisan food producers – highest numbers in Ireland. ▶ Well established recognition for local foods and food specialisms such as Clonakilty black pudding. ▶ Rich depth and colour in local stories – layers of history. ▶ Distinctive and vibrant maritime heritage.	▶ Seasonality. ▶ Limited public transport. ▶ Reduction of sea routes. ▶ No traffic management systems in place. ▶ Roads not suited to high volumes / signage to towns. ▶ Insufficient focus on the strengths of the area – its potential for 'slow' travel. ▶ Insufficient marine infrastructure for visiting boating vessels. ▶ Accommodation – varied needs - to include parking for camper vans near amenities. ▶ No significant markers for start or end of Wild Atlantic Way. ▶ Insufficient experiences, particularly in non-peak periods. ▶ Staff shortages and issues relating to affordable housing for staff. ▶ Marketing and positioning of West Cork experiences.	▶ Strong local passion to building new experiences that will differentiate the region. ▶ Potential to build on the region's creativity. ▶ Recognised as one of Europe's top sailing destinations. ▶ Cork Airport as overseas gateway. ▶ Nature as a playground for land and water-based activities. ▶ Abundance of artisan food providers. ▶ Traffic management systems in place for high volume areas. ▶ Create an opportunity for Start/End of Wild Atlantic Way. ▶ Build on sustainable practices eg Plastics Free Kinsale initiative & Cool Clon.	▶ The challenge facing regional tourism destinations arising from Brexit and its impact on the UK and European markets. ▶ Parking and traffic management in areas and parking for camper vans. ▶ Internet and phone connectivity. ▶ Sustainability of island life and smaller fishing communities. ▶ Insufficient understanding of tourism needs by planning department. ▶ Lack of coordination in industry development.

REGIONAL ASPIRATIONS

A plan that aligns with the aspirations of communities and industry has a much greater likelihood of making a difference and achieving longer term success. Based on consultation, tourism businesses and related stakeholders indicated a desire for tourism that:

- Reduces seasonality.
- Encourages sustainable growth that maintains the quality and vibrancy of local life.
- Offers unique experiences that builds on local strengths and passion.
- Improves the area's capacity to offer slow tourism through enhanced connectivity between trail systems and the development of new opportunities for safe hiking and cycling.
- Attracts new investment in accommodation infrastructure.
- Generates a greater level of coordination, new thinking and progressive leadership.
- Appeals to the international markets.

In addition, the strategic priorities of the County Council will facilitate the implementation of the Plan and will be supported by its implementation. In particular priorities relating to aligning with the County Council's proposition for Cork – Ireland's maritime paradise – *a lush coastal playground backed by rolling hills with an endless succession of ports, coves and bays that are a magnet for sailors and those who just love to be by the sea…. a maritime history spanning over a thousand years, including the most influential periods of European exploration – where 'paradise' means abundance.* The County proposition framework is based on two types of experiences:

- *Maritime and outdoor leisure*
- *Local creative vibe (artisanal produce, music and craft)*

With this alignment, the Destination and Experience Development Plan will play an important role in bringing this proposition to life and in delivering visitor-centric experiences. Cork County Council's commitment to facilitate and enrich the visitor journey with integrated tourism infrastructure and destination / experience enablers will likewise support the implementation of this Plan.

A wide range of stakeholders were consulted during the course of the preparation of this Plan. See appendix for full list of organisations and agencies.



View towards Drombeg Stone Circle, Glandore, Co Cork

3. WEST CORK COAST – OVERVIEW OF DESTINATION THEMES

...to create an experience you need to engage them emotinoally. It's about striking a balance between facts and activities (the functional) and engaging, amazing and memorable elements (the emotional). You want your story to the first every visitor tells when they get back home, or even better the story they share on social media.

Tourism Queensland



Charles Fort, Kinsale, Co Cork

WEST CORK COAST DESTINATION AND EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN OVERVIEW

The basis for development is to create and build visitor experiences that can deliver the vision for the West Cork Coast implemented in a 3-step process.

1

Activation of Catalyst Projects that represent areas with significant tourism potential for the West Cork Coast

2

Developing the Destination Enabling Projects that address existing deficits in addressing seasonality and regionality

3

Support the creation of saleable experiences by the tourism industry aligned with the essence of the West Cork Coast and the development themes identified within the West Cork Coast DEDP.

The desired outcome of this implementation Plan is a suite of experiences that align with and animate the destination themes and can therefore be marketed and promoted internationally. The existence of themed, saleable experiences that return economic value to the communities and businesses of the West Cork Coast is the key performance indicator of this plan.

The existence of compelling and saleable visitor experiences is the vehicle for:

- Driving average length of stay.
- Increasing overnight visitation and visitor spend.
- Dispersing visitors especially in peak season.
- Extending the season towards a year-round destination.

The character, geography, landscape, people, food, culture and heritage of the area born from land and sea must directly influence and generate the experiences that tourists can consume and be appropriate to their demands and reflect the sense of the West Cork Coast.

The recommendations detailed hereafter are proposed to deliver the vision of the West Cork Coast. This Plan does not guarantee future funding and is designed to encourage businesses to be proactive in creating unique visitor experiences.



Courtmacsherry, Arigadeen River Kayaking Co Cork

THE WEST CORK COAST STORY

*The West Cork Coast – **where living in the moment promises a kaleidoscope of flavours, colour, culture and adventure;** and where the serenity of the bays and countryside today stand in distinctive contrast to the piracy, smuggling, shipwrecks and sackings of the past. This is a coastline **where the interplay of land and sea offers a unique blend of intimacy, harmony and surprise** as time is taken to meander slowly through the villages and off the beaten track. While a shadow of poignant times still lingers, the opportunity to relax and embrace all that this gentle landscape has to offer today is more deeply appreciated.*

Understanding the essence of the West Cork Coast and the stories that are associated with the region provides the basis for a creative framework that can be used in positioning the region and shaping the development of HERO experiences. The framework presents three inter-related elements of this coastal area that highlight the strengths and personality of the destination in a way that will differentiate the West Cork Coast and will create 'cut-through' in a busy marketplace, while creating a sense of cohesion in the visitor experience.

This Destination and Experience Development Plan focuses on bringing these destination elements to the fore through providing a context to strengthen existing experiences and to develop new experiences. The framework should be regarded as a tool – one that is designed to elevate the region's best, and to bring to life those stories that underlie its very essence in a way that enables the visitor to make an emotional connection with the West Cork Coast and to clearly recall the memories of the experiences.

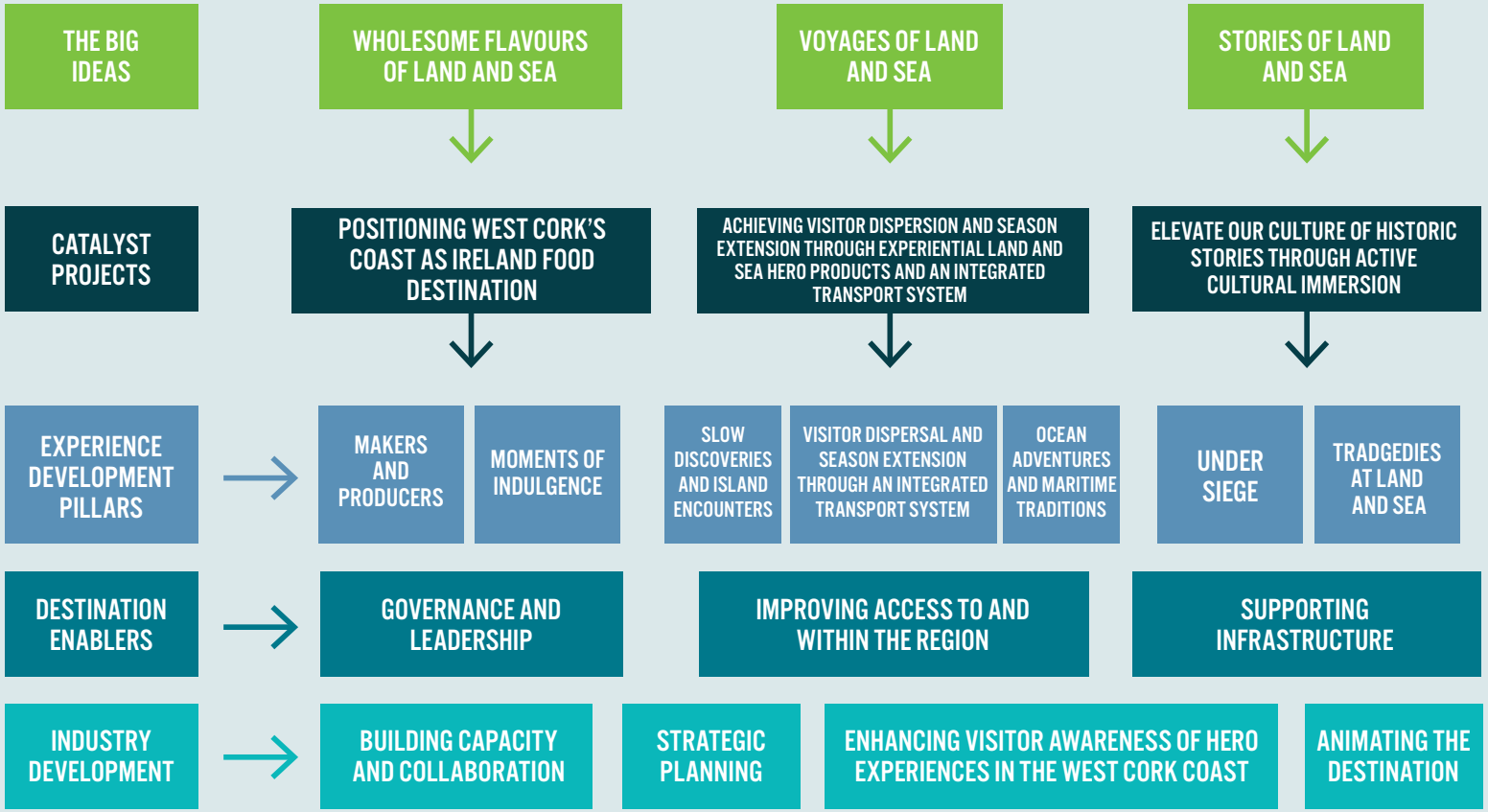
A summary of the stories can be found in the Appendix.



Decriptors of the West Cork Coast - Community Sessions 2019

DELIVERING THE WEST CORK COAST DEDP

A YEAR ROUND, WELL MANAGED, INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED TOURIST DESTINATION DELIVERING UNIQUE, SUSTAINABLE AND TIMELESS VISITOR EXPERIENCES, WHERE LIVING IN THE MOMENT PROMISES A KALEDISCOPE OF FLAVOUR, COLOUR, CULTURE AND ADVENTURE



The West Cork Coast DEDP will be delivered through a programme of industry, products and destination development activity aligned with a number of areas of strategic focus i.e. achieving the Big Ideas. These are identified through the assessment of the destination to establish the key points of differentiation, opportunities identified by the tourism industry, communities and stakeholders while maximising the potential of the built and natural assets. Crucially, these big ideas are designed to achieve the desired destination transformation that delivers on the goals of sustainable destination development, protecting the uniqueness of the landscape, the cultural and natural heritage and aspire to world class delivery of West Cork Coast experiences.

The big ideas are achieved through the delivery of the catalyst projects that provide a strategic focus for West Cork Coast DEDP. The development of visitor experiences is subsequently influenced by the experience development pillars that will collectively contribute to the delivery of the catalyst projects.

DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES THROUGH OUR CATALYST PROJECTS

The following represents projects recommended as priority projects designed to create long term destination impacts from the prospective of creating the sustainable conditions required for experience development. The development priorities are established based on their ability to contribute to the following project objectives within the context of the West Cork Coast DEDP.

The projects highlights are designed to deliver the four development priorities through a mix of catalyst and enabling projects and the Big Ideas.

1. POSITION WEST CORK COAST AS A PREMIER FOOD DESTINATION BOTH DOMESTICALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY

West Cork Coast DEDP Focus: Recognising the potential of West Cork Coast as a Foodie Destination, integrate all the local experiences to create a global leading visitor proposition. Delivered by:

- **Makers and Producers:** Visit the region that lies behind the growth of artisanal food and drink in Ireland. This is where the wholesome flavours of land and sea truly originated, and where you can meet producers and makers who have devoted energy and creativity into making this region an exciting 'foodie' destination of international repute. Discover the eclectic stories that lie behind so many award-winning flavours.
- **Moments of Indulgence** abound throughout the West Cork Coast and can be found anywhere from famed Michelin restaurants to small cafés. Even the local grocery stores present a spread of foods that highlight the region's unique wholesome flavours in an innovative way. Food and drink here are consumed with passion, and these moments of indulgence become irresistible as we share the stories of our food and discover flavours that are traced back to the region's colourful past.



Baltimore Oysters served, Co Cork

2. ACHIEVE VISITOR DISPERSION AND SEASON EXTENSION

West Cork Coast DEDP Focus: Manage tourism year-round and facilitating tourism dispersion particularly in peak season, and creating hero experiences that will drive season extension, overnight visitation and visitor spend.

A commitment to a series of projects that recognise the operational challenges faced within the destination at peak periods i.e. traffic management plans, integrated transport, shared facilities at beaches, toilet facilities, and waste management.

- **Integrated Transport System and Visitor Dispersal** - Transport to and within the region is a key destination enabler. The West Cork Coast is at Destination maturity "*Progressing*" and in terms of Destination Maturity Kinsale is at "Enhancing". The key urban towns and beaches in the area are seeing congestion in peak season. An integrated transport system is essential to disperse the visitors from the key hub towns of Kinsale, Clonakilty and Skibbereen to the lesser travelled areas. It will allow for the development of new best-in-class HERO experiences to attract visitors building on the Slow Discovery concept, with development of walking, cycling, eco-tourism, birdwatching, and island experiences, while getting into the true essence of the destination and uncovering the stories of land and sea. It would link all modes of transport - car, bus, local link, walking, cycling, kayaking, boat, together to make it seamless for the traveller with transfer of luggage etc.
- **Re-imagining Kinsale** – Kinsale is at "Enhancing" Destination maturity in the Destination maturity Framework. Congestion is a key issue, and the focus needs to be on Experience Innovation and Visitor Dispersal. The recently commissioned Re-imagining Kinsale Urban design briefing document by Scott Tallon Walker presents a clear opportunity for Kinsale to become an international example, best in class template and national/international benchmark in how a heritage tourism town can be sensitively and creatively updated for modern times using best urban design, place-making and conservation practices. https://www.kinsale.ie/2021/07/07/reimagining-kinsale/ Kinsale is also the Start/End of Wild Atlantic Way and we need to recognise this from a visitor perspective.
- **Clonakilty** – Implement the "Refreshed Vision for Clonakilty". This vision gives Clonakilty area the projects and ideas for working collectively to drive tourism growth and reposition Clonakilty in the minds of the domestic and international visitors. This refreshed vision has a specific emphasis on quality over quantity in terms of visitor numbers.
- **Slow Discoveries and Island Encounters** - Establish recognition for slow travel through strengthening infrastructure and services that will support walking, hiking and cycling.
  - Look at the feasibility of developing **Blueways and Greenways.**
  - **Eco-tourism:** Develop the land-based ecotourism experience, recognising that this area has significant untapped potential, particularly in relation to bird watching.
  - **Cultural and Heritage:** Build new and strengthen existing experiences that animate the local cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage assets.
  - **Island Encounters:** Continue to build on existing unique selling propositions – food experiences on Heir Island; art on Sherkin Island – leveraging its positioning as a location for a degree in visual arts; and Gaeltacht life on Cape Clear. Visitor experiences that accentuate island traditions and the stories that highlight islanders' resilience and passion for life have the potential to resonate with visitors and generate overnight stays. Existing experiences and unique elements include the Fastnet Tour.
- **Ocean Adventures and Maritime Traditions:** The combination of calmer waters, milder climate and clear unpolluted sea make this area a paradise for ocean adventures. Exploring islands by yacht or traditional sailboat, kayaking estuaries and coastal river-ways, discovering underwater heritage in an area renowned for wreck and scenic diving, and experiencing some of the best whale watching in Europe are all adventures awaiting the visitor. The maritime story of West Cork runs deep. It is embedded with the local culture and coastline just as much in the present as in the past. It connects communities, inspires passion, and generates a sense of pride in a way that is almost unique on the Wild Atlantic Way. The sheer number of coves and natural harbours, and the sheltered nature of the waters have created a profound connection with the sea and a heritage that embodies this connection.



Kinsale Harbour, West Cork, Co Cork

3. ELEVATE OUR CULTURAL AND HISTORIC STORIES

West Cork Coast DEDP focus: Improved development and promotion of the areas unique features and stories to achieve increased domestic and international cut-through.

- **Under Siege:** The stories of sackings, battles, siege, and revolution echo from Kinsale to Baltimore. Much of modern Ireland was shaped under the hands of those who fought for their cause and defended their principles in this part of the country. Forts, castles, historic sites and plaques remind the visitor of troubled times that stand in sharp contrast to the tranquility of today's landscape and the vitality of towns, villages and islands. This HERO theme is core to the identity of West Cork and can be brought to the fore of the visitor experience in so many different contexts. The story of Ireland can be challenging for the overseas visitor to truly grasp, and this theme provides the context to unravel and present the different chapters and to show how the elements inter-relate.
- **Tragedies at Sea:** Poignant times is further reflected in the tragedies on land and sea that have befallen this area. Shipwrecks abound off the coast, but none more famed than the Lusitania – a dramatic sinking in May 1915 that impacted the psyche of the entire coastline. News of The Great Famine from 1845 -1852 - the worst humanitarian disaster of nineteenth century Europe originated largely from the reports being sent out from Skibbereen, and the community remains closely tied to this tragedy.

4. DESTINATION ENABLING PROJECTS

West Cork Coast DEDP: A series of destination enabling projects to address existing deficits impacting on the challenges of extending the season, increasing overnight visitation and visitor spend, and attracting visitors to engage with the true essence and story of the West Cork Coast without compromising the environment or culture of the region.

DESTINATION ENABLING PROJECTS			INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT			
Governance and Leadership	Improving Access to and Within the West Cork Coast	Supporting Infrastructure	Building Capacity and Collaboration	Strategic Planning	Enhancing Visitor Awareness of HERO Experiences	Animating the Destination

Governance and Leadership

Formation of an Implementation Group with representatives from all the key agencies to identify the ideal model to resource and implement the actions.

The West Cork Tourism Network was formed in 2020, its membership includes Fáilte Ireland, Cork County Council, Pure Cork and business representatives from across the tourism sector in West Cork who sit on the aforementioned DEDP groups and participate on a voluntary basis. The vision for the **West Cork Tourism Network (WCTN)** is to oversee the implementation of the two DEDPs for West Cork (West Cork Coast & West Cork Three Peninsulas and Kenmare) ensuring that both plans are aligned and that tourism and hospitality providers across both geographies are working together. The overarching objective of the DEDPs is to sustainably increase the economic benefit of tourism to the area.

Improving Access to and Within the Region

- Expanding air and sea access – continue to work together to improve air and sea access into the West Cork Coast.
- Explore opportunities to develop an integrated transport network to seamlessly disperse visitors throughout the County.
- Continue to assess and address carparking needs in towns and villages including the implementation of park and ride facilities in peak season.
- Undertake signage audit of the region.

Supporting Infrastructure

- Encourage the creation of conditions that will promote investment in developing diverse categories of bed stock in the accommodation sector.
- Work with communities to assess and address infrastructural requirements to facilitate the development of marine tourism and improve the quality of the region's maritime environment, and to fully implement the *Marine Leisure Infrastructure Strategy (2010-2020)*.
- Work with Cork County Council to review accessibility and inclusion issues to ensure that all visitors have an opportunity to engage fully in experiencing a destination.

INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

Building Capacity and Collaboration

- Create a "Bespoke Business Support Programme" for the West Cork Coast as the basis for industry training and mentoring, with a focus on developing new and innovative visitor experiences and adopting the DEDP as a basis for commercial development.
- Develop the capacity of the tourism industry to create saleable experiences for selling online and delivering to the international market.
- Networking and Familiarisation Trips – create a networking plan to develop a strong dialogue between tourism businesses.

Strategic Planning

- Encourage community stakeholders to maintain a strategic planning focus at the community level, using the DEDP to determine strategic priorities on a regular basis.
- Work as a region towards accreditation as a sustainable destination and use an accreditation process to strengthen the principles and practices of sustainability in business operations.

Enhancing Visitor Awareness of HERO Experiences

- **Work within the marketing strategies of Pure Cork** to ensure that messaging and visual material relating to the West Cork Coast are aligned with the Wild Atlantic Way and the direction of this Plan.
- **Work with Fáilte Ireland** to profile key HERO experiences on the Wild Atlantic Way platform and ensure that the positioning of the West Cork Coast on this platform is in line with this Plan. Highlight the types of experiences that will differentiate the region and encourage increased visitation and interest.
- **SME Digital strategies:** Strengthening the distribution of experiences through engaging businesses in adopting online booking systems and online distribution.
- Promoting increased industry participation in social media.

Animating the Destination

- **Festivals and Events:** Support existing festivals and investigate opportunities for new events where these promote the themes and experiences identified in this Plan, and proactively focus on using festivals and events to extend the tourism season and expend visitor and community experiences.
- **Sense of Place:** Encourage all communities to focus on strengthening their 'sense of place' and overall welcome. This is well advanced in a number of towns and villages but is an area that requires ongoing commitment. Use the Destination Town toolkit as guide for developing Sense of Place.
- **Storytelling:** Identifying the stories and working with businesses and communities to develop a sound working knowledge of these stories is important to delivering strong theme-based experiences that allow the visitor to connect emotionally with the destination and to create a greater sense of authenticity.
- **Digital Infrastructure:** There is a need to work with partners to ensure that new technologies are put in place to support the enhancement and delivery of experiences, the curation of content, and the flow of visitors within the region.

DESTINATION EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT– THE BIG IDEAS

THE EXPERIENCE THEMES UNDER WHOLESOME FLAVOURS OF LAND AND SEA ARE:

- Makers and Producers
- Moments of Indulgence



West Cork Coast DEDP Focus: Recognising the potential of West Cork Coast as a Foodie Destination, integrate all the local experiences to create a global leading visitor proposition.

OVERVIEW

Failte Ireland's Food and Drink Strategy 2018-2023 is dedicated to changing the perception of Ireland's Food and drink offering abroad, as well as developing and promoting food tourism nationwide. Ireland has made significant strides in recent years in strengthening the breadth and quality of its food and drink offering, with operators better networked and mobilized and a steady stream of innovative food and drink initiatives across the country. International research indicates that the reality of the visitor's experience with Ireland's Food and Drink now far exceeds the expectations they had prior to their arrival in the country. In 2019 as part of the Food Strategy Failte Ireland developed a promotional platform "Taste the Island" to promote and further develop Ireland's Food Tourism Industry on a domestic and international scale. However, this was paused in 2020 due to Covid 19.

We know the power of a passionate, well organize food tourism network focused on visitor impact cannot be underestimated. Food and drink experiences in tourism have the potential to connect visitors to cultures in a very special way. They showcase the people, places, and processes behind the food that makes each destination unique.

Food and beverage consumption is an intrinsic part of the tourist experience. It can play a strong role in affecting destination choice, it's an important channel for tourists to experience the local culture and spending on food comprises of one-third of tourists' total expenditure. Currently, in Ireland, food and beverage accounts for 35% of overall visitor spend, equating to €2 billion.

Food is an essential part of life and community. In fact, one could seriously question whether you can experience the real, authentic side of a culture without experiencing the food.

Since visitors can experience most food types globally, they enjoy and value experiencing them in their authentic place. Memorable food and drink experiences can be broken down into four main themes:

- Authentic and Real
- High-Quality Produce
- Close to Source
- Iconic Food and Drink Experiences

Delivering great visitor experiences contribute actively to the development of great visitor experiences in tourism by providing support for key initiatives that lead to the promotion and ultimate repositioning of Irish food and drink experiences in the minds of potential visitors.

The West Cork Coast is "A Place Apart" on the Wild Atlantic Way with its gentle and generous nature. This corner of the world has a wonderful food culture. West Cork's farmers, award-winning artisan producers and chefs are leading Ireland's culinary revolution.

EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT – MAKERS AND PRODUCERS

Presenting experiences to the Visitor

It has long been acknowledged that there are more Artisan Food Producers in West Cork than anywhere in the country. More and more chefs are making West Cork their home as they have a natural larder on their doorstep, and with sustainability and food miles ethos high on the agenda this is likely to continue – currently there are 3 Michelin Star Restaurants in West Cork - Bastion in Kinsale, Restaurant Chestnut in Ballydehob and Dede in Baltimore, and also the Kinsale Gourmet Academy set up by Michelin Star Chef David Rice.

The Taste of West Cork Food Festival brings this to life where 250+ events across more than 40 towns & villages including the West Cork islands. It is also recognized as the home of Farmhouse Cheeses. In addition to this we have seen significant investment in the Food and Drink space in recent years e.g., Glenilen Farm, Kinsale Meadery, Clonakilty Distillery, Clonakilty Black Pudding to name but a few.

Visit the region that lies behind the growth of artisanal food and drink in Ireland. This is where the wholesome flavours of land and sea truly originated, and where you can meet producers and makers who have devoted energy and creativity into making this region an exciting 'foodie' destination of international repute. Discover the eclectic stories that lie behind so many award-winning flavours.



Manning's Emporium, Bantry, West Cork

HERO PRODUCTS	SUPPORTING EXPERIENCES
▶ A Taste of West Cork Food Festival ▶ Kinsale Food Tour ▶ Kinsale Meadery ▶ Clonakilty Distillery ▶ Clonakilty Black Pudding ▶ Woodcock Smokery ▶ West Cork Farm Tours	▶ Farmers Markets/Neighbourhood Food ▶ Specialist Food Shops e.g., Gourmet Café Kinsale, URRU Bandon ▶ Scally's Supervalu Clonakilty ▶ Field's Supervalu Skibbereen ▶ Food Producers e.g., Glenilen Farm, Caherbeg Pork, Exploring Tree, Koko's Ummera Smoked Products, Lettercollum Kitchen Project, ▶ Breweries and Distilleries e.g., Clonakilty Brewing Co., West Cork Distillers, 3 Sq Miles. ▶ Festivals and Events e.g., Kinsale Gourmet Festival, Kinsale Chowder Festival, Baltimore Seafood Festival

Experience Development Recommendations

- As an established culinary destination with such diverse awarding-winning food and drink products, the key challenge today is identifying new ways to continue engaging existing visitors and to attract new markets through developing new initiatives that will have a wide level of market appeal. This will involve continuing to explore the potential for developing distinctive workshops and events that will take the region's positioning from strength to strength.
- Potential to increase the supply level of accessible visitor experiences thus growing the density and diversity of the Food and Drink destination offering. This would target new levels of visitor demand to achieve sustained economic returns while adhering to a development ethos matching the world class standards associated with the Irish Food and Drink offering.
- Continuing to leverage and profile A Taste of West Cork Festival – an internationally acclaimed festival that showcases the distinctive foods and food creators over 10 days in September - events across more than 40 towns & villages including the West Cork islands encompassing the DEDP region and beyond. This is the region's premier food and drink event and one that has firmly positioned West Cork as a 'foodie' destination.
- Potential to grow regular food tours and experiences of meeting makers and producers throughout the year, with increasing involvement from local businesses and growth in number of potential artisan experiences, although further commitment to developing coordination and promotional tools are required.
- Farmers' markets are a well-recognised opportunity to connect easily with local producers, and this remains an area that can be further developed as a strong year-round experience.

EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT – MOMENTS OF INDULGENCE

Presenting the experience to the visitor

The West Cork Coast is an area of rich abundance – where wholesome flavours entice and inspire year-round. The Food culture is unique in a region that offers the very best in artisan food production. Award winning cheeses, honey, black pudding, smoked salmon, ice cream, chocolate, bread, beers and spirits can be savoured throughout. Meeting the producers, exploring the farms, wondering through fields and woodlands, watching the fish come onshore or foraging the coastline, seeing produce being smoked or honing your filleting skills all highlight the deep connection between culinary excellence and maintaining the environmental integrity of land and sea.

Moments of indulgence abound throughout the West Cork Coast and can be found anywhere from famed Michelin restaurants to small cafés. Even the local grocery stores present a spread of foods that highlight the region's wholesome flavours in an innovative way. Food and drink here are consumed with passion, and these moments of indulgence become irresistible as we share the stories of our food and discover flavours that are traced back to the region's colourful past.

HERO PRODUCTS	SUPPORTING EXPERIENCES
▶ Michelin Star Restaurants	▶ Farmers Markets/Neighbourhood Food
▶ Specialist Food Shops	▶ Food and Drink visitor experiences such as
▶ Award Winning Artisan Food Producers	▶ West Cork Farm Torus
▶ A Taste of West Cork Food Festival	▶ Glenilen Farm
▶ Kinsale Gourmet Festival	▶ Exploring Tree
▶ Kinsale Food Tour	▶ Ummera Smoked Products
▶ Kinsale Meadery	▶ Clonakilty Brewing Co
▶ Clonakilty Distillery	▶ West Cork Distillers,
▶ Clonakilty Black Pudding Visitor Centre	▶ 3 Sq Miles.
▶ Woodcock Smokery	▶ Festivals and Events such as:
▶ Kinsale Gourmet Academy	▶ All lreland Chowder Cook Off
▶ Kinsale Good Food Circle	▶ Baltimore Seafood Festival

Experience Development Recommendations

West Cork is known for its restaurants and food experiences. The challenge of maintaining and strengthening this reputation is essential, particularly as initiatives across Ireland focus on food and other destinations seek to leverage their local foods and drinks.

- Food can be an integral element of a wide range of experiences. It can be themed to further animate an experience, whether it relates to West Cork's maritime heritage, outdoor adventure, the stories of rebels, or even the tragedy of The Famine. Using food to add a new dimension to these themed experiences or to further enrich community festivals and events will deepen the significance of the activities and events and will provide a basis for new partnerships.
- Food and Drink provide various opportunities to extend the season and to encourage overnight stays. With the growth of craft breweries and distilleries, there is potential to look at developing new food and drink events that are outside the peak-season.
- All aspects of the food culture in the West Cork Coast will benefit from an ongoing focus on coordination, promotion and the development of web-based tools that assist the visitor in planning a trip.

"West Cork to me is the capital of food in Ireland. So much of the best food being grown and produced in Ireland comes from West Cork. From the farmers to the producers to the farmers markets and restaurants, it is a haven for foodies." **— Clodagh McKenna, Irish Chef & Food Writer**



Baltimore, Lunch with oysters Co Cork

THE EXPERIENCE THEMES UNDER VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY ON LAND AND SEA ARE:

- Slow Discoveries and Island Encounters
- Ocean Adventures and Maritime Traditions

West Cork Coast DEDP Focus: Manage tourism year-round and facilitating tourism dispersion particularly in peak season, and creating hero experiences that will drive season extension, overnight visitation and visitor spend.

A commitment to a series of projects that recognise the operational challenges faced within the destination at peak periods:

- Traffic management plan at key areas in West Cork, i.e., Kinsale.
- Integrated transport system.
- Shared facilities at beaches, toilet facilities, waste management.



Ferry coming into Cape Clear Island, Co Cork

OVERVIEW

This will be achieved through a series of projects that will increase the supply level of accessible year-round leisure visitor experiences, and in recognising the challenges faced in relation to traffic management and levels of concentration of tourism activity particularly in Kinsale which is a mature destination and other key towns. An integrated transport system will need to be developed across the area to help with visitor dispersal, elevate congestion and make experiences more sustainable and user friendly for the visitor integrating with trail development.

The passion, adventure and drama associated with seafaring life can be found along the entire West Cork Coast. This was a theatre of tragedy and euphoria – from sackings, armadas, shipwrecks and piracy to silks, spices and stories of boat building achievements. That passion remains with the talent of rowers bringing home the gold, the fishing vessels that return with their catch, the lifeboats that continue to safeguard the waters, and the excitement of catching a wave or glimpsing the ocean's giants rising out of the depths of the sea.

It is also a geography that compels the visitor to slow down and get off the beaten track to experience the serenity of the coves, the charisma of the islands, and the magnetic charm of small towns. The magical discovery of bioluminescence and the opportunity to wonder through tranquil gardens, quietly observe estuarine birdlife or reflect on former monastic life rewards those who slow down. This is an area where mind and body can recharge, and whether the visitor is bathing in a forest or the sea, there is a promise of wellbeing and renewal that mirrors the lushness in the landscape.



EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT – SLOW DISCOVERIES AND ISLAND ENCOUNTERS

Presenting the Theme to the Visitor

For visitors who chose the meandering routes around headlands and coves, the reward is one of intimacy and delight as stone circles, medieval monasteries, stunning beaches, and pastoral landscapes unfold. This is a stretch of the coast that promises restoration of body and mind in return for taking time to engage with the landscape.

Oileán Chléire (Cape Clear), Sherkin Island, Heir Island, Long Island and the many other small islands together known as 'Carbery's Hundred Isles' provide a haven for boating enthusiasts, artists, writers, and anyone looking to finding a slower pace and a way of life based on centuries of tradition. The backdrop of rugged natural beauty and tranquility create an appeal that attracts visitors back generation after generation.

HERO PRODUCTS	SUPPORTING EXPERIENCES
▶ Colourful towns and villages	▶ Farmers Markets/Neighbourhood Food
▶ Lough Hyne	▶ Timoleague Abbey
▶ Charles Fort	▶ Seaweed Foraging
▶ Drombeg Stone Circle	▶ Yoga on the beach
▶ West Cork Garden Trails	▶ Cycle West Cork
▶ West Cork Forest Bathing	▶ Seven Heads Walking Trails
▶ Wild Atlantic Sports	▶ Kilbrittian Trails
▶ Wild Atlantic Seaweed Baths	▶ Community and Local Walking and Cycling Trails.
	▶ Intertidal Zones and Estuaries for Eco Tourism.

Experience Development Recommendations

Establish recognition for slow travel through strengthening infrastructure and services that will support walking, hiking and cycling. Use this infrastructure to support the development of other experiences outlined in this Plan. Existing associated products and experiences include:

- The Walking Trails of the Seven Heads
- Community and Local Trails – Baltimore, Kilbrittain, Inchydoney, Timoleague, Old Head
- Clonakilty Community Cycle Scheme
- Designated cycle routes, although a number of these are in poor state of repair for road cyclists

Develop the land-based ecotourism experience, recognising that this area has significant untapped potential, particularly in relation to bird watching. Existing products and experiences include:

- Intertidal Zones and Estuaries – Clonakilty Bay is a designated Special Protected Area that includes an extensive wetland complex and a well-developed sand-dune system – which is largely unused for ecotourism.
- Lough Hyne – experiencing the bioluminescence and unique local ecology of Ireland's only statutory marine reserve
- Emergence of Forest Bathing

Build new and strengthen existing experiences that animate the local cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage assets. Examples include:

- The story of the West Cork Railway
- Timoleague Abbey and the Monastic Theme – a centre of learning in the seventeenth century known for the production of valuable manuscripts
- Stone Circles and Standing Stones such as Drombeg Stone Circle.

Continue to build on the existing unique selling propositions – food experiences on Heir Island; art on Sherkin Island – leveraging Sherkin's positioning as a location for a degree in visual arts; and Gaeltacht life on Cape Clear. Visitor experiences that accentuate island traditions and the stories that highlight islanders' resilience and passion for life have the potential to resonate with visitors and generate overnights stays. Existing experiences and unique elements include:

- Birdwatching on Cape Clear – with the chance to observe bird migrations between northern and southern hemispheres.
- Sea angling trips, whale and dolphin tours, and marine ecology.
- Cookery school and a unique opportunity to share a meal.
- Residential sailing schools and yoga retreats.
- Maritime heritage and an opportunity to explore Cape Clear's connection to the story of the Lusitania at the Fastnet Heritage Centre.
- Sherkin Island – the Island of the Arts offers a range of experiences and an artists' trail.
- Walking trails such as the Cape Clear Green Loop.
- Island festivals – Open Ear, Storytelling, Wildlife.
- Promote the story and culture of sustainability that characterises the islands – developing experiences that showcase accomplishments and traditions:
- The first integrated wind energy system in Ireland was on Cape Clear and today the island has been selected as one of six islands to participate in a major EU clean energy project.
- Cape Clear Distillery – a contemporary example of new initiatives that celebrate the island's heritage.
- Island cooperatives.
- Towelsail yawls – the lobster boats of Heir Island and Roaringwater Bay



Baltimore Pier, Baltimore, Co Cork_master

EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT – OCEAN ADVENTURES AND MARITIME TRADITIONS

Presenting the Theme to the Visitor

The combination of calmer waters, milder climate, and clear unpolluted sea make this area a paradise for ocean adventures. Exploring islands by yacht or traditional sailboat, kayaking estuaries and coastal river-ways, discovering underwater heritage in an area renown for wreck and scenic diving, and experiencing some of the best whale watching in Europe are all adventures awaiting the visitor.

The maritime story of West Cork runs deep. It is embedded with the local culture and coastline just as much in the present as in the past. It connects communities, inspires passion, and generates a sense of pride in a way that is almost unique on the Wild Atlantic Way. The sheer number of coves and natural harbours, and the sheltered nature of the waters have created a profound connection with the sea and a heritage that embodies this connection

The passion, adventure, and drama associated with sea-faring life can be found along the entire coast. This was a theatre of tragedy and euphoria – from sackings, armadas, shipwrecks and piracy to silks, spices and stories of boat building achievements. That passion remains with the talent of rowers bringing home gold, fishing vessels returning their catch, the lifeboats that continue to safeguard the waters, the excitement of catching a wave or glimpsing the ocean giants rising out of the depths of the sea.

HERO PRODUCTS	SUPPORTING EXPERIENCES
▶ Whale Watch West Cork	▶ Cork Whale Watch
▶ Courtmacsherry Angling	▶ Garretstown Surf School
▶ Atlantic Wahle & Wildlife Trips	▶ Inchydoney Surf School
▶ Atlantic Sea Kayaking	▶ SurfnSUP West Cork
▶ Sovereign Sailing	▶ Blueway – River Ilen.
▶ Cape Clear Fastnet Tour	▶ Marine Activity Leisure Sector eg Regattas, Ilen Blueway – River of Champions
	▶ Atlantic Offshore Adventures
	▶ Baltimore Sea Safari
	▶ Heir Island Sailing School
	▶ Pukana Surf Adventures
	▶ The Lagoon Activity Centre
	▶ Oysterhaven Adventure Centre
	▶ West Cork Maritime Heritage Company revitalising traditional boat building



Moonlight Kayaking Experience, Lough Hyne, Co Cork

Experience Development Recommendations

- Marine-based experiences have the potential to be exceptional along the West Cork Coast. There are many examples of excellent offerings, but the sector as a whole is fragmented, and the area is not fully benefitting from the collective strengths of its ocean adventures.
- Whale watching is an iconic HERO experience and one that must be carefully managed to maintain the integrity of the experience and the well-being of the marine wildlife. Developing policies to ensure its sustainability and to position West Cork in this context will be critical going forward.
- The marine activity leisure sector can be strengthened substantially through a regional strategic approach to its development – one that clearly identifies the range of strengths and opportunities and outlines a cohesive framework for its development in a way that fully leverages the competitive advantages that this stretch of coastline offers.
- The regional opportunities for developing HERO experiences include building on the array of marine adventure activities currently offered – sailing, kayaking, surfing, stand-up paddle boarding – and consolidating the offering to assist the visitor in booking and engaging in the activities.
  - Expanding existing water-based activities that are linked to the maritime heritage theme
  - Further developing the blueway concept on the River Ilen
  - Improving beach public realm
  - Developing an adventure heritage water-based race event
- Build on existing initiatives and support community efforts to raise the profile of maritime heritage as a key attractor. Projects and experiences to focus on include:
  - Assess the feasibility of developing a Museum of Maritime Heritage and revitalising traditional boat building and sailing skills
  - Cape Clear Heritage Centre
  - Access to lighthouses
  - Elevation of the RNLI story and the role of the lifeboats in Courtmacsherry and Baltimore communities
  - The role of fishing today as a key component of the local economy
- Strengthen the piracy theme and the way in which seafaring life in the past shaped the fortunes of coastal towns (good and bad), the food and drink, and the fashions of bygone eras. Assets that can be used to support this theme include:
  - Baltimore Castle
  - The legacy of piracy stories, including the stories of the O'Driscoll clan
  - Place names, such as Blindgate in Kinsale
  - Shipwrecks and marine archaeological site.
- Highlight the evolution of new traditions and new perspectives for coastal communities. The role of sustainability has become core to many areas in West Cork. The related activities and objectives need to be shared with the visitor.
  - Transition Town Kinsale.
  - Sustainable Skibbereen initiative.
  - Sustainable Clonakilty.

THE EXPERIENCE THEMES UNDER STORIES OF LAND AND SEA ARE:

- Under Siege
- Tragedies of Land and Sea


Charles Fort, Kinsale, Co Cork

OVERVIEW

By having an understanding of what motivated visitors to travel to Ireland, not just their needs can help grow market share through more effective experience development and targeted marketing. The Wild Atlantic Way has identified the Culturally Curious as a key market segment. This segment is independently minded and is interested in places of historical and cultural interest. The Wild Atlantic Way Brand Promise speaks about *"a landscape that continuously shapes its living history"* and *"vibrant communities whose stories and culture stimulate you"*

The West Cork Coast has a rich and colourful history. Every natural and built asset conveys a myriad of stories but it currently lacks the experience to enable visitors to immerse themselves into the narrative. This narrative will be brought to life through the development of HERO Experiences which encapsulate the stories of land and sea

EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT - UNDER SIEGE

Presenting the Theme to the Visitor

The stories of sackings, battles, siege and revolution echo from Kinsale to Baltimore. Much of modern Ireland was shaped under the hands of those who fought for their cause and defended their principles in this part of the country. Forts, castles, historic sites and plaques remind the visitor of troubled times that stand in sharp contrast to the tranquillity of today's landscape and the vitality of towns, villages and islands.

The heroism and martyrdom of those who fought for the preservation of Gaelic life and the revolutionary cause continues to emanate from military forts and battle sites. Here, stories of times past can touch a visitor unexpectedly in many corners of the region, whether it be The Battle of Kinsale story through Charles Fort and other related OPW sites or the story of Baltimore at the turn on the seventeenth century when the entire economy was based on pilchards and piracy, or in more recent times key figures like Michael Collins and Sam Maguire.



HERO PRODUCTS	SUPPORTING EXPERIENCES
▶ Charles Fort ▶ Michael Collins Centre ▶ Michael Collins House	▶ James Fort. ▶ Sams Cross ▶ Sam Maguire Passport Trail ▶ Cork Rebel Way / Michael Collins Trail ▶ Dún na Séad Castle, Baltimore

Experience Development Recommendations

This HERO theme is core to the identity of West Cork and can be brought to the fore of the visitor experience in so many different contexts. The story of Ireland can be challenging for the overseas visitor to truly grasp, and this theme provides the context to unpack and present the different chapters and to show how the elements inter-relate.

- Kinsale is located at the gateway of the Wild Atlantic Way and has a unique opportunity to set the stage for what is to be experienced along the route and to highlight its own story in an innovative way. Significant plans are in place to strengthen the Kinsale Harbour experience and the telling of The Battle of Kinsale story through Charles Fort and related OPW sites. This focus needs to be supported and maintained.
- The story of Baltimore at the turn of the seventeenth century sounds more like fiction than fact – a time when the entire economy was based on pilchards and piracy. But raids from the sea and the sale of locals into slavery cast a shadow over Baltimore that prevailed into the nineteenth century. Today this theme has the potential to add an additional dimension to the maritime heritage. While the proposed development of interpretative centres both in Baltimore and on Cape Clear are seeking to highlight the maritime heritage, there is an opportunity to elevate this side of the story in a more cohesive manner.
- The recently launched Cork Rebel Way and the stories of key figures including Michael Collins and Sam Maguire add a further layer of drama to the theme 'under siege'. Existing attractions such as the Michael Collins Centre and the Michael Collins House interpret key parts of the story, while the route has the potential to tie a collection of significant sites together into an experience that will be important in dispersing the visitor. The success of the route will depend on the fluency of the story and the extent to which communities can creatively leverage the initiative.

EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT – TRAGEDIES ON LAND AND SEA

Presenting the Theme to the Visitor

In the midst of beauty and serenity, there are moments when the harsh realities of more poignant times can be discerned. The communal grief can be felt in the famine graveyards and the shadows of the former poorhouses; the despair of those lost at sea or stolen from families through acts of war still seems to cry out when least expected.

Tragedies on land and sea that have befallen this area. News of The Great Famine from 1845 to 1842 - the worst humanitarian disaster of nineteenth century Europe originated largely from the reports being sent out from Skibbereen, and the community remains closely tied to this tragedy. Shipwrecks abound off the coast, but none more famed than the Lusitania – a dramatic sinking in May 1915 that impacted the psyche of the entire coastline.

HERO PRODUCTS	SUPPORTING EXPERIENCES
▶ Skibbereen Heritage Centre ▶ Lusitania Museum & Old Head Signal Tower	▶ RNLI / Lusitania Story Courtmacsherry ▶ Cape Clear Heritage Centre.



Skibbereen Heritage Centre, Co. Cork

Experience Development Recommendations

Skibbereen's role in telling the story of The Famine is well recognised and is set to expand with the development of the Workhouse/Soup Kitchen. This initiative provides an opportunity to reposition Skibbereen more firmly on the world stage and to take a more prominent role in the global dialogue on famine today. At the same time, the local story can be strengthened and further animated through a strategic appraisal of the use of the two buildings.

The proximity of Skibbereen to Baltimore and the blueway that connects them on the River Ilen offers further potential to tie the story to a wider area and to integrate it with other themes and activities associated with maritime heritage and boating.

The Lusitania story unfolds along the coast from the Heritage Centre on Cape Clear, to the RNLI story and the new model of the Lusitania in Courtmacsherry, and finally to the closest point to where the tragic drama played out at Old Head. Here the Memorial Garden and the Signal Tower provide context, but the story holds considerably more potential as a visitor experience. This has been highlighted in the plans for the proposed Lusitania Visitor Centre and moving ahead with this project will elevate this unifying theme and will create a valuable Signature Discovery Point experience that will complement the Battle of Kinsale story and Masterplan for OPW site in Kinsale.



Michael Collins house, Clonakilty, Co Cork

4. THE ACTION PLAN

When you customise an experience to make it just right for an individual...you cannot help changing that individual.

The Experience Economy, Updated edition, 2011



Garretstown Beach, Kinsale, Co. Cork

ACTION PLAN

IMPLEMENTING THE WEST CORK COAST DEDP PLAN

The implementation of the West Cork Coast Destination and Experience Development Plan is based on stakeholder commitment to project delivery. Key stakeholders will collectively partner on the delivery of the key tasks required to implement the DEDP. It represents a five-year operational plan creating a destination development focus for the West Cork Coast.

The West Cork Coast DEDP is designed to build on existing project plans and integrate all related activity for a coordinated series of outputs. These include projects that are being implemented, projects featured in existing plans and new concepts to build the destination's capacity for new visitor experience development.

The implementation phase is structured around an action plan approach. The framework adopts the VICE model as a means of measuring success and is applied to the operational framework for the DEDP. This includes the measurement of projects that will enhance tourism industry capacity development, experience creation and enhancement, catalyst and destination enabling projects. A list of actions relating to all proposed projects and strategic pillars actions has been devised. All stakeholders will be consulted in relation to the delivery of the identified actions. Each of the stakeholders listed below have been tasked with delivering on actions which will help to shape the plan and ultimately ensure the success of the project over the next five years.

The workplan is broken down into the following key sections:

A. Catalyst Projects.

B. Experience Development Projects based on DEDP Themes.

C. Destination Enabling Projects.

D. Local Industry Focused Projects.

ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS

Reference made to projects in this Plan does not guarantee funding, but where funding is available, it will be in alignment with this Plan. While funding is provided to certain projects, Fáilte Ireland is not the developer. Developers are required to comply with relevant legislation and the provisions of Statutory Policies, Strategies, Plans and Programmes, including those relating to environment and planning.

Timeframe

Short-term	Year 1-2	2022/2023
Medium-term	Year 3-4	2024/2025
Long-term	Year 5+	2026+

ACTION PLAN

A. CATALYST PROJECTS

CATALYST PROJECT - WHOLESOME FLAVOURS OF LAND AND SEA

Position West Cork Coast as Ireland's Premier Food Destination.

Fáilte Irelands Strategic Pillar: Prepare the Pipeline
To support the industry to build a pipeline for future international business.

Experience Development Themes:
- Makers and Producers
- Moments of Indulgence

		Lead	Timeline
A.1 Irelands Premier Food Destination	▶ A co-ordinated structure that is business led, underpinned by governmental and academic support and staffed by a fulltime Food and Drink co-ordinator that will consolidate and strengthen the creativity of our artisan food and drink producers ensuring that the flavours of both land and sea are brought to life through immersive experiences year-round. The objective being to extend the season, increase overnight visitation and visitor spend and attract visitors to engage with the true essence of the West Cork Coast Food and Drink story thereby positioning the West Cork Coast as Irelands premier Food Destination both Nationally and Internationally by 2027.	FI **Partners** WCTN, IHF, RAI, VFI, LTG's	Short – Medium-term

CATALYST PROJECT: VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY ON LAND AND SEA

Achieve Visitor Dispersal and Season Extension through Experiential Land Sea products and an integrated transport system and traffic management systems at key sites.

Fáilte Ireland Strategic Pillar: Opening the outdoors and Accelerate Domestic Tourism
Transforming Irelands Outdoor Tourism Experiences, stimulating sustained growth while delivering brilliant experiences.

Experience Development Themes:
- Slow Discoveries
- Island Encounters

		Lead	Timeline
A.2 Transport Strategies & Cycle Network Plans	▶ Undertake a programme of activity to enhance accessibility and permeability for visitor travel into West Cork and movement along the coast.	CCC **Partners** FI, WCTN	Short – Medium-term

A3 Integrated Transport System	▶ **Develop an integrated transport system.** Review the requirements to develop an integrated transport network to seamlessly disperse visitors throughout the West Cork Coast. It would link all modes of transport - car, bus, local link, walking, cycling, kayaking, boat, together to make it seamless for the visitor. It would include connectivity between Air and Sea Ports to hub settlements including Kinsale, Clonakilty and Skibbereen as well as a seamless service for visitors re transfer of luggage for walkers / bikes for cyclists etc.,	**Lead** FI **Partners** WCTN, Local Link, Bus Eireann, CCC	**Timeline** Medium – Long-term
A.4 Wild Atlantic Way Coastal Path	▶ **Expand existing infrastructure and trails to establish southern sections of the Wild Atlantic Way Coastal Path and network of linked trails.** Identify the development activities that will need to be undertaken. The development of this route from Kinsale to Ballydehob will involve working closely with local landowners. There needs to be a focus on the environmental sustainability of related initiatives, recognising the potential for high levels of use. An integrated transport system needs to be aligned to this project re transfer of luggage for visitors and connectivity to towns and villages. **The development of the Wild Atlantic Way Coastal Path in West Cork from Kinsale to Ballydehob will be developed in line with the Wild Atlantic Way Coast Path Roadmap that will be completed by the end of 2022.**	**Lead** RRO, FI **Partners** CCC, FI, LTGs, CCT, CnO, DRCD, IFA, LCs LEO, NTO	**Timeline** Ongoing – Long-term
Experience Development Themes: • Maritime Traditions • Ocean Adventure			
A.5 Fastnet Experience	▶ **Develop the Oileain Cleire Fastnet Experience and Heritage Centre and support Islanders to create experiences for visitors to actively understand island life and culture on each of the islands.**	**Lead** CCT **Partners** FI, CnO, FLAG, DRCD, LEO,	**Timeline** Short-term
A.6 Shared Facilities for Water-based Operators	▶ **Develop a Shared Facility for Water-based Activity Operators.** The West Cork Coast has the potential to offer high quality outdoor experiences for a minimum of nine months of the year however the quality of activity experience currently lags behind international standards due to lack of adequate visitor facilities.	**Lead** CCC **Partners** LC, FI	**Timeline** Short – Medium-term

CATALYST PROJECT: STORIES OF DISCOVERY ON LAND AND SEA

Elevate our Cultural and Historic Stories through Active and Cultural Immersion.

Fáilte Ireland Strategic Pillar: Preparing the Pipeline
To support industry to build a pipeline for future international business.

Experience Development Themes:
- Under siege
- Tragedies on Land and Sea

A.7 Iconic Start/ End of Wild Atlantic Way	▶ **Develop an iconic opportunity for Kinsale as Start/End of Wild Atlantic Way.** This project should incorporate elevating Heritage assets of the town, elevating the Battle of Kinsale story, improving public realm and providing adequate infrastructure to preserve the essence of the town to create an attractive sustainable iconic tourism destination at the Start / End of the Wild Atlantic Way.	**Lead** KCTB, FI **Partners** FI, CCC, OPW, LC	**Timeline** Medium – Long-term
A.8 Masterplan for OPW Sites in Kinsale	▶ **Develop a master plan for the key OPW attractions in Kinsale** that clearly demonstrates the delivery of a strong destination visitor experience. The plan needs to include a visitor strategy for an integrated experience relating to Charles Fort, James Fort and Desmond Castle, and the potential to create new walking tours and interpretative cycle routes – focusing on creating significant added value to the existing experiences.	**Lead** OPW/DCHG **Partners** FI, KCTB	**Timeline** Medium-term

EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PILLAR: TRAGEDIES ON LAND AND SEA

A.9 Lusitania Museum and Old Head Visitor Centre	▶ **Support the development of the Lusitania Visitor Centre at the Old Head of Kinsale** as outlined in the indicative Master Plan developed in 2015. This site is first **Wild Atlantic Way Signature Discovery Point,** and this project builds on the success of the development of the Old Head Signal Tower and the Lusitania Memorial Garden and is intended to be the central attraction relating to the sinking of the Lusitania. ▶ Opportunities need to be explored re how to **integrate the recently gifted wreck of the Lusitania to create a living museum, using sonar technology to view the wreck.** (The wreck is regarded as a war grave and protected by an Underwater Heritage Order under National Monuments Acts). ▶ Supporting experiences eg **a regional trail or guided experience** that ties together the RNLI story and the new model of the ship at Courtmacsherry, and the Fastnet Heritage Centre on Cape Clear should also be explored so as to enrich the Lusitania Experience for the visitor.	**Lead** OPW/DCHG **Partners** FI, KCTB	**Timeline** Medium-term

A.10 The Famine Story – Skibbereen Heritage Centre	**Expand the story of The Famine in Skibbereen through the development of the Workhouse/Soup Kitchen building** adjacent to the Skibbereen Heritage Centre. ▶ This building offers the potential to consider a range of options which would strengthen Skibbereen's destination experience. These include: ▶ Opportunities for a more interactive experience relating to the Famine, including developing an area as an exhibition centre for famine related themed art. ▶ Potential to develop a Famine International Forum Centre to bring together discussions on famine from a global perspective. ▶ Address the safety issues with accessing the Abbeystrewry Famine Graveyard and develop a stronger themed walking tour of Skibbereen. ▶ Continue to develop the 'Diaspora Stories' project and use it to strengthen genealogy tourism within the region.	**Lead** CCC, SHC **Partners** UCC, FI, LHS, DCHG	**Timeline** Medium-term

B. EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Wholesome Flavours of Land and Sea: Position West Cork Coast as Irelands Premier Food Destination.			
Experience Development Themes: • Makers and Producers			
B.1 A Taste of West Cork Food Festival	▶ Strengthen the **Taste of West Cork Food Festival** which is an excellent platform to highlight the wholesome flavours and moments of indulgence as well as many of the other themes in this DEDP. The festival includes a number of events that involve meeting makers and producers and hands-on activities. Ongoing support for this festival is essential to maintain the region's positioning for artisan food and drink, and the emphasis should be on highlighting the HERO themes outlined in both this plan and the DEDP for the West Cork Peninsulas. ▶ Kinsale to be incorporated into the Taste of West Cork Food Festival.	**Lead** ATOWC **Partners** FI, CCC, IFA, AT, Local Food Producers, KCTB, LEO, LEs, LCs, RAI, CCT, SECAD, WCDP	**Timeline** Short-term – Ongoing
B.2 Hands On Experiences	▶ Assess all existing hands-on experiences offered through the festival and identify those that could be delivered on a more regular basis throughout the year.	**Lead** ATOWC **Partners** FI, CCC, IFA, AT, Local Food Producers, KCTB, LEO, LEs, LCs, RAI, CCT, SECAD, WCDP	**Timeline** Short-term

B.3 Makers and Producers	▶ Identify potential new experiences involving Makers and Producers.	**Lead**	**Timeline**
		ATOWC, WCTN, Local Food Producers	Short-term
		Partners	
		FI, CCC, IFA, AT KCTB, LEO, LEs, LCs, RAI, CCT, SECAD, WCDP	
B.4 Farmers Markets	▶ Assess all farmers' markets and the experiences they have to offer and explore the potential for using markets in a more interactive and immersive way in the off-season eg development of covered spaces / pop up kitchens with a greater emphasis on demonstrations, tastings and ways of engaging with the visitor.	**Lead**	**Timeline**
		CCC, WCTN	Short-term
		Partners	
		FI, IFA, Local Food Producers, West Cork Markets, CCT, SECAD, WCDP, KCTB	
B.5 Makers and Producers	▶ Work towards developing a new Makers and Producers event that will complement the existing Taste of West Cork Food Festival.	**Lead**	**Timeline**
		ATOWC, WCTN	Medium-term
		Partners	
		CCC, Local Food Producers, IFA, LEs, LTGs, RAI	
Experience Development Themes: • Moments of Indulgence			
B.6 Culinary Experiences in Restaurants	▶ Continue to promote, support and further develop exceptional culinary experiences in restaurants throughout the region. Develop a stronger regional profile on restaurants and food experiences and integrate this with the inventory of hands-on immersive experiences.	**Lead**	**Timeline**
		WCTN	Short-term
		Partners	
		ATOWC, FI, LTGs, Local Chefs, RAI, Les	
B.7 Customised Trip Planning	▶ Use existing resources, such as A Taste of West Cork Food Festival Artisan Food Guide, to create a web-based interactive tool to facilitate developing cycling and self-touring culinary experiences. Include options to meet makers and producers where feasible, farmers' markets, and food retail. Provide the option of layering additional artisan craft locations on the map. Build on the mapping tool that was developed for the DEDP to enable customised trip planning.	**Lead**	**Timeline**
		ATOWC, Pure Cork, WCTN	Medium-term
		Partners	
		CCC, Local Food Producers, Local Farmers Markets, CCCS, LEO, CCT, SECAD, WCDP, FI	

B.8 Breweries and Distilleries	▶ Work with breweries and distilleries to develop an artisan beer and spirits festival/event in the off-season.	**Lead**	**Timeline**
		WCTN, Breweries and Distilleries	Medium-term
		Partners	
		Local Food Producers, Local Chefs, LEs, LTGs	
B.9 Community Food Events	▶ Assess potential to expand existing community food events, such as the Baltimore Seafood Festival, to be much broader in their seafaring scope. Explore the opportunity to expand this festival to include seafood and activity events on Sherkin Island, Cape Clear, Heir Island and Long Islands to create a wider regional event.	**Lead**	**Timeline**
		WCTN, LTG	Medium-term
		Partners	
		Local Food Festival Committees, LEs, CnO, SIDS, HICC	
B.10 Foraging Experiences	▶ Explore opportunities to develop new foraging workshops.	**Lead**	**Timeline**
		WCTN	Short-term
		Partners	
		Local Food Producers, Local Chefs, Les	
B.11 Seafood Experiences	▶ Develop new seafood experiences and work to profile more seafood on menus along the West Cork Coast.	**Lead**	**Timeline**
		WCTN	Medium-term
		Partners	
		FI, Pure Cork, LTGs	
B.12 Food and Drink Experiences	▶ **Explore new opportunities to layer 'moments of indulgence' / distinctive food experiences on existing or proposed experiences in this Plan.** Develop a mentorship programme that assists businesses and community organisations involved in developing and delivering experiences to identify elements of their experiences that could be given additional value through a new approach to the food and beverage element.	**Lead**	**Timeline**
		FI	Short-term
		Partners	
		LEs, Local Chefs, Local Food Producers	
B.13 Food Stories	▶ **Collect and curate Food and Drink stories as a tourism asset.** The stories that lie behind the unique tastes of West Cork are integral to the food experience. Stories such as Timoleague Abbey and Molaga Honey, the influence of the Cistercians on farming and food, the story of butter, the extent to which piracy shaped local cuisine with the 'import' of spices (including spiced beef as a traditional staple of Christmas), and the trading of wine through Kinsale have all shaped today's food offering. Although they may be known informally, collecting them will deepen their significance and relevance to the food experience. This could be undertaken through working with a 3rd level institution.	**Lead**	**Timeline**
		LTGs, SECAD, WCTN	Medium-term
		Partners	
		CCC, FI, MTU, CCT, CnO, IFA, AT, FLAG, WCDP, WCICC	

B.14 Themed Food Experiences	▶ **Promote innovative themed food experiences** based on the Food stories of the West Cork Coast eg the Monks' Trail in Timoleague and support the development of further initiatives.	**Lead** LTGs, SECAD, WCTN **Partners** CCC, FI, MTU, CCT, CnO, IFA, AT, FLAG, WCDP, WCICC, FI	**Timeline** Medium-term - Ongoing
B.15 Raise Profile Through National and International Events	▶ **Continue to profile West Cork's culinary excellence through national initiatives.** Work with Cork Convention Bureau to identify corporate events that can be leveraged by West Cork chefs and producers.	**Lead** WCTN, Cork Convention Bureau, ATOWC **Partners** CCC, FI, Local Chefs, Local Food Producers	**Timeline** Medium-term

VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY ON LAND AND SEA

Achieve Visitor Dispersal and Season Extension through Experiential land and sea hero products and an integrated Transport System.

Experience Development Themes:

- Slow Discoveries
- Island Encounters

SLOW DISCOVERIES

Establish recognition for slow travel through strengthening infrastructure and services that will support walking, hiking and cycling. There is an extensive range of community trails throughout the West Cork Coast, but the destination has no clear market recognition for 'slow' travel – whether walking, hiking or cycling. This should be further enabled by an integrated transport system.

B.16 Trails Advisory Group	▶ **Establish a Trails Advisory Group** with representatives from the various community groups that are currently overseeing local trails development. This group will take a lead role in identifying a coordinated approach to trails development and promotion within the DEDP area.	**Lead** WCDP, RRO, LTGs **Partners** CCC, FI, CCT, CnO, DoAFM, DRCD, DTTAS, IFA, LCs, LEs, NTO, NRA, SECAD, VSCG, WCDP, WCICC	**Timeline** Short-term
B.17 Trails Strategy	▶ **Work with CCC to develop a Trails Strategy** for the region that identifies opportunities for expanding the existing infrastructure through the development of connecting trails, and related ancillary facilities including signage, parking at trail heads, and supporting services. The strategy will need to outline a management approach for the ongoing management and maintenance of trails and must focus on elevating the significance of trails.	**Lead** CCC, RRO, LTGs **Partners** FI, CCT, CnO, DoAFM, DRCD, DTTAS, IFA, LCs, LEs, NTO, NRA, SECAD, VSCG, WCDP, WCICC	**Timeline** Short-term

B.18 Trails Register	▶ In keeping with the CCC Trails for Tourism Policy (2015), work with Council to **develop the standardised database that will inform a county-wide Trails Register.** In addition to quality, length, accessibility and grade of trails, information should include the recommended information on places to stay; ancillary facilities (toilets, parking, and bike rentals for cycle routes); places to eat; settlements on or in close proximity to the trail; and local visitor attractions.	**Lead** CCC, RRO, LTGs **Partners** FI, CCT, CnO, DoAFM, DRCD, DTTAS, IFA, LCs, LEs, NTO, NRA, SECAD, VSCG, WCDP, WCICC	**Timeline** Short-term
B.19 Cycle Routes, Cycle Lanes and Greenway Development	▶ Work with CCC and relevant cycling coalitions to **extend the Cork Metropolitan Cycle Network Plan westwards,** recognising that cycling is rapidly growing in Cork City, and the city itself has the capacity to generate substantial new rates of visitation into the West Cork Coast area through cycling. Identifying longer-distance safe cycling routes and the potential for **greenway development** should be a priority in this Plan. – **Map existing cycle routes and assess** safety and suitability of these routes. – **Identify potential for developing cycle lanes on existing transport corridors** and highlight the importance of including cycle initiatives in road upgrade projects. – Address road maintenance issues on the existing designated cycle routes – Assess potential of designating select minor roads as 'green lanes' for cycling.	**Lead** CCC **Partners** FI NRA, CCCS, CCT, CnO, DoAFM, DRCD, DTTAS, IFA, LTGs NTO, SECAD, VSCG, WCDP, WCCC, BE, CLL	**Timeline** Long-term – Ongoing
B.20 Cycle Initiatives and Bike Sharing Scheme	▶ **Continue to support/encourage the extension of cycle initiatives and bicycle sharing schemes** – particularly into the Skibbereen and Baltimore area, and work to re-establish the Clonakilty Community Cycle Scheme. – Work with IAAT to help ensure access to adequate insurance at viable rates – Pursue options to extend the availability of e-bikes. – Encourage the development of cycling experiences – including itineraries with suggested stops to visit arts and craft businesses, restaurants, coffee shops and sites of interest.	**Lead** LTGs **Partners** IAAT, CCC, FI, SECAD, DRCD	**Timeline** Long-term – Ongoing
B.21 Cycling Infrastructure	▶ **Continue to assess supporting infrastructure,** including route signage and cycle parking requirements to meet the growing demand and reduce inappropriate parking.	**Lead** CCC, LLC, Bus Eireann	**Timeline** Long-term – Ongoing
B.22 Bike Frames on Buses	▶ Work with transit and bike operators to begin offering bike frames on local buses to allow cyclists to access a starting point by bus.	**Lead** LLC, Bus Eireann **Partners** CCC	**Timeline** Medium – Long-term

B.23 Cycling Events	▶ **Support and raise the profile of cycling events** such as the Clonakilty Bike Festival. – Explore developing a **Slow Food Cycle Event** as an additional way of connecting producers with visitors and local residents and promoting overnight stays. This could be developed as a feature of a Taste of West Cork Food Festival or as a standalone event. – Repackage components of the West Cork Garden Trail into a viable cycling experience, ensuring that the tour highlights places to eat.	**Lead** ATOWC, WCTN, LCs WCGT **Partners** LTGs, FI, CCC, LEs, CBF, WCCC, CCT, CnO, DRCD, DTTAS, IFA, SECAD, WCDP, WCICC	**Timeline** Short-term – Ongoing
B.24 Eurovelo	▶ **Eurovelo** promotes cyclo-tourism through a network of routes across Europe which includes the south and west coast of Ireland. It is proposed to **permanently sign the section of Eurovelo 1** through Cork County which will include approximately 140 kilometres of the area covered in this DEDP.	**Lead** CCC **Partners** Sport Ireland and Eurovelo	**Timeline** Short-term
B.25 Tangible and Intangible Culture and Heritage	▶ **Build on the concept of 'slow discoveries' through developing and promoting experiences that allow visitors to gently immerse themselves in the local culture and heritage and to gain new insights on its tangible and intangible elements.** This is about fostering authentic connections eg Seághan Ó Coileáin and **Timoleague Abbey.** Currently the visitor experience is entirely underwhelming, the level of interpretation does not do justice to the underlying story, and the site is under-protected. – Work with the OPW and the local community **to develop the Abbey as a key experience in the area.** Focus on encouraging the visitor to spend time within the village of Timoleague, including visiting other points of interest such as the Church of the Ascension, with its remarkable interior mosaic. – Develop a guided interpretive experience that supports a longer stay in the village. – Tie the stories of **early standing stones** together to inspire further slow discoveries. The Drombeg Stone Circle and the story of the Cape Clear Inscribed Stone can be linked together with a wide range of otherprehistoric sites in West Cork to present a very different image of life in past millennia.	**Lead** OPW, DCHG, LTG **Partners** CCC, FI, SECAD, WCDP	**Timeline** Medium - Long-term
B.26 West Cork Railway	▶ Profile the **story of the West Cork Railway** and highlight how former modes of travel tied the region together socially and economically. Use the West Cork Model Railway Village to motivate further explorations in the region and to gain deeper insights into the story of West Cork.	**Lead** WCMRV **Partners** CCC, FI, LTGs, SECAD, WCDP	**Timeline** Medium - Long-term

B.27 Bookable Activities	▶ Encourage visitors to take time out for new and intimate discoveries. **Identify a series of small group bookable activities and site visits that can be promoted at hotel front desks,** all of which are designed to give a unique glimpse into a distinctive aspect of past or present life in West Cork. Activities and visits can be booked directly by the hotel with the provider on behalf of the visitor.	**Lead** LTGs, LEO, IHF **Partners** CCC, FI	**Timeline** Short-term
B.28 Eco-tourism/ Lough Hyne	▶ Continue to maintain the significance of Lough Hyne for **marine and freshwater ecological research.** ▶ Continue to ensure that overall numbers are maintained within the lough's carrying capacity. ▶ Continue to provide information and interpretation on Lough Hyne at Skibbereen Heritage Centre.	**Lead** UCC **Partners** FI, EPPA, NSAI, CCC, DARD, SHC, LEs, IFA, AT, SECAD, WCDP	**Timeline** Short-term
B.29 Birdwatching	▶ **Work with ornithologists to assess the potential to develop birdwatching experiences and develop the infrastructure and supporting tools and services to create a strong niche offering.** The islands and the mud flats, particularly in the Courtmacsherry/Clonakilty/ Rosscarbery Special Protected Area are renowned for migratory and resident birdlife, and locations such as Kilbrittain and Cape Clear have excellent birding potential, but the region as a whole has limited recognition for birdwatching and few market-ready experiences.	**Lead** FI, LTGs, CnO, BWI, LTGs, **Partners** CCC, NPWS, EPA, NSAI, DARD, CCT, LEs, LCs, FLAG, SECAD, WCDP, WCICC	**Timeline** Medium-term
B.30 Forest Bathing /Wellness	▶ **Strengthen the link between slow travel, wellness and appreciation for the natural environment** through continuing to encourage and expand the concept of **forest bathing.** – Work with new entrepreneurs to assist in developing feasible experiences, identifying appropriate settings and establishing new routes to market. – Encourage an uptake in existing training opportunities in Shrin-Yoku (Japanese forest therapy). – **Highlight existing spa and wellness experiences** and use wellness to strengthen off-season visitation.	**Lead** WCFBG, FI **Partners** CCC, Coillte, IFA	**Timeline** Short-term

B.31 Bookable Multi-disciplinary Eco-tourism and Heritage Experiences	▶ **Develop land and sea ecotourism experiences and strengthen the positioning of the West Cork Coast for ecotourism,** through leveraging existing experiences and creating recognition for new experiences. ▶ **Work toward offering a range of bookable multi-disciplinary ecotourism and heritage experiences aimed at enabling visitors explore and further appreciate the unique ecology of the West Cork Coast and its cultural heritage.** These experiences may include guided kayaking trips or hikes, bird-watching tours, marine ecology tours, photography tours, and painting or writing sessions. All events should be led by an expert in a particular field of environmental science, ecology, history or the arts, and groups should be small to maximise the process of making deep and slow discoveries.	**Lead** LTG's, LEs **Partners** CCC, FI, BWI, OPW/ DCHG, CCT, CnO, Cuas, lHSs, SHC, TAFF, NPWS, FLAG, SECAD, WCDP, WCGT, WCICC	**Timeline** Medium-term
B.32 Music Experiences	▶ **Highlight and expand the existing music experiences** and promote a greater awareness of the unique nature of many of these experiences. These range from community festivals such as the Baltimore Fiddle Fair, the Clonakilty International Guitar Festival, and the Kinsale Jazz Festival, to intimate small-scale experiences that are true 'slow discoveries' such as Connolly's of Leap – famed for its cult music and walls that rock with the music of global artists.	**Lead** LTGs **Partners** CCC, FI, OPW/ DCHG, CCT, CnO, SECAD, WCDP, WCGT, WCICC, CCE	**Timeline** Medium-term
B.33 Craft Sector	▶ Work with the **crafts sector** to determine new strategies to strengthen the sector and Identify opportunities to create new event-related outlets for crafts.	**Lead** ACI, LEO **Partners** LEs, CCT, SECAD, WCLD	**Timeline** Short-term
B.34 Heritage Experiences	▶ **Identify new heritage experiences.** Eg. **A bell ringing tour** in a range of churches. Or a **heritage tour to include Templetryne Churchyard** with its viewing point of the **Ballinspittle Ring Fort** (anecdotally known as the second largest ring in Ireland).	**Lead** LC, LTGs, LEO **Partners** FI, CCC, CRWC, LEs, HC	**Timeline** Medium-term

ISLAND ENCOUNTERS

The islands offer distinctive opportunities for further 'slow discoveries'. Cape Clear is Ireland's southernmost inhabited Gaeltacht Island, and this island together with Sherkin, Heir and Long Islands provide a range of experiences that allow the visitor to get away to a more serene setting, slow down, and appreciate the islands' traditional lifestyle, artistic qualities and commitment to sustainability and maintaining island ways of life. In addition to the range of experiences currently offered, building strong linkages between mainland stories and island themes will be important in motivating further travel to the islands.

B.35 Sherkin – "Island of the Arts"	▶ Sherkin Island has developed a niche 'island encounter' in the arts and is known as the 'Island of the Arts'. It has significant home-grown talent in all genres and offers a BA Honours degree in the Visual Arts in partnership with the Dublin Institute of Technology. – **Explore options for developing a new physical base or substantially improving the existing facility for the delivery of the arts degree programme and related workshops.** – **Prepare a feasibility study** that includes an assessment of the economic impact through a growth in the educational market and the opportunities related to expanding workshop offerings to the leisure market. – **Develop a studio trail event.** An annual event that is built around the opportunity to visit working studios and, potentially, a temporary gallery or art exhibition, attend seminars and participate in related activities would further profile the artistic character of the island.	**Lead** TUD, SIDS **Partners** FI, LC, LEO, SECAD, WCCC, ACI, FLAG, UCC	**Timeline** Medium-term
B.36 Eco-tourism Experiences	▶ **Continue to develop niche ecotourism experiences.** Cape Clear has already established recognition for its birdlife. – Strengthen this potential. This should include working in partnership with mainland guides and businesses that are offering an experience in bird watching to create critical mass within the region. – Work on developing itineraries for specialist tour groups. – Develop guided experiences that integrate other unique cultural heritage elements of the island, including a visit to the new distillery and the heritage centre.	**Lead** CCT, WCICC **Partners** CCC, CnO, LEs, BWI, CCT, FLAG	**Timeline** Medium-term

B.37 Sustainability	▶ Sustainability is a key theme on the islands. Significant innovation underlies a number of past and current projects associated with the islands, and the theme itself should be developed as an experience for niche markets looking at the concept of island sustainability. ▶ Work towards developing excellence and leading practices in island sustainability and use this as a platform to attract small special interest groups looking to discuss the concept from a national or global perspective. In doing so, explore new approaches to becoming recognised as a Smart Island Destination. Eg Cape Clear's status as one of six pioneering islands in the Clean Energy for EU Islands initiative. – Support islanders to create experiences for visitors to actively understand island life and culture on each of the islands and how this distinctive way of life in turn enriches the arts and culture. – Continue to develop the niche areas of specialism that highlight the local identity – the arts on Sherkin Island, storytelling on Cape Clear, culinary arts on Heir Island, the Gaeltacht culture and Gaelic language on Cape Clear, and music across the islands, including the traditional Ceilí. – Explore opportunities to develop Artists studios on Sherkin and Heir Islands.	**Lead** CCT, WCICC **Partners** CnO, SIDS, HICC, FI, CCC	**Timeline** Short to Medium-term
B.38 Capacity Building and Collaboration	▶ **Work with island providers to develop a joined-up approach to delivering experiences.** Accommodation constraints, limited hospitality options, and the potential of working with mainland partners to enhance a package, all require capacity building and new approaches to packaging and partnering. – **Provide mentorship to encourage the development of new clusters** and the exchange of new ideas.There needs to be clear communication with prospective visitors regarding services available and the nature of island living in advance of arrival, and new services could be developed such as a partnership with a mainland food store to deliver food hampers for self-catering visitors. – Encourage the island tourism groups to promote a more cohesive approach to delivering island experiences and services in shoulder and winter seasons. – Given the accommodation constraints, work with mainland partners who can offer the accommodation to create activity packages where visitors travel to an island for an activity as part of the package.	**Lead** WCICC, WCIIF, FI **Partners** CnO, SIDS, CCC, CCT	**Timeline** Short to Medium-term

B.39 Capacity Building and Collaboration	– Highlight the connections between the islands and the other themes outlined in this DEDP. The theme of 'under siege' and the stories of rebels are well illustrated with incidents of gun running and smuggling on the islands.	**Lead**	**Timeline**
		WCICC	Short to Medium-term
		Partners	
		CnO, SIDS, HICC, FI, CCT	

VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY ON LAND AND SEA:

Achieve Visitor Dispersal and Season Extension through Experiential land and sea hero products and an integrated Transport System

Experience Development Themes:
- Ocean Adventures
- Maritime Traditions

OCEAN ADVENTURES

B.40 Sustainable Eco-safari/ Whale and Dolphin Watching Tours	▶ **Continue to be regarded as a leading destination in sustainable whale watching tours and ocean eco-safaris through a strategic approach to the ongoing development of the sector,** including an emphasis on: – Developing an **education and training programme for skippers** of the whale watching boats. Currently only a passenger license is required which is insufficient to guarantee the ongoing delivery of sustainable and quality experiences. – Developing national policies that would allow the Department of the Agriculture, Food and the Marine to police the sector more effectively and ensure that boats are operating within established protocols. – **Review international best practices and work as a sector to determine what should be applied to whale and dolphin watching in West Cork.** The International Whaling Commission highlights a number of strategies that should be incorporated including a clear commitment to responsible whale watching as a point of marketing, the development and adherence to local guidelines or codes of conduct, and the importance of an enriching educational experience. – **Consider promoting a responsible whale watching certification programme** as a point of differentiation and a commitment to sustainability. An example includes the WCA Responsible Whale Watching Certification programme.	**Lead**	**Timeline**
		DoAAFM, IWDG,	Medium-term
		Partners	
		FI, Pure Cork, CUAS, LEs, LTGs, FLAG, CCT, WCICC	

B.41 Marine Activity Sector	▶ West Cork has a strong **marine activity sector** – sailing, ocean kayaking, surfing and diving, with a range of activity providers on the mainland and islands. Strengthen the overall offering through **a more strategic approach to promoting this sector.** – Work with ISA and related partners to develop sailing experiences that tie into the theme. – Highlight the significance of the **River Ilen as a blueway** through developing new boating opportunities, including a greater focus on rowing as an activity. – Encourage the development of new kayak rental facilities and the development of a public pontoon at Skibbereen. – Promote any new blueway development . – Work with operators to further develop coastal rowing as a niche regional activity.	**Lead** ISA, LTGs, **Partners** CCC, Pure Cork, FI, LEs, FLAG, CCT, WCICC	**Timeline** Short-term - Ongoing
B.42 Marine Leisure Activity	▶ **Implement a regional strategic approach to the development of marine activity leisure.** The West Cork Coast has a diverse range of potential experiences, with different areas being informally recognised for different experiences. This plan has identified a number of projects, but a more focused planning review is required to maximise the leisure potential of this stretch of sheltered coastal waters. – Develop a marine leisure plan for the coast that clearly identifies the strengths and weaknesses of each area and the opportunities that should be pursued. – Review coastal marine leisure in other jurisdictions to assess transferability of development concepts. The development of marine trails around Vancouver Island in British Columbia provides a potential case-study – see www.bcmarinetrails.org.	**Lead** CCC **Partners** FI, LTGs, LEs, CnO, HICC, CCT, DoAFM, FLAG, ISA, SECAD, SIDS, WCDP, WCICC	**Timeline** Long-term
B.43 Fastnet Experienceand Heritage Centre Marine Eco-tourism	▶ **Develop the Oileain Cleire Fastnet Experience and Heritage Centre and support Islanders to create experiences for visitors to actively understand island life and culture on each of the islands.** Architectural drawings have been developed for a site in North Harbour with views out to sea, with easy and safe access from the main ferry terminal and the harbour. – There is preliminary commitment from Údarás na Gaeltachta for a proportion of the required funding and efforts are being made to secure funds and capital grants from elsewhere. Further assessment of the role of the building is likely to assist in moving forward. Consideration may need to be given to further developing its potential role as a tourism asset. The proposed location near the point of arrival creates a stronger local cluster and synergies between facilities can be more readily developed. – Develop a **business plan** for the proposed facility identifying its potential to enhance the local economy. – Consider using this attraction to **highlight the marine ecotourism assets** and the story of the fishing industry including the story of whale fishing to whale watching that has occurred over time.	**Lead** CCT, DoAFM, **Partners** Pure Cork, LEs, LTGs, FLAG, CCT, WCICC, FI, IWDG	**Timeline** Medium-term - Ongoing

B.44 Maritime Heritage Experiences	▶ **Identify opportunities for developing experiences within other areas of West Cork that will complement the maritime heritage experiences in the Baltimore and islands region.** – Develop a guided visitor **experience that ties together stories** relating to the RNLI in Courtmacsherry, the Seafarers' Memorials in the different communities, the sea-trading history of the various local ports, theecological and economic changes arising from the silting of the bays, the story of sea defences and the impact of tsunamis, and the role of local ports in the story of local mining. – Explore opportunities for continuing to improve visitor access and the overall visitor experience relating to the lighthouses at Galley Head, Old Head and the Fastnet.	**Lead** LCs, FI, ILC **Partners** CCC, RNLI, LTGs, FLAG, HC, CETB, LHSs, LEs, CCT,CnO, SECAD, WCDP, WCICC	**Timeline** Medium-term
B.45 Piracy theme	▶ **Continue to strengthen the piracy theme** through existing and new events in a way that will appeal to a broad cross-section of visitors. Consider: – Further animating events with live and **immersive street theatre and theatrical tours,** including the development of **bookable experiences** within existing sites and attractions or within the local streetscape. – Building the theme through street food and market stalls with an **emphasis on foods and spices** acquired through piracy and trading, and distinctive craft ware. – Developing a **region-wide treasure trail** that highlights the stories and encourages visitors to explore the wider region.	**Lead** LTGs **Partners** CCC, FI, TC, LEs, LCs, FLAG, HC, CCT, CnO, SECAD,WCDP,WCICC, KCTB,EB	**Timeline** Medium-term
B.46 Maritime Heritage	▶ **Access the feasibility of developing a Maritime Heritage Centre to develop new or strengthen existing maritime heritage experiences associated traditional boat building in Baltimore.** – **Investigate offering Nautical Archaeology Society courses** in coastal and underwater maritime heritage and pursue the hosting of international archaeological seminars. – Maintaining and strengthening **the Baltimore Wooden Boat Festival** as a signature event. – Continuing with **developing awareness of maritime heritage** through an outreach programme at West Cork regattas and festivals. – Developing **new experiences based on current and recent restoration projects** – **Animate the piracy theme** and creating activities that will appeal to younger markets and families.	**Lead** CUAS **Partners** UCC, CCC, FI, HC, DoAFM, FLAG, RNLI, ISA, BCC, LTGs, LEs, LCs, CETB, NMCI, SECAD, WCDP	**Timeline** Medium-term – Ongoing

STORIES OF DISCOVERY ON LAND AND SEA:

Elevate our Cultural and Historic Stories through Active and Cultural Immersion

Experience Development Themes:

- Under siege
- Tragedies on Land and Sea

UNDER SIEGE

B.47 Heritage Town /Active Transport	▶ **Examine the feasibility of improving themed connectivity that will enhance walkability and use of active transport in Kinsale to include subject to funding:** – Seeking to improve pedestrian walkways and cycleways between all main attractions in Kinsale – Assessment of signage and wayfinding needs and consideration of implementing a cohesive signage strategy, including interpretative signage to highlight the key stories, with a particular emphasis on the Battle of Kinsale	**Lead** CCC **Partners** KCTB, OPW, DCHG, NPWS	**Timeline** Medium-term
B.48 Winter School	▶ **Develop a 'winter school' experience in Kinsale that is based on the cultural heritage of the town.** Residential programmes could relate to the culinary arts, storytelling for destinations, the creative arts, or deeper insights into key stories associated with Kinsale. This experience should be packaged with accommodation, site visits and eating experiences that showcase Kinsale.	**Lead** KCTB **Partners** Local Tour Guides, Local Chefs, LEs, FI, OPW, DCHG	**Timeline** Medium-term

TRAGEDIES ON LAND AND SEA

B.49 Cork Rebel Way	▶ **Support the ongoing development of the Cork Rebel Way as a HERO experience associated with the Irish Revolutionary period.** Use this initiative to elevate the story of Michael Collins, the 1916 Rebellion, the War of Independence, the Civil War and the role of many other prominent rebels across the region. This story links back to The Battle of Kinsale. The international visitor needs assistance in understanding how these stories connect and relate to each other. Explore the use of technology to animate the Cork Rebel way. Develop immersive and bookable themed tours and events and use social media to generate interest.	**Lead** CRW **Partners** FI, LC, DCHG, DRCD, WCDP, LHS, TC	**Timeline** Short-term – Ongoing
B.50 Michael Collins Trail	▶ Design and install directional signage to guide the visitor to all locations of significance associated with Michael Collins. Once completed promote the trail to domestic and international audience	**Lead** CCC **Partners** FI	**Timeline** Short-term – Ongoing

B.51 Lusitania Story	▶ Explore ways of enriching the **Lusitania visitor experience** through a **regional trail or guided experience** that ties together the RNL story and the new model of the ship at Courtmacsherry, and the Fastnet Heritage Centre on Cape Clear. – **Improve access to Old Head for cyclists and pedestrians** and to tie the Old Head experience more effectively into the Kinsale destination experience. – Further develop the **Irish Lights theme** at the existing site and work toward increasing the number of open days at the Old Head Lighthouse.	**Lead** LM/OHSTH **Partners** UCC, CDA, CnO, CCC, ILC, FI	**Timeline** Medium-term

C. DESTINATION ENABLING PROJECTS

ENABLER 1: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP			
C.1 Implementation group	▶ The implementation of the West Cork Coast DEDP will be overseen by the West Cork Tourism Network and a number ot key thematic sub-groups. These groups will operate from 2022 to 2027 and will be tasked with: – Supporting the delivery of the West Cork Coast DEDP. – Driving growth as per the agreed KPI's in the Action Plan. – Leading and managing the Action Plan.	**Lead** FI **Partners** CCC, OPW/DCHG, NPWS, UnaG, WCDP, WCLD, CCT, SECAD, FLAG, AT, LEO, CETB, LTGs, IHF, LCs	**Timeline** Short-term – Ongoing
ENABLER 2: IMPROVING ACCESS TO AND WITHIN THE REGION			
C.2 Air and Sea Access	▶ **Expanding air and sea access** – continue to work together to improve air and sea access into the Southwest particularly in relation to bringing back routes following the fallout to air traffic in light of Covid 19, as well as – Seeking to secure new route development into Cork Airport – particularly new routes from Ireland's major Continental markets –Germany, France, Italy and Benelux countries. – Working with partners to see an extension of seasonal North American flights into Ireland. – Strengthening access to the region by ferry through developing new or expanding existing routes with Europe.	**Lead** Cork Airport, CCC, Port of Cork **Partners** FI, TIL, DTTAS, CCC, CCB, LTGs	**Timeline** Ongoing

C.3 Car-parking	▶ **Continue to assess and address car parking needs in towns and villages,** including the implementation of park and ride facilities in peak season. – Establish the feasibility of an underground car-park in Kinsale associated with the development of the harbour area.	**Lead** CCC **Partners** KCTB, LLC, DTTAS, CCT, SECAD, WCDP	**Timeline** Short-term
C.4 Signage	▶ **Undertake a signage audit of the region.** A number of issues need to be addressed, such as: – Improving welcome signage at the outset of the Wild Atlantic Way and use signage to strengthen Kinsale's gateway position.	**Lead** FI, CCC **Partners** NRA, KCTB	**Timeline** Short-term
ENABLER 3: SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE			
C.5 Diverse range of quality accommodation	▶ **Encourage the creation of conditions that will promote investment in developing diverse categories of bed stock in the accommodation sector,** including new budget accommodation to complement existing facilities, while also encouraging new levels of innovation in accommodation delivery e.g., glamping, and enhancement of quality. – Explore options for attracting investment to the island communities for new and bespoke accommodation and the upgrading of existing accommodation, ensuring that it does not reduce housing stock for local residents or increase the number of empty dwellings. – Work with CCC to review the nature of current restrictions on the islands and determine the viability of policy changes that may be needed to support an increase in accommodation. – Identify local sites in the vicinity of Lough Hyne that would accommodate wild camping or pod development for walkers and cyclists interested in spending time at Lough Hyne. – **Work with existing accommodation providers to address issues of quality** which can have a considerable impact on the visitor experience and the reputation of the local destination	**Lead** FI, CCC, LTGs, **Partners** DTTAS, IHF, CCT, SECAD, WCDP, WCICC, LEs	**Timeline** Medium-term

C.6 Marine Infrastructural requirements	▶ **Work with communities to assess and address infrastructural requirements to facilitate the development of marine tourism** and improve the quality of the region's maritime environment, and to fully implement the Marine Leisure Infrastructure Strategy (2010-2020). This includes issues relating to access of slipways and related parking requirements, marina capacity, and temporary berthing options. – Continue to implement dredging work to maintain viability of local and commercial interests. – Continue to explore the opportunity to develop marina facilities at Baltimore near Bull Point. – Assess public realm areas of beaches and address infrastructural requirements that will improve the appeal and safety of the beach experience outside of peak season.	**Lead** CCC, DoAFM **Partners** FLAG, LTGs, LCs,	**Timeline** Medium-term
C.7 Accessibility requirements	▶ **Work with Cork County Council to review accessibility and inclusion issues** to ensure that all visitors have an opportunity to engage fully in experiencing a destination. This has become a recognised priority from a global perspective, a new strategic focus nationally, and needs to be addressed locally. – Review existing initiatives and models such as the Arts and Disability Networking Cork – a partnership between the Arts Council of Ireland, Arts and Disability Ireland and Cork City Council in association with the arts and disability sectors in Cork City – and assess transferability of approach and projects. – Work towards undertaking a comprehensive assessment of sites, attractions and facilities in relation to the access requirements of older visitors, young families, and visitors with specific access constraints. – Improve pedestrian access in towns as opportunities arise.	**Lead** CCC, ACI **Partners** Arts and Disability Networking Cork, IHF, RAI, Les	**Timeline** Short-term – Ongoing

D. INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

BUILDING CAPACITY AND COLLABORATION			
D.1 Bespoke Business Support Programme	▶ Create a **"Bespoke Business Support Programme"** for the West Cork Coast as the basis for industry training and mentoring, with a focus on developing new and innovative visitor experiences that are bookable online and adopting the DEDP as a basis for commercial development.	**Lead**	**Timeline**
		FI, WCICC, LEO	Short-term
		Partners	
		CCC, WCLD, ETB, UCC, MTU, PC	
D.2 Saleable Experience Programme	▶ **Develop the capacity of the tourism industry to create saleable experiences** for selling online and delivering to the international market.	**Lead**	**Timeline**
		FI	Ongoing
		Partners	
		CCC, WCLD, LEO, ETB, UCC, MTU, PC	
D.3 Staffing	▶ Fáilte Ireland will help businesses to make the industry an appealing and rewarding workplace that can retain talent with good retention and development programmes.	**Lead**	**Timeline**
		FI	Ongoing
		Partners	
		CCC, WCLD, LEO, ETB, UCC, MTU, PC	
D.4 Networking and Familiarisation Visits	▶ **Networking** – create a networking plan to develop a strong dialogue between tourism businesses. – **Familiarisation visits** – organise industry familiarisation trips to build relationship between providers, strengthen awareness of what is on offer, and assist in i connections and partnership opportunities between tourism providers. – Support Pure Cork in its development of a 'socialisation plan' designed to build awareness and engagement amongst all stakeholders across key touchpoints of the visitor journey.	**Lead**	**Timeline**
		LTGs, PC	Short-term
		Partners	
		CCC, FI, NPWS, OPW/DCHG, WCLD, WCICC, LEs, LEO, ETB, UCC, MTU	
STRATEGIC PLANNING			
D.5 Strategic Planning / Community Planning	▶ Encourage community stakeholders to **maintain a strategic planning focus at the community level,** using the DEDP to determine strategic priorities on a regular basis. – Consider undertaking further tourism planning discussions on the islands to support the sustainable growth of tourism.	**Lead**	**Timeline**
		LTGs, FI	Short-term
		Partners	
		CCC, LEs, LCs	

D.6 Sustainability	▶ As noted, **sustainability is a core value to the region and needs to be supported and celebrated.** – Ensure that discussions on tourism reflect this value system and identify ways of raising the profile of sustainability within the visitor experience. – **Consider working as a region towards accreditation as a sustainable destination** and use an accreditation process to strengthen the principles and practices of sustainability in business operations, destination development, and marketing. Any programme adopted should ensure that the specific issues of the islands are fully integrated into the initiative. – In adhering to the principles of the VICE Model, identify strategic steps that will assist communities in resolving development issues that have the potential to undermine local sense of place, environment or cultural heritage.	**Lead** FI, PC, CCC, LTGs **Partners** LEs, LCs, LEO, CCT, SECAD, WCICC, WCLD	**Timeline** Short-term - Ongoing
ENHANCING VISITOR AWARENESS OF HERO EXPERIENCES IN WEST CORK			
D.7 HERO Experiences	▶ **Work with Fáilte Ireland** to profile key HERO experiences on the Wild Atlantic Way platform and ensure that the positioning of the West Cork Coast on this platform is in line with this Plan. Highlight the types of experiences that will differentiate the region and encourage increased visitation and interest.	**Lead** FI **Partners** CCC, LTGs, LEs, Pure Cork, TC	**Timeline** Short-term
D.8 Marketing	▶ **Work within the marketing strategies of Pure Cork** to ensure that messaging and visual material relating to the West Cork Coast are aligned with the Wild Atlantic Way and the direction of this Plan. – Work with partners to profile all events, activities, experiences, visitor sites and attractions online. – Continue to work with partners that target the cruise sector, ensuring that the experiences and modes of travel are compatible from a social and environmental perspective. – Work with the Convention Bureaus and accommodation venues that have meeting facilities to promote new experiences as opportunities to extend the stay of the business market and provide value for spousal/partner itineraries.	**Lead** FI, Pure Cork, CCC **Partners** LTGs, WCICC, LEs, Festival and Event Organisers, Cork Convention Bureau	**Timeline** Short-term – Ongoing
D.9 Digital Publication	▶ **Digital Publication:** Strengthening the distribution of experiences through engaging businesses in promoting increased industry participation in social media and the West Cork Digital Publication	**Lead** FI, Pure Cork **Partners** CCC, CETB, LEO, LTGs, LEs, Festival and Event Organisers	**Timeline** Short-term – Ongoing

ANIMATING THE DESTINATION			
D.10 Festivals and Events	▶ **FESTIVALS and EVENTS** **Support existing festivals and investigate opportunities for new events where these promote the themes and experiences identified in this Plan, and proactively focus on using festivals and events to extend the tourism season and expand visitor and community experiences.** – Work with the County Council to ensure that all festivals and events are promoted online on the Pure Cork tourism website in addition to the websites of local tourism groups and the event itself. – Encourage adoption of Cork County Council's *Festivals / Events Guidelines and Policies*. – Promote best practices in waste management and greening of festivals; and encourage capacity building in demonstrating event-friendliness and hosting. – Host a bi-annual networking event to explore opportunities for collaboration, extension of festivals, new ideas, and the sharing of information on evolving standards for festivals and events. – Continue to support the emerging trend toward the development of integrated activities within events, such as combining guided hiking activities with food festivals, and use festivals to showcase other elements of the destination visitor experience to encourage return visitation. – Develop community capacity to monitor and report the economic impact of festivals and event.	**Lead** CCC, Festival and Events Organisers, PC **Partners** FI, AOIFE, CCT, SECAD, WCLD, WCICC, LTGs, LEs	**Timeline** Short-term
D.11 Sense of Place	▶ **SENSE OF PLACE** **Encourage all communities to focus on strengthening their 'sense of place' and overall welcome. This is well advanced in a number of towns and villages but is an area that requires ongoing commitment. Use the Destination Town toolkit as guide for developing Sense of Place. In addition:** – Work with local government officials to explore opportunities for business incentives that will improve the streetscape and continually assess how to maintain the upkeep of the urban built environment. – Assess the provision of basic visitor infrastructure along the Wild Atlantic Way and facilitate improvements in toilet facilities, litter receptacles, view points, signage, and parking in a manner that is sensitive to the environmental context. – Pursue opportunities to animate public gathering places at weekends. – Work with the retail and hospitality sector to extend opening hours where feasible e.g., cafes. Work towards developing a stronger night-time economy other than pubs.	**Lead** CCC, LCs, FI, LTGs, **Partners** FI, LCs, OPW/ DCHG, NPWS, CIT, SECAD, WCLD,WCICC, LEO	**Timeline** Medium-term

D.12 Storytelling	▶ **STORYTELLING** **Identifying the stories and working with businesses and communities to develop a sound working knowledge of these stories is important to delivering strong theme-based experiences that allow the visitor to connect emotionally with the destination and to create a greater sense of authenticity. It is also a key success factor in the development of local brands. To be effective, this will involve:** – Supporting and encouraging local initiatives that are designed to collect and curate local stories. There is a wealth of stories, with a number of them needing to be handled with a degree of sensitivity to ensure delivery is acceptable to all audiences. This will require a collaborative approach from local historical societies and community groups as the basis of the work. – Develop a searchable database of stories which can be accessed on a password protected intranet site. – Host storytelling forums and develop opportunities to extend the knowledge base to the wider tourism community. – Highlight examples of where stories are told in a way that significantly impacts the visitor experience. – Use storytelling to animate videography and strengthen local branding. Stories will add a new dimension to traditional visual materials and will assist in generating a deeper emotional connection.	**Lead** FI, SECAD, LTGs, HC, PPN, Active Retirement Groups, LCs **Partners** CCC, Cork County Public Participation Networks, LEs, HC, WCLD, WCDP, WCICC, Local Historical and Archaeological Societies	**Timeline** Medium – Long term
D.13 Storytelling	▶ **SME digital strategies:** Covid-19 has accelerated the shift to digital and new consumer behaviours are rapidly emerging. The need to fully embrace digital strategies is now more important than ever. – **Strengthen the distribution of experiences** through engaging businesses in adopting online booking systems and online distribution. – Promote increased industry participation on social platforms.	**Lead** FI **Partners** Pure Cork, NPWS, NTO, CCT, SECAD, WCLD, LEO, WCICC	**Timeline** Short-term – Ongoing

5. DELIVERING THE PLAN



Kinsale friends walking tour Co. Cork

DELIVERING THE PLAN

5.1 MAKING IT HAPPEN

Fáilte Ireland will facilitate the implementation of this Plan in conjunction with the West Cork Tourism Network. Fáilte Ireland will also continue to provide a suite of supports for the destination to include the following:

1. Tailor made skills and training programmes for the region.
2. Development of new and improved saleable experiences.
3. Distribution Plan.
4. Product Development Scheme.

Groups will be formed with representatives from all key stakeholders, with a thorough understanding of the tourism industry and the ability to focus on the delivery of the actions required to successfully implement the West Cork Coast DEDP.

The thematic sub-groups will operate from 2022 to 2027 and are in place to create a representative industry wide body ensuring there is a mechanism in place that allows two-way communication between the individual tourism businesses and the West Cork Tourism Network.

These thematic sub-groups will be tasked with:

- Supporting the delivery of the West Cork Coast DEDP.
- Driving growth as per the agreed KPI's in the Action Plan.
- Leading and managing the Action Plan.

Implementation of the Destination and Experience Development Plan and delivery of the experiences will require each stakeholder agency or organisation to make a shift on how they tell their story and in selecting what projects and initiatives gain support moving forward. However, each new or enhanced visitor offering needs to do more than just 'tell a story'. It needs to provide visitors with an opportunity to experience the elemental qualities of the region, to encounter the true essence of the West Cork Coast's Flavour, Colour, Culture and Adventure, and to leave feeling inspired. It is the responsibility of each agency, product provider and business operator to embrace this approach and to put themed experiences at the top of the list of the things we share with our customers.

What this means for each organisation is:

- **Fáilte Ireland** – will focus on working with the trade that deliver the 'signature experience' and will help those businesses not currently doing so to start delivering and sharing their unique story.
- **Tourism Ireland** – will focus on telling the stories connected to the experiences as a priority in their marketing, social media, and publicity.
- **Cork County Council** – will play a key role in industry, infrastructure and destination development.
- **Údarás na Gaeltachta** – will support implementation through funding and fostering economic, social and cultural development on Oilean Chleire.
- **Office of Public Works** – as their primary responsibility includes the maintenance, ownership, presentation and upkeep of buildings in state care, they should continue their role of management and development of these sites with a strong emphasis on a visitor-centric approach. It will have a key role in terms of the Masterplan for OPW sites in Kinsale.
- **Educators** – as educators in tourism, UCC, MTU, ETB's and SECAD can assist tourism operators in creating and delivering experiences.
- **Local Tourism Groups** – need to work together to share their experience stories with Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland, and work with businesses to help them find and share their experience under the common themes established in the Plan.
- **Individual businesses (trade)** – need to find which experience theme they best deliver, develop new or enhance existing experiences, and encourage their customers and the marketing agencies to share that story with the world.
- **IHF** as the representative body for hotels and guesthouses need to work to ensure a good quality accommodation base for visitors.
- **RAI** as the representative body for restaurants will have a key role in terms of the profile of the food offering and positioning of the West Cork Coast as a premier Food Destination.
- **Pure Cork** will have a key role in term of information provision and marketing.
- **Transport** – Bus Eireann and Local Link Cork will play a vital role in delivering on the integrated transport system element of the Plan.

ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS

This Plan has been aligned with all agency plans (CCC, Údarás, FLAG, etc) In doing so, it both supports existing plans and seeks to gain leverage from their strategies and actions. *Note: Recommendations listed do not guarantee funding and will have to go through the same application process for all projects. Examine what agencies are offering funding as new streams of funding may become available during the lifetime of this Plan.*

IMPLEMENTATION OF FEASIBILITY PROJECTS

This Plan identifies examining the feasibility of a range of projects. Where proposals for new initiatives are progressed to feasibility stage, consultation with relevant interested parties will take place.

FUNDING

Fáilte Ireland provides funding for sustainable tourism projects. As of the date on which this Plan was published, none of the projects referred to within the Plan have secured funding from Fáilte Ireland. Reference made to projects in this Plan does not guarantee funding. While funding is provided to certain projects, Fáilte Ireland is not the developer. Developers are required to comply with relevant legislation and the provisions of Statutory Policies, Strategies, Plans and Programmes, including those relating to environment and planning.

5.2 MEASURING SUCCESS

The impact of the West Cork Coast DEDP will be measured through the monitoring of key metrics that examines the commercial development of tourism across the West Cork Coast area. The Plan framework adopts the VICE model as a means of measuring success. The VICE Framework identifies sustainable tourism as the interaction between Visitors, the Industry that serves them, and the Community and Culture that hosts them and their collective impact on and response to the Environment where it all takes place.

The measurement of success will include analysis of the following areas of performance:

1. Demand Side Conditions.
2. Supply Side Conditions.
3. Destination Development.
4. Environment.

SPECIFIC RECORDED OUTPUTS FROM THE WEST CORK COAST DEDP RECORDED ANNUALLY WILL INCLUDE:

- Increase bed nights across the West Cork Coast by 2% YoY ahead of national average from year 3 of implementation of the West Cork Coast DEDP.
- Increase in visitor numbers achieved through regional dispersion across the West Cork Coast while growing revenue to attractions by 2% ahead of the national average from implementation.
- Increase the value of visitors to the West Cork Coast over volume.
- Increased visitor satisfaction benchmarked through TripAdvisor.



Fishing boats tied up at Glandore Harbour, Co Cork

DEMAND SIDE

Measurement 1 Occupancy levels achieved.

Measurement 2 REVPAR achieved.

Measurement 3 Visitor numbers and visitor dispersion assessed through measurement of footfall across the West Cork Coast across key sites and attractions.

Measurement 4 Visitor Satisfaction of the West Cork Coast as a destination.

Measurement 5 Visitor spend during visit assessing value over volume

SUPPLY SIDE

Measurement 1 New tourism enterprise development.

Measurement 2 Employment levels in tourism enterprises.

Measurement 3 Growth in the diversity of bed stock across the West Cork Coast.

Measurement 4 Grow the volume of destination experiences that are bookable online.

Measurement 5 New experiences development based on saleable experiences.

Measurement 6 Industry training – Volume of DEDP related courses and levels of participation on courses.

Measurement 7 Enhancement of festivals – number of events and attendees at key events.

Measurement 8 Inclusion of Food and cultural elements to experiences.

Measurement 9 Extension of periods of business operations - season extension across the West Cork Coast.

DESTINATION SIDE

Measurement 1 Appropriate sustainable visitor management model identified, which relieves congestion through an integrated transport system.

Measurement 2 Recognition as Ireland Premier Food Destination.

Measurement 3 Increased reach of the West Cork Coast visitor experiences through social media channels.

ENVIRONMENT

Measurement 1 Develop effective management of the environment, including natural, cultural and heritage assets through sustainable tourism.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL & SUSTAINABLE CONSIDERATIONS



Italian Gardens, Bantry House, Bantry, Co Cork

SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Failte Ireland recognises that it has never been more important that the safeguarding and successful growth of Ireland's tourism sector is based on a sustainable and balanced approach. Environmental protection, economic competitiveness, community & visitor awareness and involvement, all play a part in successfully achieving and benefiting from this approach.

This Destination and Experience Development Plan (DEDP) provides an opportunity to ensure that all existing and future tourism projects and initiatives within the West Cork Coast DEDP area are planned, developed and managed in a sustainable and integrated manner. The Plan has full consideration for the following:

- The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) goals and specifically the implementation of policies to promote sustainable tourism
- The Sustainable Tourism Working Group – Guiding Principles, and
- The VICE (Visitor, Industry, Community and Environment) Model for Sustainable Tourism

The VICE Model has been integrated into this Plan in the following way:

- The delivery of exciting and motivating tourism experience that is easy to find, access and navigate, and exceeds their expectations as **visitors,**
- Building and unlocking capacity in the local tourism sector, increasing employment levels in tourism and supporting the development of the required skills in the **industry,**
- Spreading the economic and social benefits of tourism more widely to **communities** that currently do not derive significant benefits from tourism; and
- Valuing, promoting protecting and enhancing the **environment** and heritage as the cornerstone of Irish tourism.

This Plan will enable and motivate stakeholders and industry in the area to amplify their local tourism offering. The plan aims to increase visits, dwell time and spend in the locality in a sustainable manner. The key objectives and aspirations of this Plan is creating, maintaining and enhancing sustainable tourism for the West Cork Coast region.

The implementation of the following guiding principles is key to the success of the Plan.

Guiding Principles for Sustainable and Responsible Tourism

- Assess the feasibility of developing and implementing visitor management plans where relevant
- Encourage the adoption of a responsible tourism approach with ongoing monitoring of environmental impacts
- Increase awareness and appreciation of the West Cork Coast region's unique landscape and environment
- Increase environmental performance among tourism businesses
- Encourage sustainable modes of transport and ensure they are accessible to tourists
- Introduce and implement minimum sustainable standards for tour guides
- Increase and promote environmental protection and enhancement when progressing actions derived from this plan
- Ensure the EPA's Environmental Sensitivity Mapping Webtool is consulted when implementing projects resulting from this plan.
- Ensure the Plan contributes towards delivering on Irelands Climate Action Plan 2021
- Monitor the quality of visitor experiences and local social/cultural impact at key sites
- Ensure West Cork Coast visitor experiences are accessible to all where possible
- Support voluntary and community-led environmental protection projects, which in turn benefit tourism
- Advocate for the protection of key environmental and tourism assets
- Improve tourist management, particularly in mature and established tourist areas
- Encourage tourism related businesses to engage in the Leave No Trace Programme
- Ensure crucial infrastructure including water and wastewater services are in place and adequate
- Harness the importance of ecosystem services and protected sites to encourage sustainable levels of ecotourism growth and awareness
- Ensure invasive species management is in place through the promotion of effective biosecurity measures

6.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Fáilte Ireland recognises the need to integrate environmental considerations into this plan in a way that responds to the sensitivities and requirements of the wider natural environment. Environmental considerations including inland and coastal water quality and amenity, climate change, traffic, biodiversity, built and cultural heritage, landscape, critical infrastructure and communities, all play a vital part in our tourism sector.

The protection, enhancement and promotion of our most important tourism asset – the natural environment has been an integral part of the formation of this plan as is evidenced in the following:

- A firm commitment to ensuring sustainable and responsible tourism principles are practiced,(as mentioned in the previous section)
- Environmental assessments and resulting measuring and monitoring,
- Compliance with statutory decision making and consent granting at Plan implementation stage, and
- Integrating requirements for environmental protection and management.

6.2.1 Environmental Assessment

Consideration has been given to the requirement to undertake environmental assessment of this plan in order to ensure full legal compliance and to further integrate protection, enhancement and promotion of the environment in developing and implementing the Plan. The following sets out the two types of environmental assessments that were considered.

1. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The Plan was examined for the need to undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). On initial examination of the plan it was determined that full SEA would be required. The assessment process was completed having full regard to SEA Directive 2001/42/EU and to Statutory Instrument No. 435/2004 as amended. The outcome of this process can be referenced in the relevant environmental documents that accompany this plan.

2. Appropriate Assessment (AA)

The Plan was examined for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment (AA). On initial examination of the Plan and in completing screening for AA, it was determined that Stage 2 AA would be required. The assessment process was undertaken having full regard to the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC and to Statutory Instrument No. 477/2011. The output and outcome of this process can be referenced in the relevant environmental documents that accompany this plan.

Key findings of the SEA and AA Process for the Plan

Having completed full SEA and AA on the West Cork Coast DEDP it is evident that these processes have had a positive influence on the evolution of the Plan and will also continue to have a positive environmental influence as the Plan enters its implementation phase. The outcome of completing the above environmental assessments has resulted in the following:

- Identifying and mitigating where relevant potential environmental impacts resulting from the plan.
- Identifying relevant positive environmental impacts arising from the Plan and ensuring the implementation of actions that result in environmental protection, enhancement, and promotion e.g., visitor management actions, environmental and sustainable education.

- Developing a suite of mitigatory actions to ensure that any negative environmental impacts are reduced or eliminated at Plan implementation stage.

This suite of mitigatory actions includes:

- The requirement to establish the status of the DEDP and its interrelationship with statutory decision making and consent-granting frameworks;
- Integrating the requirements for Environmental Compliance into the Plan. Particular emphasis is placed on the following:
  - Requirements for lower-tier environmental assessment,
  - The Cork County Development Plan,
  - The Climate Action Plan 2021,
  - Visitor management,
  - Consideration for infrastructural capacity and green infrastructure, and
  - Ecosystem services.
  - Development and execution of an Environmental Monitoring Programme for the Plan during implementation and operation.
- The SEA Directive requires that the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes are monitored. Section A5a details the measures that have been selected in order to monitor the likely significant effects of implementing this plan.
- Monitoring can demonstrate the positive effects facilitated by the Plan and can enable, at an early stage, the identification of unforeseen adverse effects and the undertaking of appropriate remedial action.
- The occurrence of persistent significant adverse environmental effects which are directly attributable to tourism would necessitate consideration of the effects in the context of the Plan and a possible review of part(s) of the Plan.
- Environmental monitoring will be based around indicators that allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives.
- A variety of sources of information will be used to run the Environmental Monitoring Programme.
- Environmental monitoring will be executed by Fáilte Ireland and will run concurrent with the implementation phase of the Plan itself. It will be reported on to the Plan's implementation group on an annual basis where relevant information sources allow, and the findings of the monitoring will influence the actions of the Plan as it progresses. The monitoring will be linked directly to the Plan's KPI's, including monitoring of visitor numbers where relevant.
- Environmental monitoring for the Destination and Experience Development Plan and other existing/future Fáilte Ireland plans, programmes, etc. may be undertaken and reported on at the same time.
- Appendix 5A sets out the indicators that will be used in the operation of this Environmental Monitoring Programme.



Baltimore, Enjoying an Oyster, Co Cork

6.2.2 Implementation and Consent

This DEDP is situated alongside a hierarchy of statutory documents setting out public policy for land use development, tourism, infrastructure, sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management. These include the National Planning Framework (NPF),

Regional Spatial and Economic (RSESs) and lower tier Development Plans and Local Area Plans.

Implementing the West Cork Coast DEDP will involve Fáilte Ireland helping to facilitate, promote, support and coordinate stakeholders (including local authorities, other government agencies, tourism operators, communities and visitors) in their activities in a way that is consistent with existing and emerging plans that have been subject to environmental assessment. The DEDP does not provide consent, establish a framework for granting consent or contribute towards a framework for granting consent.

In order to be realised, projects included in this plan will have to comply, as relevant, with the various provisions of legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework, of which this plan is not part and does not contribute towards.

Further detail on requirements in this respect are set out in Section 9.2 of the accompanying SEA Environmental Report.

6.2.3 Integrating Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management into the Plan

The SEA and AA team worked with the plan-preparation team at Fáilte Ireland in order to integrate requirements for environmental protection and management into the plan.

Fáilte Ireland provides funding for sustainable tourism projects that emerge as part of specific, competitive, themed and time-bound grant schemes or as part of wider strategic partnerships. These include projects relating to land use, infrastructural development and land use activities and attractions. Reference made to such projects included in the Plan does not guarantee funding. While funding is provided to certain projects, Fáilte Ireland is not the developer.

In order to achieve funding (including promotion) for land use or infrastructural development or land use activities from Fáilte Ireland, Fáilte Ireland's stakeholders shall be required to demonstrate compliance with measures relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management contained within the following Fáilte Ireland published documents:

- Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme Appendix 5 'Site Maintenance Guidelines' and other relevant measures from the Fáilte Ireland visitor and habitat management guidelines series (and any subsequent replacements); and
- Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme Appendix 6 'Environmental Management for Local Authorities and Others' (and any subsequent replacements).

In order to be realised, projects included in the DEDP (in a similar way to other projects from any other sector) will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework, of which the DEDP is not part and does not contribute towards. Such legislation, policies, plans and programmes include:

- Requirements for lower-tier environmental assessment, including EIA and AA;
- Statutory land use plans that form part of the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework (e.g., Development Plans, such as the Cork County Development Plan, and Local Area Plans) and that have undergone environmental assessment, as appropriate, including various provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management; and
- The Climate Action Plan 2021 and the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018 and any subsequent versions).

Infrastructure Capacity

With respect to infrastructural capacity (including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) the potential impact on existing infrastructure as well as the potential environmental effects of a likely increase in tourism-related traffic volumes along any routes resulting from the relevant initiative shall be considered and mitigated as appropriate, where relevant.

Fáilte Ireland will follow National Planning Framework guidelines and liaise with relevant planning authorities to ensure any proposed developments are adequately provided for in terms of critical service infrastructure.

The promotion of developing visitor friendly infrastructure where it is required will also be encouraged.

Any proposed site management and maintenance guidelines produced by Fáilte Ireland will encourage site owners and operators to consider environmentally sustainable solutions and compliance with the Water Framework Directive.

Visitor Management

Those receiving funding shall seek to manage any increase in visitor numbers and/or any change in visitor behaviour in order to avoid significant effects including loss of habitat and disturbance, including ensuring that new projects are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities.

Extensive research by Fáilte Ireland has shown improved environmental outcomes (including improved attainment of conservation objectives) in areas with visitor management strategies. Visitor management strategies will be required for proposed plans, programmes and projects that are to receive funding as relevant and appropriate.

Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services

Those receiving funding shall contribute towards the maintenance of existing green infrastructure and its ecosystem services while taking into account the output of the Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem Services project being undertaken by the NPWS. Proposals for the development of any green infrastructure should demonstrate the synergies that can be achieved with regard to the provision of open space amenities; sustainable management of water; protection and management of biodiversity; protection of cultural heritage; and protection of protected landscape sensitivities.

Where possible, extension of existing greenways and future development of new greenways and blueways should complement and integrate rather than replace existing green infrastructure. Stakeholders considering the development of greenways and blueways should have regard to the Fáilte Ireland publication Greenway -Visitor Experience & Interpretation Toolkit and Connecting with nature for health and wellbeing EPA Research Report 2020.

7. APPENDICES



Galley Head Lighthouse, West Cork, Ireland

APPENDIX 1

A wide range of stakeholders were consulted during the course of the preparation of this Plan. Individual organisations and agencies include:

- A Taste of West Cork Food Festival
- Comhar na nOileán
- Comharchumann Chléire Teoranta
- Cork County Council
- Cuas, West Cork Maritime Heritage
- Fáilte Ireland
- Local Enterprises / Food Producers / Representatives from each area throughout the West Cork Coast region
- Michael Collins / Cork Rebel Way Committee
- National Parks and Wildlife Service
- SECAD Partnership CLG
- Local Tourism / Community Groups / Business Chambers / Tidy Towns including Baltimore, Oileán Chléire, Sherkin Island, Heir Island, Skibbereen, Union Hall Rosscarbery, Dunmanway, Clonakilty, Seven Heads, Courtmacsherry, Timoleague, Kilbrittain, Old Head of Kinsale
- Kinsale Local Link Cork
- Office of Public Works
- Lusitania Museum / Old Head Signal Tower
- Heritage Ltd.
- West Cork Garden Trail

The views of local business operators, community groups, regional and national agencies, and local Government within the West Cork Coast were of fundamental importance in the development of the Plan. In undertaking the work, 180 attendees attended 6 workshops and 1 working group meeting in Phase 1 with another 35 site visits and 23 interviews. In Phase 2, 74 participated in 6 experience development workshops and 1 working group meeting, and interviews and small group discussions were conducted with 10 site visits and 14 representatives from agencies and community organisations. The Survey had 75 respondents with the analysis of findings, the mapping of assets and 'mystery shop. TEAM Tourism would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who attended these meetings and met on-site - for their input, advice and generous hospitality. in addition to the consultation, a significant number of plans and strategies have informed this plan. These indude:

- Tourism Development & Innovation - A Strategy for Investment 2016-2022, Failte Ireland
- Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme 2015- 2019, Fáilte ireland
- South West Action Plan for Jobs 2015-2017
- Taste Cork 2021 Food Support Strategy for Cork
- Cork County Council Tourism Statement of Strategy and Work Programme 2017-2022
- West Cork Local Development Strategy
- West Core Maximising the Benefits of Walking Tourism 2012
- Cork County Development Plan 2014

Online and in-destination research also included websites and brochures relevant to:

- Fáilte Ireland
- Tourism Ireland
- Government Departments including Tourism, Transport, Environment, Agriculture, Marine and Rural and Community Development
- Cork County Council
- Rural Development Companies, National Trails Office, etc.
- Local Tourism Groups in the West Cork Coast
- Local Enterprises in the West Cork Coast
- Local Historical and Archaeological Organisations
- Local Tourism Groups In the West Cork Coast
- Local Enterprises in the West Cork Coast
- Local Historical and Archaeological Organsations

APPENDIX 2

PARTNER ACRONYMS

ACI	Arts Council of Ireland
AT	An Teagasc
ATOWC	A Taste of West Cork Food Festival
BCC	Baltimore Community Council
BWI	BirdWatch Ireland
C	Coillte
CBF	Clonakilty Bike Festival
CCC	Cork County Council
CCE	Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann
CCT	Comharchumann Chléire Teoranta
CCCS	Clonakilty Community Cycle Scheme
CETB	Cork Education and Training Board
CnO	Comhar na nOileán
CRWC	Michael Collins / Cork Rebel Way Committee
Cuas	Cuas, West Cork Maritime Heritage
DCHG	Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
DoAFM	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DRCD	Department of Rural and Community Development
DTTAS	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FI	Fáilte Ireland
FLAG	Fisheries Local Action Group
HC	Heritage Council
HICC	Heir Island Community Council
IFA	Irish Farmer's Association
IFI	Inland Fisheries Ireland
IHF	Irish Hotels Federation
ILC	Irish Lights Commission
ISA	Irish Sailing Association
ITOA	Irish Tour Operators Association
KCTB	Kinsale Chamber of Tourism and Business
LCs	Local Communities
LEO	Local Enterprise Office
LEs	Local Enterprises
LHS	Local History Societies
LLC	Local Link Cork
LTGs	Local Tourism Groups
LM/OHSTH	Lusitania Museum / Old Head Signal Tower Heritage Ltd.
NMCI	National Maritime College of Ireland
MTU	Munster Technological University
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
NTO	National Trails Office
NRA	National Roads Authority
NSAI	National Standards Authority of Ireland
OPW	Office of Public Works
RAI	Restaurant Association of Ireland
RRO	Rural Recreation Officer
SECAD	SECAD Partnership CLG
SHC	Skibbereen Heritage Centre
SIDS	Sherkin Island Development Societ
STI	Sustainable Travel Ireland (was Ecotourism Ireland)
TC	Taste Cork
TIL	Tourism Ireland Limited
TUD	Technical University of Dublin
UCC	University College Cork
UnaG	Údarás na Gaeltachta
VSCG	Visitor Safety in the Countryside Group
WCCC	West Cork Cycling Clubs
WCDP	West Cork Development Partnership
WCFBG	West Cork Forest Bathing Group
WCGT	West Cork Gardens Trail
WCICC	West Cork Islands Community Council

APPENDIX 3

SELECTED INDICATORS, TARGETS AND MONITORING SOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENT	INDICATORS	TARGETS	SOURCE AND (WHERE AVAILABLE) FREQUENCY
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	B1: Conservation status of habitats and species as assessed under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive	B1: Maintenance of favourable conservation statusfor all habitats and species protected under National and International legislation to be unaffected by implementation of the Plan1	▶ Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" ▶ Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities ▶ SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) ▶ Government report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive - as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every 6 years) ▶ Government National Monitoring Report for the Birds Directive under Article 12 (every 3 years) ▶ Consultations with the NPWS ▶ CORINE mapping resurvey (every c. 5 years) ▶ Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes
	B2: Percentage loss of functional connectivity without remediation resulting from the Plan	B2: No significant ecological networks or parts thereof which provide functional connectivity to be lost without remediation resulting from the Plan	
	B3i: Number of significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from the Plan	B3i: Avoid significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from the Plan	
	B3ii: Number of significant impacts on the protection of listed species	B3ii: No significant impacts on the protection of listed species resulting from the Plan	
Population and Human Health	PHH1: Occurrence (any) of a spatially concentrated deterioration in human health arising from environmental factors resulting from the Plan, as identified by the Health Service Executive and Environmental Protection Agency	PHH1: No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result the Plan	▶ Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" ▶ Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities ▶ SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) ▶ Consultations with the HSE and EPA ▶ Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENT	INDICATORS	TARGETS	SOURCE AND (WHERE AVAILABLE) FREQUENCY
Soil	S1: Artificial surfaces land cover extent	S1: Contribute towards the target of the National Planning Framework's SEA (2018) to "Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4%."	▶ Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" ▶ Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities ▶ SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) ▶ CORINE mapping resurvey (every c. 5 years) ▶ Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes
Water	W1i: Classification of Overall Status(Comprised of ecological and chemical status) under the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters)Regulations 2009 (S.I. No. 272 of 2009) W1ii: Mandatory and Guide values as set by the EU Bathing Water Directive and transposing Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008)	W1i: No deterioration in the status of any surface water or adverse effect upon the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status' as a result of the Plan W1ii: No deterioration in the value of bathing waters or adverse effect upon the ability of any bathing water to achieve Mandatory values and, where possible, Guide values as a result of the Plan	▶ Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" ▶ Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities ▶ Data issued under the Water Framework Directive Monitoring Programme for Ireland (multi-annual) ▶ SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) ▶ Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes
	W2: Interactions with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC resulting from development adhering to the Plan	W2: Not to affect the ability of groundwaters to comply with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC, subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the WFD	
	W3: Compliance of relevant lower tier assessments and decision making with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines	W3: For lower tier assessments and decision making to comply with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines	
Air and Climatic Factors	AC1: Demonstration of compliance with provisions relating to climate adaptation and mitigation have been integrated into the Plan	C1: To maximise the amount of measures relating to climate adaptation and mitigation being implemented	▶ Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" ▶ Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities ▶ SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) ▶ Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENT	INDICATORS	TARGETS	SOURCE AND (WHERE AVAILABLE) FREQUENCY
Material Assets	M1: Number of instances whereby additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries of funding towards areas in the Plan area where adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity is unavailable	M1: No instances whereby additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries of funding towards areas in the Plan area where adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity that does not present a danger to human health are unavailable	▶ Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" ▶ Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities ▶ SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) ▶ Consultations with the partners such as the EPA, Irish Water and/or Cork County Council ▶ Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes
	M2: Number of significant adverse effects on the use of or access to public assets and infrastructure	M2: No significant adverse effects on the use of or access to public assets and infrastructure	
	M3: Preparation and implementation of construction and environmental management plans	M3: For construction and environmental management plans to be prepared and implemented for relevant projects	
Cultural Heritage	CH1: Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan	CH1: No unauthorised adverse effects on archaeological heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan	▶ Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" ▶ Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities ▶ SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) ▶ Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes
	CH2: Percentage of entries to the Records of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan	CH2: No unauthorised adverse effects on architectural heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan	
Landscape	L1: Number of unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in the Development Plans and other statutory land-use plans	L1: No unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in the Development Plans and other statutory land-use plans	▶ Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for ▶ Environmental Protection and Management" ▶ Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities ▶ SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) ▶ Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes



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