

# *Ancient* Destination Experience Development Plan

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## Plean Forbartha Eispéiris Cheannphointe Ársa

“ ...the *Ancient* Destination Experience Development Plan (ADEDP) is a five year plan. It is designed to be a roadmap for enhancing the existing *Ancient* visitor proposition to achieve the objectives of addressing seasonality, increasing visitor numbers, improving dwell time and visitor dispersion across the destination...”

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# Executive Summary: The Plan at a Glance

## OVERVIEW

The *Ancient* Destination Experience Development Plan (ADEDP) is a five year destination development plan. It is designed to be a roadmap for enhancing the existing *Ancient* visitor proposition to achieve the objectives of addressing seasonality, increasing visitor numbers, improving dwell time and visitor dispersion across the destination. This DEDP will be completed over the next five years and is primarily focussed on the area known as the Boyne Valley extending across counties Meath and South Louth. The DEDP will extend into North Louth and parts of Cavan, Monaghan and Westmeath with relevance to the *Ancient* proposition.

The plan will provide a destination wide tourism development focus, harnessing existing plans and examining new projects to create a world class destination ensuring *Ancient* is the core development theme.

The ADEDP seeks to capture proposed projects within one plan and maximise their potential over the next five years. These projects and destination development activity are organised into an experience development framework to be adopted as a five year action plan. This framework will provide the context for tourism operators and stakeholders to work collaboratively, develop new and improve existing visitor experiences and communicate coherent and unified destination stories for the domestic and international visitors.

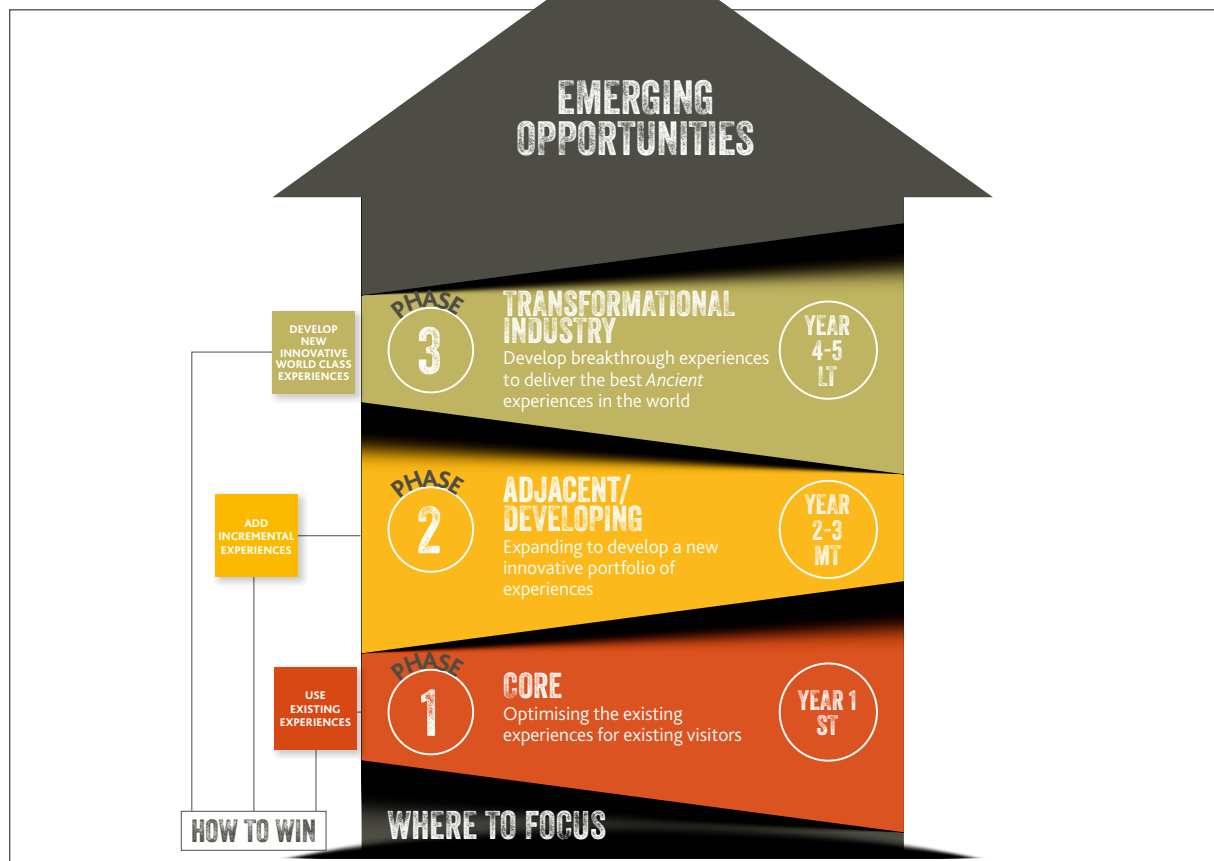
A Destination & Experience Development Plan (DEDP) represents a five year destination development plan.

The key objectives are as follows:

- Ensure the local experiences are brought to life through the development of the optimal mix of hero and ancillary products that get people into the area and retain them.
- Unlock the economic growth potential of an area by progressing a range of key initiatives that will motivate and facilitate potential tourists to visit and stay 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 international visitors to immerse themselves actively in the locale, interact with local people engaging the senses by immersing themselves in the destination.
- Strengthen the value of tourism to the local community by providing employment opportunities.

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.

## EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES



## DEVELOPING THE *ANCIENT* OPPORTUNITY

The story of *Ancient* is the story of Ireland. From ancient sites to storied myths and legends, its historical significance rivals any international destination. It represents one of the most fascinating visitor destinations in Ireland with stories told through 5,000 years of history. From its status as the fifth province of Ireland, home to the first farmers and sites of international significance, no other destination possesses the wealth of natural and built heritage assets to engage the full senses of the visitor.

The portfolio of built and natural assets provides the context to develop a more coherent approach to develop the *Ancient* visitor proposition and lead the way in telling the *Ancient* story through compelling visitor experiences. The area has the capacity for significant growth through season extension and visitor dispersion across the *Ancient* geography.

The characteristics of successful destinations include good levels of accessibility, public amenities, historical resonance, engaged trade and stakeholders, accommodation stock combined with existing attractions and activities. The focus of the ADEDP is to enhance each of these categories to deliver economic growth for the area while also adhering to international best practice to protect our archaeological heritage such as the ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites (2008) and Article 4 of the World Heritage Convention in relation to Brú na Bóinne.

The approach adopted within the ADEDP is based on an experience growth model. It is centred around the continuous development of visitor experiences created and delivered by the local tourism industry. In the immediate term, the tourism industry will focus on enhancing the existing portfolio of

experiences to optimise the current levels of experience provision. This will progress over the medium term to a growth in the existing portfolio of saleable experiences, delivered by the local tourism industry.

Over the short to long term, the ADEDP will enhance the capacity of the local tourism trade to become the key agent of change and represent the core tenant of transformational change. The long-term goal is to develop the local tourism industry's ability to become the main catalyst for transformational change and deliver a portfolio of world leading experiences that will support sustained economic growth across the destination.

Over the five years of the ADEDP, visitor numbers are projected to recover to pre Covid-19 levels. This will be achieved through working with the industry in the post Covid-19 recovery phase, developing new visitor experiences and enhancing existing core visitor propositions. The strategic approach will support the destination ambition to become world leading in telling the story of *Ancient* through world class, immersive and fascinating experiences for visitors. This projected recovery and destination growth plan will become the platform for achieving the objectives of increasing bednights, visitor dispersion, employment growth and season extension.

Similarly, this projected destination performance will be planned for with careful consideration for our heritage assets. It will adopt a responsible approach to ensure we conserve and protect our archaeological heritage and how our future visitors will engage with it. This approach will include archaeological monuments of significance in state care and outside of state care.

## THE STRATEGIC APPROACH

The development framework of the ADEDP features three interdependent layers of activity. They include;

1. **Achieving the 'Big Ideas' through Destination Catalyst Projects (Transformational)**
2. **Strategic Development Pillars - Create the conditions for Experience Development (Developing New Experiences)**
3. **Elevation Projects - Destination Enablers (Developing the Core)**

### 1. Achieving the 'Big Ideas' through Destination Catalyst Projects (Transformational)

The challenge of the *Ancient* narrative is to deliver stories through an engaging and immersive approach. The Big Ideas, delivered through a number of destination catalyst projects are designed to elevate the *Ancient* story.

They will deliver world class experiences through experience innovation and become the most intriguing global exponent of the *Ancient* story.

The development of the Big Idea for the ADEDP is designed to be motivational for both the tourism industry and the visitor alike. The projects are designed to be transformative for the wider destination in connecting the many destination experiences layers. The essence of the Big Ideas is to develop and enhance the core product, interpreting the *Ancient* story through new differentiated approaches providing compelling reasons to visit the destination. The Big Ideas focus on the following two product development themes.

1. ***Ancient* Routes – World leading experiential routes telling the story of *Ancient*.**
2. ***Ancient* Senses – Bringing the stories alive through active and cultural immersion in the stories of *Ancient*.**

Each of the Big Ideas will be achieved through the successful delivery a series of destination catalyst projects that integrate the existing product base with a new development focus.

DELIVERING WORLD LEADING EXPERIENCES: TELLING THE STORY OF ANCIENT

*The Big Ideas*



**THE ANCIENT ROUTES**

**THE ANCIENT SENSES**

*Catalyst Projects*

WORLD'S LEADING EXPERIENTIAL ANCIENT ROUTES

BRINGING THE ANCIENT STORIES ALIVE THROUGH ACTIVE AND CULTURAL IMMERSION



BOYNE VALLEY DRIVE

BOYNE NAVIGATION & GREENWAY

ANCIENT ALIVE

IRISH FOOD STORIES - 5,000 YEARS OF FOOD

*Strategic Development Pillars*



Unlocking the Heritage Assets

Reveal the Natural Assets

Introduce the Ancient Legends

Develop the Industry Base

*Pillar Objective:*

Develop the portfolio of accessible Ancient heritage assets that will deliver best in class visitor experiences befitting an area with UNESCO status.

Capitalise on the potential of existing sites and expand the experience capacity of supporting sites to create the world's most experiential trail of Ancient experiences.

The existing Boyne Valley Drive is 225kms of driving route encompassing Meath and South Louth.

Create a necklace of visitor experiences linking the heritage story through the natural assets of the area, connecting from the Boyne Valley through the landscape on greenways, blueways and various ancient trails to North Louth, integrating with parts of Monaghan, Cavan and Westmeath.

Create a focal point for visitors to engage with the ancient story through immersive experiences in the ancient land and waterscapes.

Build on the intrigue of the local stories, myths and legends, integrate these tales with the delivery of experiences linked to Ancient through activities and sectors such as food and agri-tourism.

Provide the industry with easily accessible narrative and focus for experience development adopting the Ancient legends and stories.

Support the development of the tourism industry to enhance their delivery of experiences across all stages of the visitor journey and advance the tourism capacity of key towns to deliver a consistent and quality experience to the international visitor.

*Elevation Projects*

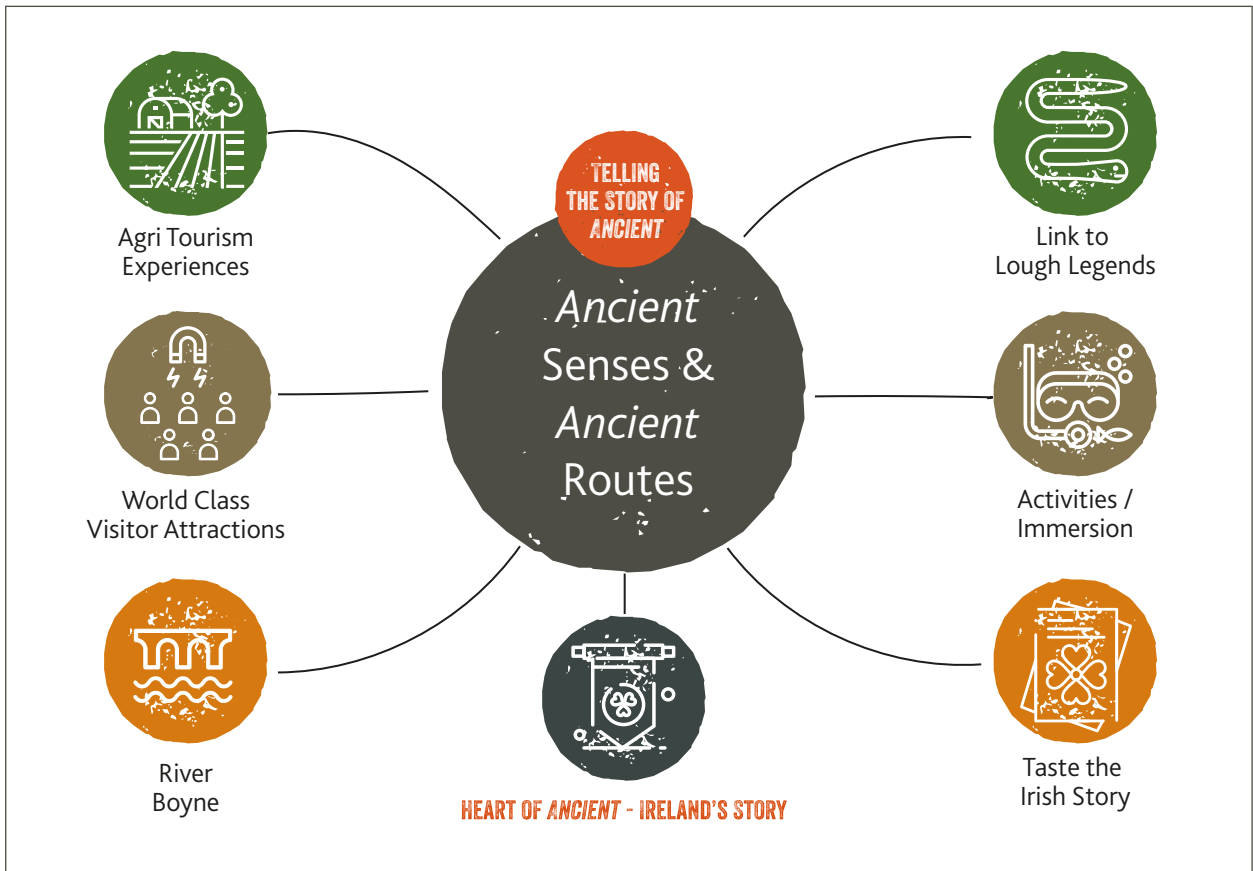


INDUSTRY CAPACITY GROWTH

PARTNERING WITH OPW

EXPERIENCE INNOVATION CLUSTERS

RE-IMAGINEERING THE WORLD'S MOST EXPERIENTIAL ANCIENT ROUTES



ANCIENT ROUTES – WORLD LEADING EXPERIENTIAL ROUTES TELLING THE STORY OF ANCIENT

BOYNE VALLEY DRIVE

The re-Imagineering of the Boyne Valley Drive must be transformed into an internationally iconic experiential route, possessing a myriad of experience layers. This will provide the industry and key stakeholders such as OPW and Local Authorities with a new experience development focus. It will link existing attractions on the Boyne Valley route with an extended focus on new and supporting experiences. The development of thematic experience route options will enhance the existing offering from being a point to point journey across heritage sites to providing multi-faceted experiences telling the *Ancient* story and blending a range of experiences from food to activities and attractions.

BOYNE NAVIGATION AND GREENWAY

*Ancient* must build on the uniqueness of its stories and heritage assets to create experience differentiation and relevancy in the international marketplace. The integration of the wealth of *Ancient* assets into the development of the Boyne Navigation and Greenway will create product standout. It will introduce new ways of interpreting a UNESCO World Heritage site and 5,000 years of stories while ensuring we protect and conserve our national archaeological heritage assets. The Boyne Navigation and Greenway has the potential to become one of the most fascinating land and water heritage trail journey for visitors. It will develop an international positioning as one of the most iconic heritage trails in the world, while also linking destination towns and villages.



Patrick Kavanagh Centre, Co. Monaghan



## ANCIENT SENSES – BRINGING THE STORIES ALIVE THROUGH ACTIVE AND CULTURAL IMMERSION IN THE STORIES OF ANCIENT

### ANCIENT ALIVE

The challenge identified within the ADEDP process is a requirement to bring many of the *Ancient* stories 'alive', create opportunities to engage with the *Ancient* story and become more immersive for the visitor. The development of the activities sector, aligned with the *Ancient* sites and the natural assets has the scope to bring these stories to life in a differentiated way.



*Yellow Steeple, Trim, Co Meath*

The River Boyne, Boyne Navigation and Greenway, Carlingford Lough, other Blueways and Greenways each offer the platform for growth. Carlingford possess the greatest concentration of natural assets that supports activity sector growth. The local Lough of Legends opportunity provides further opportunities to embrace this activity development theme through the integration of activities, the natural assets and the local myths and legends. Proposed private sector investment in the Carlingford area can become a major attractor and catalyst for activity growth.

The development of the Blueway at Trim Castle and access to the Boyne at Oldbride represent other key areas for activity growth. The longer-term objectives of the Boyne Navigation will be the development of a sustainable activity base that will access the *Ancient* stories along the route.

### IRISH FOOD STORIES - 5,000 YEARS OF FOOD

Every destination competes on its food offering. However, no destination possesses the depth of association with the Irish Food Story as the Boyne Valley area, from the first farmers to the current narrative around the Boyne Valley producers. The story of *Ancient* can be told through food while the story of Irish food can be told throughout the entire destination, from farm to fish.

The development of an Irish Food Story Trail will integrate the wider *Ancient* destination, told through food heritage. This can also become one of the key experience layers on top of the proposed re-imagining of the Boyne Valley Drive in the *Ancient* Route.

## 2. Strategic Development Pillars - Create the conditions for experience development (Developing New Experiences)

In realising the potential of the catalyst projects to deliver the Big Ideas, the ADEDP will focus on four development pillars. These are designed to unlock the potential of the existing asset base and grow the capacity of the local tourism industry, providing the basis for a coherent industry approach to experience development.

The strategic pillars identified for the development of the ADEDP are;

#### Unlocking the Heritage Assets:

Develop the portfolio of accessible *Ancient* heritage assets to deliver best in class visitor experiences befitting an area with UNESCO World Heritage status, while ensuring we protect and conserve our archaeological heritage. It will capitalise on the potential of existing sites while expanding the experience capacity of supporting sites to create the world's most experiential trail of *Ancient* experiences.

#### Reveal the Natural Assets:

The creation of a necklace of visitor experiences linking the heritage story through the natural assets of the area e.g. River Boyne, the centre piece of the existing 225kms Boyne Valley Drive, that connects through the landscape linking greenways, blueways and various ancient trails to North Louth, integrating with parts of Monaghan, Cavan and Westmeath.

It will create a focal point for visitors to engage with the *Ancient* story through immersive experiences in the *Ancient* land and waterscapes, increasing and promoting environmental enhancement through a sustainable tourism approach.

#### Introduce the Legends:

Build on the intrigue of the local stories, myths and legends, integrating these tales with the delivery of experiences linked to *Ancient* through activities and sectors such as food and agri-tourism. Provide the industry with an easily accessible narrative and focus for experience development adopting the *Ancient* legends and stories.

**Develop the Industry Base:**

Support the development of the tourism industry to enhance their delivery of experiences across all stages of the visitor journey and advance the tourism capacity of key towns to deliver a consistent and quality experience to the international visitor. Increasing the experience delivery capacity of the tourism industry will be central to the success of the ADEDP. Concentrated effort on progressive members of the industry to create new experiences and enhance the existing pool of saleable experiences will be the key focus. This will align with the cluster focus and produce targeted growth from key experience providers. A programme of industry development supports will be aligned to develop the industry where growth opportunities exist that will benefit the wider destination.

**3. Elevation Projects - Destination Enablers (Developing the Core)**

The ADEDP is supported by a series of Elevation Projects - Destination Enablers. These will focus on growing industry capacity, improve the product base and foster new levels of collaboration to deliver world class experiences. These provide the basis to ensure the operational fundamentals of the *Ancient* destination are in place.

**1. EXPERIENCE INNOVATION CLUSTERS,**

The geography of the ADEDP predominantly aligns with the River Boyne from source to mouth. As identified in the Boyne Valley Masterplan, a number of natural clusters are formed through the existence of key destination hubs along the river route. Each of the defined cluster areas possess a natural portfolio of existing experiences through built and natural heritage. The opportunity to create scale and stimulate experience growth will be achieved through the development of thematic clusters, largely based on a logical geographic distribution of the area.

A number of clusters are proposed with Activity, Food and Culture being the initial areas of focus. Central to each cluster area is the location of the destination towns currently in development supported by towns that can emerge as cluster hubs. This targeted focus will also support the industry capacity building process with an alignment with the agreed cluster themes.

**2. PARTNERING WITH THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC WORKS (OPW)**

The recent investment in Brú na Bóinne to deliver a world class experience has established a destination standard. The completion of the Boyne Valley Masterplan provides an additional roadmap for experience enhancement across all sites. The continued implementation of the masterplan and development of visitor experiences will support the goal of iconic sites delivering iconic experiences, delivered through a sustained partnership approach between Fáilte Ireland, Office of Public Works and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH).

The projects referred to within the ADEDP are aligned with an agreed schedule of activity ensuring consistency in all stakeholder's approach. Working with the OPW to sustainably manage the sites from a visitor perspective and enhance the visitor experience remains a key prerogative through the strategic partnership approach between Fáilte Ireland, OPW and the DHLGH.

**3. DEVELOP INDUSTRY CAPACITY**

The ADEDP destination enablers focus places additional emphasis on further enhancing the capacity of the local tourism industry. A strategic focus will be placed on working with the local industry to nurture new experiences, enhance existing experiences and upskill the tourism industry to continuously deliver experience innovation. It also recognises the challenge of the existing accommodation levels and options while striving to expand and enhance the range of day and evening economy initiatives throughout the destination.

The Industry *Ancient* Experience Development Plan (IAEDP) will foster an experience quality expectation among tourism providers who participate. It represents the supports provided by Fáilte Ireland presently, however, will elevate the programme among key accounts in becoming part of a focused incubation approach. This approach will also become integrated with other agency training supports and funding streams available ensuring consistency in the overall strategic approach.

The programme will also work with the local tourism industry to create new saleable experiences relevant to the *Ancient* themes while enhancing their ability to scale their business, aligned with the objectives of the ADEDP.



# Section One: Key Result Areas and Targets



## 1.1 KEY RESULT AREAS AND TARGETS

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.



*Narrow Water, Carlingford Lough, Co. Louth*

## 1.2 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

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

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

A DEDP Impact Measurement Model has been devised to assess the return on investment from the DEDP and measure performance across key outputs areas such as attractions and industry development. It will also assess the longer term impact of developing the *Ancient* routes through an enhanced Boyne Valley Drive and Boyne Navigation and Greenway to become a major international ancient experience proposition.

The four areas of measurement to assess the impact of the DEDP are;

### 1. MEASURING OUR STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP IMPACT – OPW AND DHLGH

Monitor the growth in visitor numbers and spend across fee paying attractions and visitor footfall to non-fee paying attractions.

This element will focus on assessing the impact of investment into major attractions across the destination that includes recent investment in Brú na Bóinne and proposed works at Trim Castle. The target outputs of this investment will include increased footfall. However, the wider destination impact will be examined through the overall measurement of footfall across all fee paying and non fee OPW sites. This will assess the dispersion impacts and associated dwell time across the *Ancient* geography arising from any targeted uplifts in major destination sites such as Brú na Bóinne and Trim Castle. Annual tracking of visitor numbers will be collated for inclusion in the overall DEDP Impact Measurement System.

## 2. MEASURING EXPERIENCE PERFORMANCE GROWTH – 'BASKET OF ANCIENT EXPERIENCES'

A 'basket of experiences' will be monitored to assess the experience return on investment derived from DEDP programmes to build industry capacity in addition to any future capital investment designed to create or enhance *Ancient* experiences across the destination.

The DEDP has identified a number of experience providers that have committed to further experience development or enhancement of their existing experiences. A basket of experiences will be created through members of the tourism industry who are adopting the DEDP as central to their own development focus. This will include members of the tourism industry identified as delivering experiences with high growth potential or strongly aligned with the themes and target sectoral clusters within the DEDP.

Participants within the Industry *Ancient* Experience Development Programme (IAEDP) will be included in the 'basket' of experiences based on their commitment to work towards achieving the vision set out in the DEDP. The 'basket' will be representative of the target sectoral clusters within the plan. A range of performance indicators will be agreed that will include elements such as annual tracking of visitor numbers, season extension, new experiences created, employment indicators.

## 3. KEY ACCOUNTS ACROSS THE BOYNE VALLEY ANCIENT ROUTE

The examination of DEDP destination growth will be achieved through measuring the performance of key accounts distributed across the *Ancient* geography. The key transformational projects as outlined include the creation of *Ancient* Routes delivering World Leading Experiential Routes telling the Story of *Ancient*. This will be delivered through an enhanced Boyne Valley Drive and the Boyne Navigation and Greenway. These projects will transverse the destination and become significant engagement platforms for the tourism industry.

Measuring growth through Fáilte Ireland key accounts will monitor industry development across the geography of *Ancient* to ensure a representative mix of accommodation, attractions and activities are measured. This will identify the wider destination impact through key accounts. Duplication will be avoided to ensure no double counting with the 'basket' of experiences. Current monitoring of key accounts and associated metrics will feed into the annual tracking of performance for inclusion in the overall DEDP Impact Measurement System.

## 4. ENVIRONMENT

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



Boyne Valley Flavours





*Slane Castle, Co Meath*

## Section Two: Setting the Scene





## 2.1 DESTINATION EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND THEIR OBJECTIVES

Developing a visitor experience requires a shift away from the traditional product versus price mentality. It is about delivering life enhancing moments that inspire visitors to share their experiences with others, but also make them want to return. The concept of experience development extends beyond 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.

The role of the DEDP is to support the development of the world-class experiences focused on the region's rich ancient heritage while adding to the overall destination proposition. The purpose of this document is to present the destination themes of the region. These are organised into an experience development framework to be adopted as a commercial action plan for the next five years. This framework will provide the context for tourism operators and stakeholders to work in partnership, create new and improved existing visitor experiences, and communicate coherent and unified stories to the visitor.

The DEDP is a five year commercial development plan for an area. The key objectives are as follows:

Ensure the local experiences are brought to life through the development of the optimal mix of hero and ancillary products that get people into the area and retain them.

- Unlock the economic growth potential of an area by progressing a range of key initiatives that will motivate and facilitate potential tourists to visit and stay 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 international visitors to immerse themselves actively in the locale, interact with local people engaging the senses by immersing themselves in the destination.
- Strengthen the value of tourism to the local community by providing employment opportunities.

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 potential visitors will understand. The Experience Brands provide the competitive advantage that separates Ireland from its 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 proposition which ensures that a consistent approach is taken to the identification and development of memorable tourism experiences within these brands. They must also be distinctive in the international marketplace and differentiate themselves 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 and 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 and 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.



Sitting underneath the Brand Ireland pillars are four key propositions (or experience brands) which represent the country's areas of strategic importance. These four areas are:



“ 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 pre-date the pyramids; and knights, kings, monks and Vikings loom large in incredible stories. ”



“ 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. ”



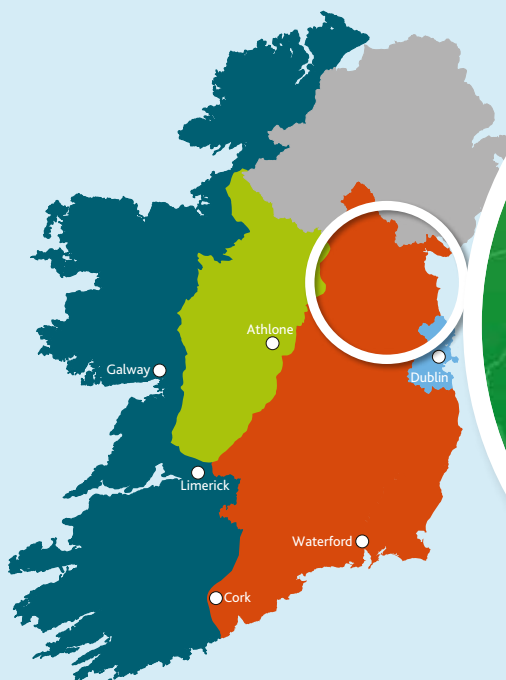
“ Dublin living thrives side by side with the natural outdoors so you can constantly jump between completely unique, different and often unexpected experiences. ”



“ 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. ”



\*Note: Study area refers only to the Republic of Ireland



## 2.2 ANCIENT OVERVIEW

Since its launch, Ireland's Ancient East is now a well-established regional experience brand making a significant impact on tourism across the east of the country delivering increased visitor numbers and spend, season extension and job creation. The development focus has been centred on developing brilliant visitor experiences with the potential to drive incremental bed nights and revenue across the region

Most recently, 16 new interactive experiences have opened across the region following funding of over €2.1million as part of our Storytelling and Interpretation investment scheme, with 2 more due to open shortly. The Destination Towns Capital Investment Programme was also created to enable every Local Authority apply for funding of up to €500,000 to develop towns across the country.

This kind of investment in tourism is critical for Ireland's Ancient East to stand out in the international marketplace, particularly when tourism trends are evolving rapidly. The Ireland's Ancient East team has worked hand in-glove with tourism businesses to progress Visitor Experience Development Plans for the region.

Recent challenges and global crisis's act as a constant reminder of the complexity of many external factors that quickly impact on our activity and development planning. It serves to remind all stakeholders of the importance of the collective approach, the need for a new focus on destination competitiveness and the need to diversify into a wider range of international markets while also appealing to new visitor segments.

Achievements to date include;

- Over €29m invested in attractions.
- €59.6m committed to 23 Greenway development projects.
- Working on projects with potential to deliver over €35m in value over the next 3 years.
- 10 projects with Strategic Partners Office of Public Works (OPW) and Coillte - €13.9m.
- 18 new and improved visitor experiences across the region through the Ireland's Ancient East Storytelling and Interpretation investment scheme.

- Partnered with Wexford & Waterford County Council in three projects under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund.
- Historic Towns signage - 18 towns completed with 198 Visitor Orientation map and story boards installed.
- Fáilte Ireland will invest up to €7m through the local authorities located in Ireland's Ancient East to boost the attractiveness and tourism appeal of destination towns across the region. This scheme is part of the National Tourism Development Authority's work to drive a better regional spread of overseas and domestic visitors and spend.
- Working with local authorities as partners in tourism to support their investment in tourism activity.

### 'ANCIENT' DESTINATION EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Fáilte Ireland has initiated a number of Destination Experience Development Plans across the country. These are five year commercially focused Destination Experience Development Plans for a region, which bring the public and private sector together to drive visitors and revenue to lesser known areas and attractions, especially in the off-peak season. The themes of these Destination Experience Development Plans have been designed to enhance each area's strongest tourism assets and appeal to core overseas markets.

Vitality, these plans will be delivered in a way that encourages visitors to spend more time in an area, without compromising the environment or culture of the region. This plan will be completed over the next 5 years and primarily focus on the area known as the Boyne Valley, extending across Counties Meath and South Louth. The DEDP will also extend into North Louth and parts of Counties Cavan, Monaghan and Westmeath with relevance to the Ancient proposition.

Carlingford Adventure Centre, Co. Louth



## 2.3 HOW THE PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

The ADEDP was developed through an extensive programme of consultation, research and international best practice review.

The research methodology employed a bespoke experience research framework, devised to examine current destination experiences, project development considerations and opportunities, industry capacity and an assessment of current distribution channels.

This was further supplemented by a programme of research within the destination, including group and individual consultations, community workshops, mystery shopper visits by international and domestic visitors, international consumer assessment, social media analysis and online reviews of the destination.

An analysis of international best practice was undertaken to examine comparable *Ancient* themed destinations or areas that possess the same strategic pillars proposed for development in this plan. The core objective is to establish their success factors and apply the learnings to the project.

The programme of research specifically included the following;

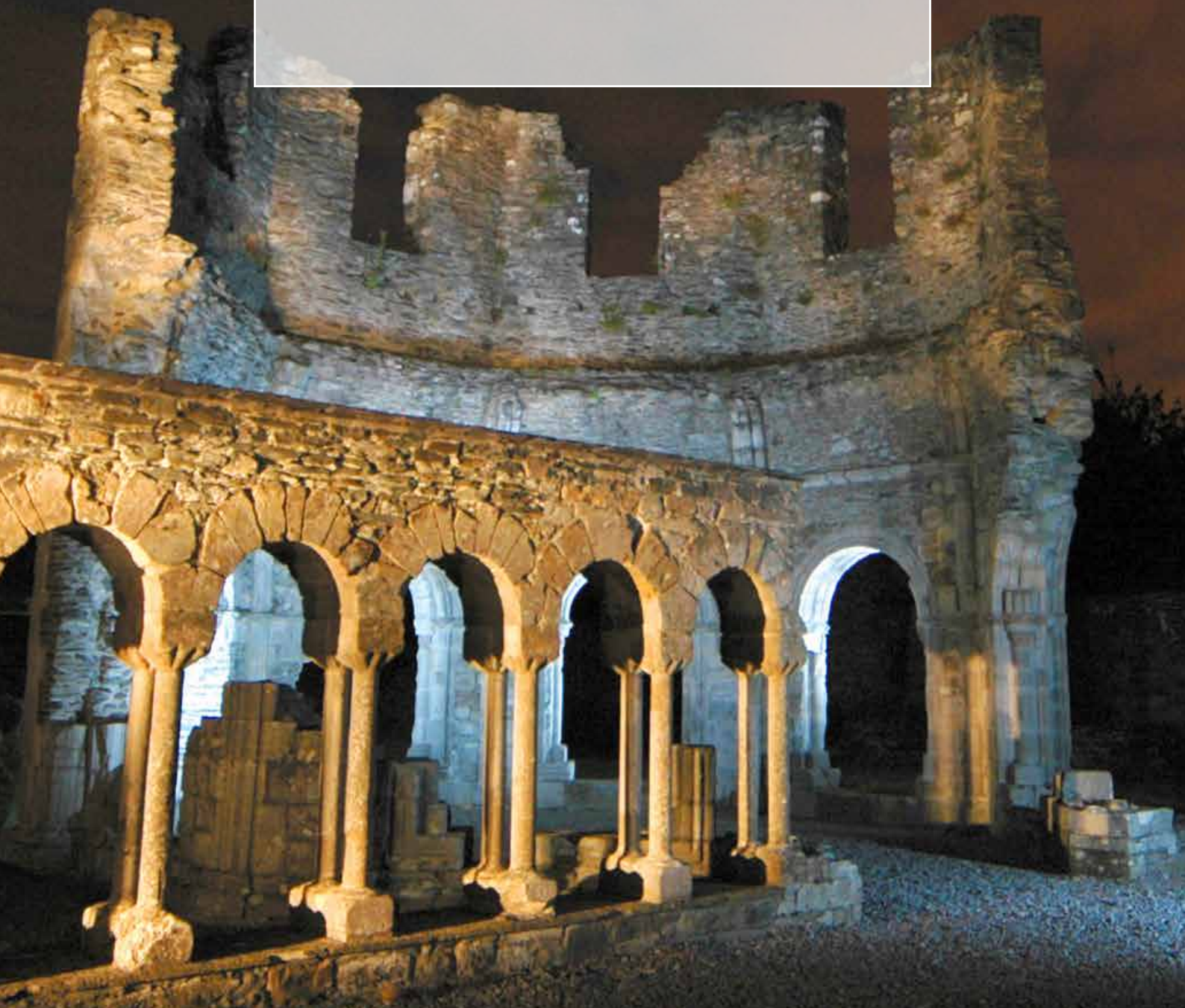
- Hosting of the *Ancient* Experience Conference attended by 80 representatives of all stakeholders and tourism industry.
- Mystery shopper programme in addition to visits by international visitors to the destination.
- Visitor experience product audit across the geography of the *Ancient* proposition.
- Review of future trends in Tourism and online share of voice and consumer sentiment to destination through a programme of 'digital noise' assessment.
- Project identification workshops with all key stakeholders including OPW, Louth and Meath County Councils.
- Hosting of a dedicated workshop for the Activities sector.
- Examination of online saleable experiences available in destination and associated distribution channels.
- Examination of the current sales and distribution approach for *Ancient* destination experiences by international tour operators
- Assessment of current capacity of industry in context of creating destination visitor experiences.
- International benchmarking against comparable destinations with a similar product base and thematic approach to experiences.
- Programme of secondary research reviewing existing tourism and economic development plans.
- Series of one on one industry consultations and on site visits throughout the destination with tourism industry and other key stakeholders.
- Tourism industry workshop to finalise DEDP themes and secure industry commitment to the process over the next five years.



“...the research methodology employed a bespoke experience research framework, devised to examine current destination experiences, project development considerations and opportunities, industry capacity and an assessment of current distribution channels...”



## Section Three: Where We Are Now



### 3.1 KEY INSIGHTS INFORMING OUR ACTIONS / RESEARCH OVERVIEW

#### INTERNATIONAL BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS

A programme of international benchmarking was undertaken to assess comparable destinations and those relevant to the strategic pillars around which the ADEDP is structured. From this wider review of nineteen destinations, a number emerged as being particularly relevant and capable of providing key lessons to inform the development of the plan. These included Loch Ness & The Great Glen, Istria, Croatia, Bregenzerwald, Austria and Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

The key lessons and critical success factors from these international destinations were collated under each of the strategic pillars that guide this process. Subsequent benchmarking analysis was conducted against international destination criteria. This provided additional destination performance measurements to assess the area and required future development focus for the DEDP. The key learnings under each strategic pillar are summarised as follows;

#### UNLOCK THE HERITAGE BASE

- The use of a wide range of partnerships and collaborations to deliver joined up and added-value visitor experiences.
- Need to develop joint ticketing and cross-selling.
- The involvement of creative talent to design and deliver innovative products and experiences.
- Collective approach to the marketing and the telling of the heritage stories of the destination using a range of different sites.
- Leveraging the heritage assets for community benefit (longer opening hours to encourage evening visits, use by local groups for events and festivals, dual use of car parks, shared tourist information provision).
- Regular investment in new products and experiences.

#### REVEAL THE NATURAL ASSETS

- Ensuring core destination natural assets are available to visitors.
- A strategic approach to ensure that there is a clear and specific reason to visit each of the rural communities across the destination in ways that directly enhance the natural environment.
- Easy access to the countryside through well-designed, well maintained and signed footpaths, cycleways and trails.
- A good network of reliable and sustainable public transport connecting the rural communities.
- Ensuring visitors understand the link between local environment and local products (food, drink and crafts), language and culture delivered with a strong sustainable approach and message.
- Providing visitors with a wide range of activities within the natural environment thus encouraging visitors to engage with nature.
- Increasing and promoting environmental enhancement through a sustainable tourism approach.

#### INTRODUCE THE ANCIENT LEGENDS

- Putting the core local myths and legends 'centre stage' and using them as the catalyst for branding, promotion, events, festivals, experiences and retail opportunities.
- Involving creative talent to assist in the development of these experiences using innovative and hybrid solutions.
- Allowing the tourist to discover the myths and legends in fun and entertaining ways.
- Ensuring that local people and local voices are involved in telling the stories of the local legends.
- Increasingly using local myths and legends and connecting them to comparable myths and legends in other countries around the world e.g. older than the pyramids.



Handweaving at Swallow Studios, Co. Monaghan



1916 Launch re-enacted at Cavan County Museum



King George IV Ballroom, Slane Castle, Co. Meath

## DEVELOPING THE INDUSTRY BASE

- Establishment of sectoral and creative networks and clusters to foster collaboration and the development of new ideas
- Develop strong internal communication channels to involve all local stakeholders
- The collective provision of training programs focusing on visitor experience development
- Commitment to regular international benchmarking and undertaking learning journeys to understand the competition
- Encouraging new types of partnerships with non-tourism organisations in order to increase capacity and inject new ideas
- Understanding the meaning of service and design quality and a collective commitment to deliver a world class destination.
- Creation of the conditions to foster tourism entrepreneurship to develop new experiences and attract talent to the local tourism sector.
- Creation of the conditions to attract inward tourism product investment into the destination e.g. hotel stock, attractions and activities.

## MYSTERY SHOP

A series of mystery shopper visits were conducted to assess the visitor experience, pre visit and in destination. Additional mystery shopper visits were conducted across a range of visitor attractions during the consultative phase. The process included assessment of the destination readiness from pre visit presentation online to direct enquiries followed by on site visits.

Across each of the assessment areas a number of key themes emerged. These issues were subsequently identified within industry workshops as areas for future development focus. Among the areas for development includes;

- Creation of consistent visitor experiences across all attractions.
- Enhance the capacity of the tourism industry to cross sell and promote other destination visitor experiences.
- Examine the narrative adopted by the tourism industry to promote the destination experience and own experience.
- Adopt a destination wide approach to staff training to enhance customer service quality and industry product knowledge.
- Build the industry capacity to enhance the online proposition from online booking systems to collaboration with other local experiences.
- Address the limited number of experiences being promoted as reasons for visitors to stay.
- Adopt a new development focus for the Boyne Valley Drive that encourages increased dwell time. The drive is currently positioned as a means of driving through the destination without any significant motivation for the visitor to extend their stay or sample new experiences off the main trail. The fundamentals of the route require attention from signage to experience mapping based on the expectations of the modern visitor to Ireland.



## TOURISM INDUSTRY AND STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Collective and individual feedback throughout the consultation phase produced a significant level of consistency for future development focus. The recognition of the tourism industry's requirement to build capacity along all elements of the visitor journey is acknowledged by the industry and verified by the research programme. Equally important is the stated desire to start working more cohesively as a destination and build on the opportunity presented by the DEDP.

The key product development focus concentrated on the rich heritage asset base while recognising the need to increasingly incorporate the natural assets of the area into the visitor experience. Every natural and built asset conveys a myriad of stories but currently lacks the experience to enable the visitor to immerse themselves into the narrative of the *Ancient* destination. The priority focus for the stakeholder within the context of the DEDP include;

- Examine ways to disperse visitors from major attractions across the wider destination.
  - Develop a collaborative approach to developing itineraries that retain visitors in the area beyond the current one night stay.
  - Develop tourism as a viable economic sector delivering employment across the destination.
  - Build on the opportunities provided by new major events such as Púca and Taste the Island.
  - Create more effective industry networks and collaboration on experience development.
  - Restore a focus on the River Boyne as a source to mouth proposition and basis for new activity development.
  - Examine how major sites can deliver enhanced visitor experiences reflecting their international status.
  - Deliver the cultural experience to deliver new evening economy experiences in interesting venues.
  - Examine how themed clusters can foster experience innovation across the destination.
  - Develop a new focus on activity infrastructure through Blueway and Greenway development linking all resources together.
  - Review the effectiveness of the Boyne Valley Drive as an orientation mechanism for visitors.
- Deliver the Boyne Navigation and Greenway project to become a major visitor experience and community resource.
  - Maximise the potential of initiatives that support visitor dispersion across the destination e.g. Louth Heritage Trail, Cooley Camino.
  - Deliver on the potential of key urban centres as exploration bases for the destination.
  - Develop the food story to deliver year round visitor experiences that will reach across the destination.
  - Address the perception of the area as a day visit destination.
  - Develop an industry education approach to create wider industry awareness.
  - The top rated destination challenges identified by the industry were:
    - Requirement to increase skill set and experience development capacity of the tourism industry.
    - Enhanced focus on experience and product development.
    - Increase accommodation stock levels.
    - Address current levels of industry collaboration and low cross selling.
    - Create more reasons to stay and increase dwell time.



Kells Courthouse, Co. Meath

“...every natural and built asset conveys a myriad of stories but currently lacks the experience to enable the visitor to immerse themselves into the narrative of the *Ancient* destination...”



## 3.2 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS (SWOT)

### STRENGTHS

- Depth of the Ireland's Ancient East story across the destination supported by extended range of hero and signature experiences.
- River Boyne as a geographic focal point for the destination supported by diversity of land and seascape across the destination.
- Boyne Blueway at Trim and current Boyne Navigation segment facilitating immersive heritage experiences.
- UNESCO World Heritage site status creating global destination recognition through Brú na Bóinne as a hero site and associated events e.g. Solstice.
- Quality of existing activity and major attraction providers.
- Diversity of historical venues available for event and experience innovation.
- Authenticity of the local food story and first farmers association with the area.
- Emergence of new visitor experiences across the destination to support local experience clusters
- Destination association with nationally prominent legends and stories from St. Patrick to the "Salmon of Knowledge".
- Quality of niche cultural festivals, events and destination ownership of the Halloween narrative and Puca festival.
- Accessibility and proximity to major access ports and large urban centres.

### WEAKNESSES

- Current perception of area as a transit zone particularly among tour operators.
- Destination not maximising economic value of major attractions to increase dwell time and dispersion of visitors throughout the area.

- Current reliance of the destination on the domestic market as dominant market source.
- Core portfolio of assets – Towns / Driving Route / Natural Assets / Visitor Attractions are not delivering on their potential or largely not functional from a visitor experience perspective.
- Pace of progression of projects that can represent internationally iconic visitor experiences in the destination e.g. Boyne Navigation, Blueway.
- Perceived difficulty of accessing slower paced activities and experiences e.g. on water, bike or foot.
- Natural assets of the area not entirely accessible or presented in a visitor centric manner.
- Existing range of way marked routes and trails are not fit for purpose or effective in delivering tourism value to the destination from driving routes to current walking and cycling trail provision.
- No focused urban gateway to the destination e.g. developing an access point through Drogheda.
- Quality of pre visit destination information and itinerary development among tourism industry limiting longer stays within the destination.
- Large attractions are not delivering for retaining visitors in the destination and are contributing to a transient destination profile.
- Inconsistent quality of the "on the ground" visitor experience at many attractions.
- Operational model for a number of key sites resulting in site closures outside of peak visitor periods limiting the area's capacity to become a year round destination.



*Puca Festival Athboy, Trim & Drogheda*



Listoke Gin School & Distillery, Co. Louth

- Low levels of joint ticketing, cross selling and industry collaboration.
- Lack of promotable evening economy visitor options and accessible food experiences available throughout the year.
- Limited new experience development focus among tourism industry not fully availing of the international platform that Ireland's Ancient East provides.
- Current accommodation industry and capability levels to meet international visitor expectations around accommodation standards and range of superior accommodation options.
- Current hotel accommodation stock levels and dominance of three-star hotel accommodation across the destination.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Create the world's most engaging cluster of *Ancient* Experiences that will be recognised as the BEST ANCIENT EXPERIENTIAL TRAIL IN THE WORLD in a UNESCO World heritage site through the enhancement of the Boyne Valley Drive.
- Engaging visitors with *Ancient* through owning 'ancient activities' telling the stories of *Ancient* in new and immersive ways that brings ANCIENT ALIVE - ANCIENT ACTIVITIES
- The significance of night and light across the destination and developing unique night time visitor experiences across ancient venues – EXTRAORDINARY VENUES – EXTRAORDINARY EVENTS
- The food heritage of the area to link agri-tourism and food to create Ireland's Food Heritage destination – THE STORY OF IRISH FOOD AND DRINK – Heritage of Irish Food Trail.
- Ability to differentiate the areas Blueways and Greenways through opening up the River Boyne supporting the *Ancient* theme and authenticity of the destination as a base for myths and legends integrated into destination and community experiences.
- Destination towns as hubs such as Trim and Drogheda and emerging gateway towns that can offer a distinctive visitor experience based on adoption of core cluster themes e.g. Heritage, Activity, Food, Culture.
- Development of Drogheda as a major access point to the *Ancient* destination enhanced through a masterplan approach, new visitor experience and destination development focus.
- The world site for the birthplace of Halloween and ability to access the story all year round.
- Investment in major sites opening up new opportunities to cross sell other sites and visitor experiences across the destination, increasing and promoting environmental enhancement through a sustainable tourism approach.
- Industry capacity building and adopting new focused approach for high potential experiences to blend all current Fáilte Ireland supports to deliver a step change in experience development in the area.
- Examine ways to communicate the sense of place through the development of a heightened focus on areas such as arts, local crafts and culture.

## THREATS

- Pace of international tourism recovery due to Covid-19 crisis.
- Susceptibility of micro tourism enterprises and rural economies to major global economic shocks evident in the Covid-19 crisis.
- Additional uncertainty around tourism economy due to Brexit.
- Industry investment capacity eroded by challenges of Covid-19 and Brexit.
- Failure to grow range and quality of destination accommodation base and improve industry capabilities to meet the expectations of an international traveller visiting a world class destination.
- Tourism industry not adopting an increased focus around experience development to adapt to changing visitor demands.
- Lack of integration of supporting experiences throughout the destination resulting in fragmented external perception of destination e.g. Blueways, Greenway Trails.
- Challenge of insurance costs for activity providers.
- Potential changes in funding models to enhance existing attractions.
- Achieving a sustainable balance in the visitor management approach and destination ambition at key sites such as the Hill of Tara and Loughcrew Cairns.
- Increase in visitor numbers with potential to disturb or damage the natural environment and archaeological heritage, in particular buried archaeological remains and low level earthworks.
- Challenge of climate change leading to extreme weather events that may contribute to potential sensitivities at heritage sites.



*Battle of the Boyne Re-enactment, Oldbridge House, Drogheda, Co. Meath*

### 3.3 KEY CONCLUSIONS BASED ON RESEARCH

#### CHALLENGE THE NARRATIVE THROUGH INTEGRATED EXPERIENCES

Modern visitor expectations are the delivery of a destination narrative told through many integrated experiences. A one-dimensional approach is no longer sufficient. The *Ancient* geography possesses an enviable portfolio of built and natural heritage. However, it requires a more expansionary outlook on experience creation to achieve the economic objectives of the DEDP.

The opportunity to realise a differentiated approach to *Ancient* will be achieved by a series of undertakings that begins with addressing the basic fundamentals identified in the DEDP research. Growth and sustained success however, will only be achieved through the focus on the strategic imperative of delivering World Class *Ancient* experiences.

The opportunity presented by the delivery and / or enhancement of experiences such as the Boyne Valley Drive and Boyne Navigation and Greenway provides a geographic focal point at the heart of the destination. The real point of differentiation will emerge through the enhancement of the supporting experiences from attractions, activities to the local food story that introduce the wider area facilitating visitor dispersion. A blended experience model is the minimum requirement to deliver the target of a world leading *Ancient* proposition delivered through immersive and engaging visitor experiences.

#### INTERNATIONALLY ICONIC DELIVERING ICONIC EXPERIENCES

Internationally acclaimed products must deliver international class experiences. The designation of UNESCO World Heritage status creates an inherent expectation around the destination experience. The recent multi million investment in Brú na Bóinne provides the platform for continuous experience development. It represents the benchmark site for the destination. The visitor expectation around supporting experiences is central to all future development activity to realise sustained economic benefits for the wider area.

World class destinations deliver world leading experiences. The experience gap between Brú na Bóinne and other internationally iconic sites across the destination limits the potential for sustainable visitor growth. A growing gap in experience quality across a number of major visitor sites and natural amenities, will become a significant destination challenge in the absence of an immediate to longer term plan to deliver iconic experiences in iconic locations.

In achieving this, careful consideration will be given to the carrying capacity of Brú na Bóinne and the identification of potential threats to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), integrity and authenticity of the World Heritage (WH) property.

#### REALISE VISITOR VALUE THROUGH CORE ASSETS

The inability to access or experience the iconic natural assets of the destination limits experience development capacity and ability to integrate these assets with the rich pool of destination legends. The River Boyne opportunity from source to mouth can provide an industry and community focal point. The delivery of the Boyne Navigation and Greenway project can become a key enabler to realising the destination value of the natural assets, eventually linking to adjoining Blueways and Greenways. It also delivers an additional experience spur to an enhanced Boyne Valley Drive – *Ancient* Route.

#### CONSISTENCY IN DELIVERY

The research highlighted a variance in visitor experience quality and service delivery. Each of the touchpoints across the visitor journey, from pre visit to post visit, highlighted a requirement to address the fundamentals. In realising the ambition to become world class, the benchmarking areas of destination consistency must be to the forefront of the industry development approach. Communicating a coherent destination narrative and fostering increased industry collaboration will contribute to establishing new industry standards across the *Ancient* geography.

#### REALISE SECTORAL VALUE

Despite the density of tourism assets, activities and scale of attractions, the local tourism economy needs greater recognition for the impact it can have in terms of regional dispersion, employment and economic value generation. The culture of tourism entrepreneurship is limited, inhibiting experience innovation. Sectoral development through the DEDP structures should provide a focal point to impact many elements of the tourism economy, which to this point may not have realised their role in tourism experience delivery e.g. agri, food and hospitality.



St. Laurence's Gate, Drogheda, Co. Louth

### DEVELOPING A CLUSTER MODEL – FOSTER INDUSTRY COLLABORATION

The geography of the *Ancient* area and the diversity of core activities, attractions and heritage assets provide a series of natural clusters. The opportunity to collaborate within and across these natural clusters can result in a cross pollination of experiences to deliver innovative visitor experiences. At the core of these clusters however, must be a coherent approach to the tourism trade working together to strengthen the appeal of the cluster for the international visitor e.g. activities, food.

### ACCOMMODATION CAPACITY

The limitations placed on the destination through the existing levels of bed stock hampers sustained growth. The need to develop the role of the tourism economy narrative around the destination while increasing visitor volumes must work in unison with expanding the current accommodation capacity. The existing “transient destination” narrative will linger in the absence of a strategic approach to expanding the bed stock. Enhancing the destination narrative of a compelling place to visit and stay must be enhanced through the addition of alternative forms of accommodation.

The ability of the destination to maximise the opportunity presented by the DEDP to deliver the projected visitor growth is impacted by existing accommodation capacity and associated industry capabilities. In the absence of a ‘fit for purpose’ accommodation base, the strategic imperative of increasing visitor dwell time in the area will be a challenge. Equally, the destination must deliver a service standard expected of an area delivering world class experiences.

Current accommodation stock levels are largely concentrated in the three-star category across the destination, while existing bed volume will be challenged to deliver destination

growth. The expectations around a world class destination striving for world leading delivery of the *Ancient* story will require the supporting experiences to match the visitor promise. The range of accommodation options and associated industry capability and standards must meet the expectations of our international visitors. This will require a sustained focus on new bed stock development while simultaneously improving the quality and capabilities of existing accommodation providers across the destination.

### MOTIVATING THE VISITOR

The research identified a significant gap in the pre visit experience for the visitor. The absence of a coherent online presence among the tourism industry is limiting the capacity to attract international visitors, particularly FIT’s. Reasons to visit are not easily accessible while pre-booking of experiences or accessing suggested itineraries of local experiences are largely absent.

Addressing the pre visit phase of the visitor journey must become an immediate focus for the tourism industry, matching the pre visit experience with the on the ground delivery. The failure to integrate the Ireland’s Ancient East message by members of the local tourism industry is failing to build on an international marketing platform.

The creation of new ways to engage with *Ancient* must provide Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, Ireland Overseas Buyers and Inbound Tour Operators with a multitude of experiences that illuminate the *Ancient* story e.g. alive through ancient activities, sense of ancient through food and culture. The creation of world leading interpretation of *Ancient* stories through sectors such as activities must be developed to create strong points of differentiation in how the visitor will engage in the story and be motivated to travel to consume these experiences. These require strategic consideration in addition to supporting the technical development of the sectors that can bring the stories alive through new and innovative experiences.

### EVENING ECONOMY INNOVATION

Every destination is examining the evening economy opportunity. The association of the *Ancient* proposition with the night and the dark / light provides it with a USP that must be developed to create standout incorporating interesting ‘*Ancient*’ venues at night time delivering a very differentiated night time economy offering. It must harness what already exists and look at ways of developing new innovative ways of delivering experiences / activity at night time in some of the most unique settings in the country. Past event examples such as the Loughcrew Opera and the proposed Knowth Dark Skies are two such illustrations. The Meath BEO music evenings provide a starting point for further development in a differentiated way aligned to the fabric of the *Ancient* story.

# Section Four: *Ancient* DEDP





## 4.1 THE PLAN & OBJECTIVES

The ADEDP is a five year *Ancient* Destination Experience Development Plan designed to guide tourism development through a roadmap of key projects adopted by all stakeholders in the pursuit of sustained tourism growth.

Over the course of the DEDP, its success will be measured in the context of achieving growth across a range of indicators from new experience supply, visitor demand and destination development indicators. The approach adopted within the DEDP is designed to be transformative in how the integrated approach to developing key projects will generate economic growth across the destination. It is designed to harness existing assets and develop them to provide compelling reasons to visit while providing the tourism industry with a central focus for experience development.

The target outputs from the ADEDP will include a reduction in seasonality, increase visitor spend, grow visitor bednights, employment and visitor dispersion.

In addition to the core economic performance measurements, the DEDP is designed to address the following objectives;

1. Ensure visitor experience consistency across the *Ancient* destination in visitor experience delivery and throughout all phases of the visitor journey from pre visit to post visit.
2. Address existing destination 'bottlenecks' to tourism growth.
3. Promote tourism vibrancy within the destination through visitor dispersion across a range of *Ancient* Experience clusters.
4. Realise the value of the core assets within *Ancient*, including Destination Towns, natural assets and visitor attractions to deliver sustained growth.
5. Engage the visitor with fascinating stories of *Ancient* in a UNESCO World Heritage area, delivered through best in class immersive experiences and activities.
6. Create the world's most immersive and experiential ancient heritage route linking all strategic development pillars.
7. Become Ireland's food heritage destination told through immersive visitor food experiences telling the *Ancient* story.
8. Create iconic experiences through iconic visitor attractions and associated experiences within the destination.
9. Address the challenges of evening economy provision.
10. Work with the tourism industry to improve their capacity to deliver new and enhanced experiences.
11. Increase the market share of international visitors.
12. Protect, sustain and enhance the natural environment of the Plan area.



Oldbridge House, Battle of the Boyne Visitor Centre, Drogheda, Co. Meath

## 4.2 DESTINATION PROJECT APPROACH

Over the five years of the DEDP, visitor numbers to *Ancient* experiences are projected to return to sustained growth, post Covid-19. It will measure future growth from the point when the destination reaches pre Covid-19 industry performance levels. The immediate short-term focus concentrates on destination recovery while retaining a key longer term destination development outlook. The subsequent incremental growth, measured against the pre Covid-19 performance baseline, will be achieved by working with our industry partners in the recovery phase, developing new experiences and enhancing existing visitor propositions.

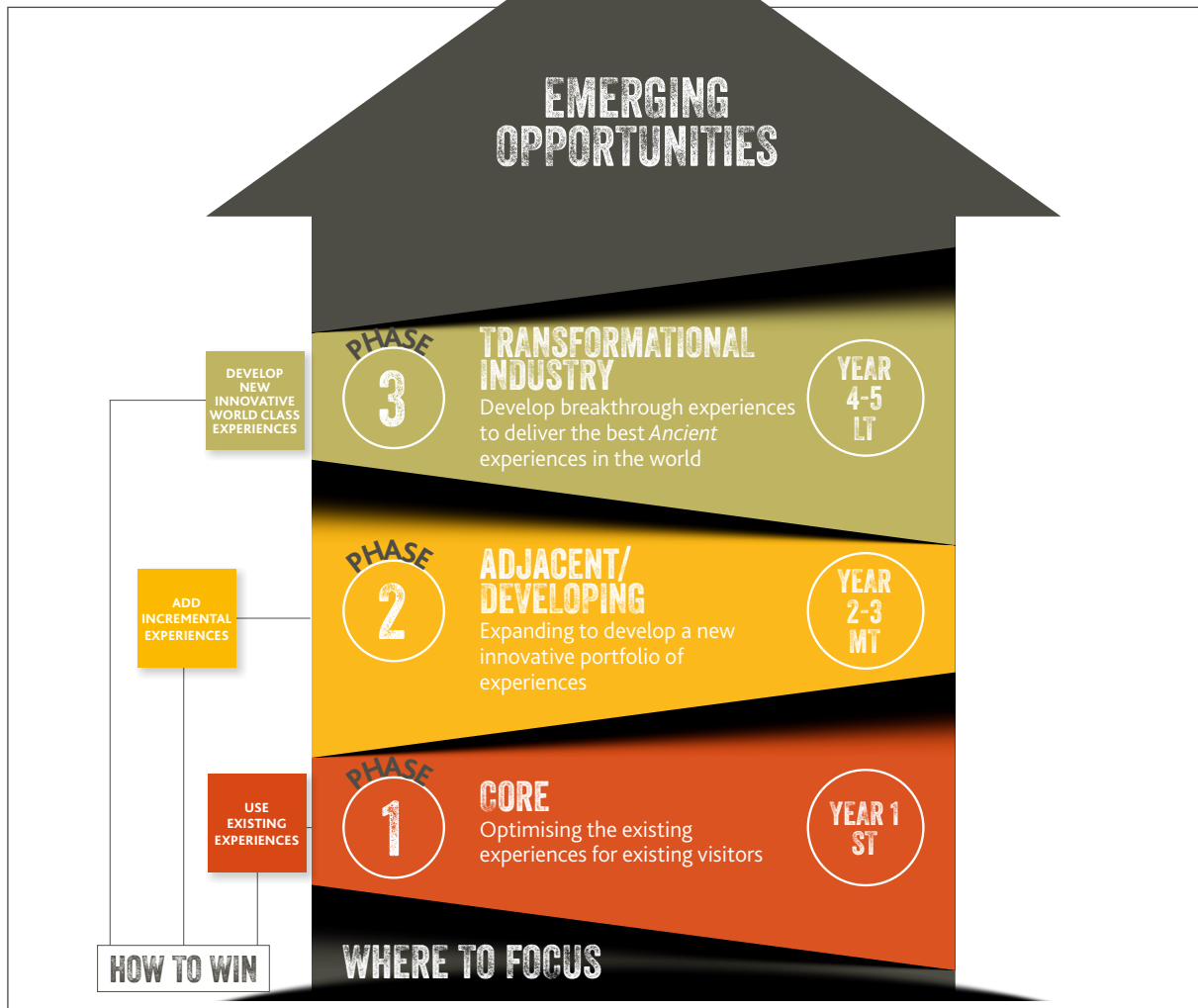
This growth will be achieved through the enhancement of the existing core visitor proposition to the development of world class visitor experiences. It will support the destination ambition to become world leading in telling the story of *Ancient* through world class immersive and fascinating experiences for our visitors.

This projected growth will be the platform for achieving the principal objectives of bednight growth, visitor dispersion, employment growth and season extension.

In order to achieve the strategic objectives of the DEDP, the development framework is structured around three interdependent layers of activity. They include;

- A: Achieving the 'Big Ideas' through Catalyst Projects**
- B. Strategic Development Pillars - Create the conditions for Experience Development**
- C. Elevation Projects - Destination Enablers**

### EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES





The Glyde Inn Annagassan, Co. Louth



The phased development approach is based on optimising the current experience base and working with all stakeholders to develop new saleable products. Over the longer term of the DEDP, a number of transformational projects will be developed harnessing the existing product base to create the scale required for sustained growth. The transformational projects approach will link all facets of the DEDP to deliver the 'Big Ideas' providing a platform for all stakeholders to embrace and contribute to develop a world class *Ancient* experience.

The approach adopted within the DEDP is based on an experience growth model. It is centred around the continuous development of visitor experiences created and delivered by the local tourism industry. In the immediate term, the tourism industry will focus on enhancing the existing portfolio of experiences to optimise the current levels of experience provision. This will progress over the medium term to a growth in the existing portfolio of saleable experiences, delivered by the local tourism industry. Over the short to long term, the DEDP will enhance the capacity of the local tourism trade to become the key agent of change and represent the core tenant of transformational change. The long-term goal is to develop the local tourism industry's ability to become the main catalyst for transformational change and deliver the portfolio of world leading experiences that will support sustained economic growth across the destination.

The 'Big Ideas' will be achieved through the delivery of a number of catalyst projects. These build upon the four strategic pillars designed to shape the development process. They will create a focus for development among the tourism industry and are designed to expand the experience product base.

The challenge of the *Ancient* narrative is to deliver the stories in an engaging and immersive approach. The Big Ideas, delivered through a range of catalyst projects will elevate the *Ancient* story. It will deliver world class experiences through experience innovation and become the most intriguing global exponent of the *Ancient* story. In realising the potential of the catalyst projects and delivering the Big Ideas, the DEDP will strategically focus on four development pillars. These are designed to unlock the potential of the existing asset base and grow local industry capacity and increase their capability to avail of this opportunity.

The strategic pillars and core themes of the DEDP provide the basis for a coherent industry approach to experience development. The strategic pillar themes will ensure a consistent *Ancient* focus applied to visitor experience development and influence future 'product' creation. These are supported by a series of elevation projects to act as strategic enablers and accelerate the destination capacity, product base and collaboration to deliver world class experiences. These provide the basis for ensuring the fundamentals of the *Ancient* destination are in place. They will address product development, industry capacity growth and ensuring a geographic distribution of visitors through cluster development.

DELIVERING WORLD LEADING EXPERIENCES: TELLING THE STORY OF ANCIENT

*The Big Ideas*



**THE ANCIENT ROUTES**



**THE ANCIENT SENSES**

*Catalyst Projects*

WORLD'S LEADING EXPERIENTIAL ANCIENT ROUTES

BRINGING THE ANCIENT STORIES ALIVE THROUGH ACTIVE AND CULTURAL IMMERSION



BOYNE VALLEY DRIVE



BOYNE NAVIGATION & GREENWAY



ANCIENT ALIVE



IRISH FOOD STORIES - 5,000 YEARS OF FOOD

*Strategic Development Pillars*



Unlocking the Heritage Assets



Reveal the Natural Assets



Introduce the Ancient Legends



Develop the Industry Base

*Pillar Objective*

Develop the portfolio of accessible Ancient heritage assets that will deliver best in class visitor experiences befitting an area with UNESCO status.

Capitalise on the potential of existing sites and expand the experience capacity of supporting sites to create the worlds most experiential trail of Ancient experiences.

The existing Boyne Valley Drive is 225kms of driving route encompassing Meath and South Louth.

Create a necklace of visitor experiences linking the heritage story through the natural assets of the area, connecting from the Boyne Valley through the landscape on greenways, blueways and various ancient trails to North Louth, integrating with parts of Monaghan, Cavan and Westmeath.

Create a focal point for visitors to engage with the ancient story through immersive experiences in the ancient land and waterscapes.

Build on the intrigue of the local stories, myths and legends, integrate these tales with the delivery of experiences linked to Ancient through activities and sectors such as food and agri-tourism.

Provide the industry with easily accessible narrative and focus for experience development adopting the Ancient legends and stories.

Support the development of the tourism industry to enhance their delivery of experiences across all stages of the visitor journey and advance the tourism capacity of key towns to deliver a consistent and quality experience to the international visitor.

*Elevation Projects*



INDUSTRY CAPACITY GROWTH



PARTNERING WITH OPW



EXPERIENCE INNOVATION CLUSTERS

## A: Achieving The 'Big Ideas' through Catalyst Projects

The creation of the Big Idea is designed to be motivational for both the tourism industry and visitors alike. The projects will be transformative for the wider destination in integrating the many layers of destination experiences in becoming a world leading experiential *Ancient* route. The Big Ideas will be delivered through four catalyst projects focused on telling the story of *Ancient* through the development of *Ancient Routes* and *Ancient Senses*. The essence of the Big Ideas is to develop and enhance the core product, interpreting the *Ancient* story through new differentiated approaches, providing compelling reasons to visit the destination.

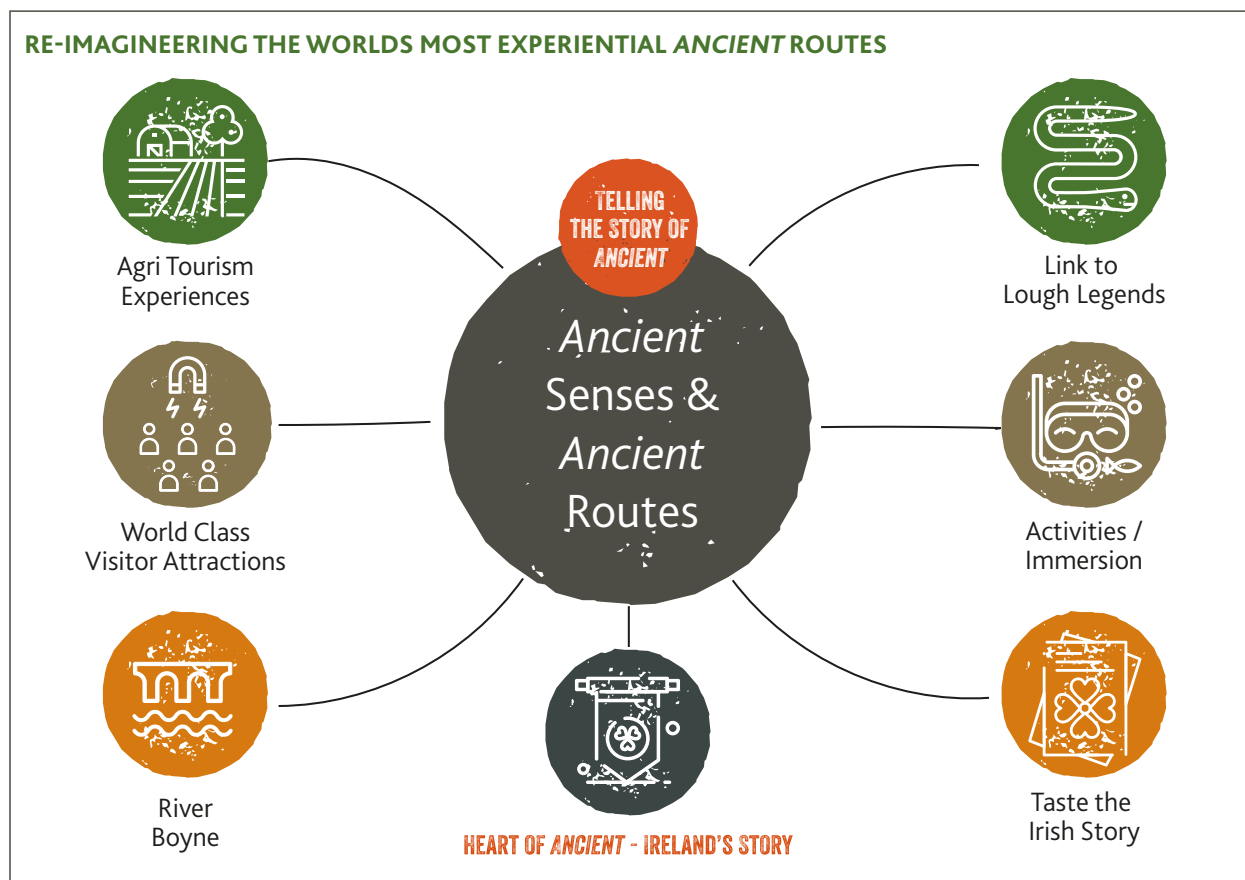
The Big Ideas focus on the following two product development themes.

1. ***Ancient Routes*** – World leading experiential routes telling the story of *Ancient*.
2. ***Ancient Senses*** – Bringing the stories alive through active and cultural immersion in the stories of *Ancient*.



Bridge over River Boyne, Bective Abbey, Trim, Co. Meath

## 1. THE ANCIENT ROUTES - WORLD'S LEADING EXPERIENTIAL ANCIENT ROUTES



### 1.1 Boyne Valley Drive

The re-imagining of the Boyne Valley Drive must be transformed into an internationally iconic experiential route, possessing a myriad of experience layers. This will provide the industry and key stakeholders such as OPW and Local Authorities with a new experience development focus. The creation of an *Ancient* route will become a strong visitor attractor. It will link existing attractions on the Boyne Valley route with an extended geographic focus to introduce a wider mix of experiences 'off' the current route. The development of route themes will enhance the existing offering from being a point to point journey across heritage sites to providing multi-faceted experiences telling the ancient story and blending a range of experiences from food, activities to attractions.

This experiential route should become the catalyst for growth across the entire destination linking all thematic clusters and destination experiences. It must strive for international recognition as the world's most experiential *Ancient* route. The route will integrate the three strategic development pillars of heritage assets, natural assets and legends together while providing a focal point for experience development within the tourism industry. The experiential route will be supported by a cluster development approach designed to blend a mix of experiences to progress it beyond the long held association as a 'driving route' and become a key motivating factor to increase dwell time in the area.

### 1.2 Boyne Navigation and Greenway

The volume of national Blueways and Greenways suggest that *Ancient* must build on the uniqueness of its stories and heritage assets to create experience differentiation for relevancy in the international marketplace. The integration of the wealth of *Ancient* assets into the development of the Boyne Navigation and Greenway will create this standout, introducing new ways to interpret a UNESCO World Heritage Site and 5,000 years of stories.

The Boyne Navigation and Greenway has the potential to become one of the most fascinating land and water heritage trail journeys for visitors in developing an international positioning as one of the most iconic heritage trails in the world. It will also link key destination towns with the route bookended with Drogheda and Navan, providing a strong development focus for both.

The project is currently under feasibility review having been developed to its current status largely by the goodwill of volunteers. This work has laid the foundation for the creation of a very unique international class product, integrating a diverse mix of attractions with their natural surrounds and new ways of engaging with the *Ancient* story. The project will be linked strongly to the development of the Boyne Valley Drive to provide an integrated range of routes and travel modes to explore *Ancient* and increase dwell time throughout the destination.

## 2. THE ANCIENT SENSES - BRINGING THE STORIES ALIVE

### 2.1 Active Alive

A challenge identified within the DEDP process is the necessity to bring many of the stories 'alive', create opportunities to engage with the *Ancient* story and become more immersive for the visitor. The development of the activities sector in the area, aligned with the *Ancient* sites and the natural assets has the scope to bring these stories to life in a differentiated way.

The River Boyne, Boyne Navigation and Greenway, Carlingford Lough, Blueways and Greenways each offer the platform for the growth. Carlingford possess the greatest concentration of natural assets that supports activity sector growth while the Lough of Legends opportunity provides further opportunities, leveraging the same development theme. A planned private sector activity investment of scale in Carlingford aligned to an international network will enhance the activity product base considerably.

The development of the Blueway at Trim Castle and access to the Boyne at Oldbridge represent other key areas for activity growth. The longer-term objectives of the Boyne Navigation and Greenway will be the development of an activity base that will access the *Ancient* stories along the route.

Each activity provider in the area is presently delivering or planning to deliver *Ancient* activity experiences, aligning the natural assets with the heritage story or sites.

### 2.2 Irish Food Stories - 5,000 Years of Food

Every destination competes on its food offering. However, no other destination possesses the depth of association with the Irish Food Story as the Boyne Valley area, from the first farmers to the current narrative around the Boyne Valley producers. The story of *Ancient* can be told through food while the story of Irish food can be told throughout the entire destination, from farm to fish.

Along with the interest by Devenish in contributing to the food narrative through 'Foodscape', a network of food events could unlock a focal point to become the hub to deliver the Irish Food Story. Meanwhile, the development of an Irish Food Story Trail will integrate the wider *Ancient* destination which can also become one of the key layers. All these food experiences will be linked together with the proposed re-working of the Boyne Valley Drive.



King John's Castle, Carlingford, Co. Louth






## B: Strategic Development Pillars

The overarching strategic imperative is to achieve the vision for the *Ancient* proposition, ensuring all pillars deliver to create a world leading ancient destination. The strategic pillars provide a development focus for the destination. They will not succeed in isolation highlighting the collective approach required to create blended experiences, working in unison to deliver world class.

The strategic pillars identified for the development of the ADEDP are

1. **Unlocking the Heritage Assets**
2. **Reveal the Natural Assets**
3. **Introduce the Legends**
4. **Develop the Industry Base**



**PILLAR 1:  
UNLOCKING  
THE  
HERITAGE  
ASSETS**

### PILLAR GOAL

Develop the portfolio of accessible *Ancient* heritage assets that will deliver best in class visitor experiences befitting an area with UNESCO World Heritage status. Capitalise on the potential of existing sites to expand the experience capacity of supporting sites to create the world's most experiential trail of *Ancient* experiences.

### PILLAR OBJECTIVES

1. Develop existing 'internationally' renowned *Ancient* sites to deliver international class experiences.
2. Development of an *Ancient* site linkage model to create cross selling synergies between key sites.
3. Deliver a visitor dispersion approach to increase footfall in areas with potential by enhancing key sites throughout the *Ancient* geography.
4. Creation of the *Ancient* Route on land and water as experience led alternatives linking key ancient sites.



**PILLAR 2:  
REVEAL THE  
NATURAL  
ASSETS**


### PILLAR GOAL

The creation of a necklace of visitor experiences linking the heritage story through the natural assets of the area e.g. River Boyne, the centre piece of the existing 225kms Boyne Valley Drive, that connects through the landscape linking greenways, blueways and various ancient trails to North Louth, integrating with parts of Monaghan, Cavan and Westmeath.

It will create a focal point for visitors to engage with the *Ancient* story through immersive experiences in the *Ancient* land and waterscapes, increasing and promoting environmental enhancement through a sustainable tourism approach.

### PILLAR OBJECTIVES

1. Develop the potential of the River Boyne as an accessible tourism resource
2. Develop the potential of the destination Blueways and Greenways development differentiated through the *Ancient* theme.
3. Develop a Source to Mouth *Ancient* proposition for the River Boyne with key community and access points
4. Activate the River Boyne through the Boyne Navigation and Greenway to create a world class *Ancient* Trail experience linking Brú na Bóinne and other key *Ancient* sites.



**PILLAR 3:  
INTRODUCE  
THE  
LEGENDS**

### PILLAR GOAL

Build on the intrigue of the local stories, myths and legends, integrating these tales with the delivery of experiences linked to *Ancient* through activities and sectors such as food and agri-tourism. Provide the industry with an easily accessible narrative and focus for experience development adopting the *Ancient* legends and stories.

### PILLAR OBJECTIVES

1. Develop an Experience Innovation Cluster approach focusing on themes that convey the destination narrative and introduce the visitor to *Ancient* through great experiences.
2. Develop the activity capacity of the area to immerse visitors in the *Ancient* story through new outdoor experiences
3. Develop accessible Farm to Fork food experiences building on the 5,000 year farming heritage of *Ancient* to tell the story of Irish food.
4. Explore the *Ancient* potential of rural / agri tourism to aid visitor dispersion into lesser known *Ancient* areas.



**PILLAR 4:  
DEVELOP  
THE  
INDUSTRY  
BASE**

### PILLAR GOAL

Support the development of the tourism industry to enhance their delivery of experiences across all stages of the visitor journey and advance the tourism capacity of key towns to deliver a consistent and quality experience to the international visitor.

### PILLAR OBJECTIVES

1. Developing the conditions to develop the accommodation base between hotel stock and alternative forms of quality accommodation supported by enhancing the capability of the industry to deliver 'fit for purpose' accommodation options.
2. Develop the tourism industry experience capacity through the required supports and conditions to foster experience development
3. Deliver a best in class destination towns programme and work with emerging towns to develop supporting hubs.
4. Develop a tourism masterplanning approach for Drogheda as a key urban gateway to the *Ancient* story
5. Develop the evening Economy proposition across the destination through event, venue and experience innovation.



Newgrange. Co. Meath

## C: Elevation Projects - Destination Enablers

The Elevation Projects represent strategic enabling projects designed to focus on industry capacity development, industry collaboration and developing motivational visitor experiences that will leverage all key *Ancient* assets. The achievement of the Big Ideas is contingent on the demand side stimuli being put in place by all stakeholders while enhancing the destination through product, service and experience quality.

The Elevation Projects address identified destination deficits such as tourism industry collaboration and capacity development. They include projects that will enhance the broader tourism infrastructure base and create the enabling conditions to support the destinations capacity to grow. This will be through product enhancement, industry collaboration, cluster development and the adoption of a consistent narrative as a visitor destination. The enablers also include destination differentiators including the wealth of natural and built heritage and status as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

### ELEVATION PROJECT 1: INDUSTRY CAPACITY GROWTH

An Industry *Ancient* Experience Development Programme (IAEDP) will be designed to develop the structures to 'incubate' the tourism industry with a particular focus on product providers with significant growth potential.

The programme will be based on providing capacity building supports designed for 'high performing / high potential experiences'. It will also work with major attractions to create a focal point to influence the quality of the experiences delivered. The programme will also provide the structure to nurture the Activities and Food (agri) product areas to align with the *Ancient* story.

The IAEDP will foster an experience quality expectation among tourism providers who participate. It represents the supports provided by Fáilte Ireland presently, however, will elevate the programme among key accounts in becoming part of a focused incubation approach. This approach should also be integrated with other training support funding streams available through other agencies, ensuring consistency in delivery and maintaining focus on the DEDP long term goals.

The programme will also work with the local tourism industry to create new saleable experiences relevant to the *Ancient* themes while enhancing their ability to scale their business, aligned with the objectives of the DEDP.

The geography of the DEDP predominantly aligns with the River Boyne from source to mouth. As identified in the Boyne Valley Masterplan, a number of natural clusters are formed through the existence of key destination hubs along the river route.

### ELEVATION PROJECT 2: PARTNERING WITH OPW

Central to the *Ancient* theme and contributing to the success of the *Ancient* DEDP is working in partnership with the wide portfolio of OPW managed sites. The recent investment in Brú na Bóinne to deliver a world class experience has established a destination standard. The completion of the Boyne Valley Masterplan provides an additional roadmap for experience enhancement across all sites. The continued implementation of the masterplan and development of visitor experiences will support the goal of iconic sites delivering iconic experiences, delivered through a sustained partnership approach between Fáilte Ireland, OPW and DHLGH.

The tourism industry must explore ways of connecting their stories and experiences with the opportunities many of the OPW sites provide. The existence of the strategic partnership between Fáilte Ireland, OPW and DHLGH provides a communications channel to ensure future projects align with each stakeholder's operational remit and ensure a sustainable approach to delivering the *Ancient* story. The projects referred to within the DEDP are aligned with an agreed schedule of activity ensuring consistency in all stakeholder's approach.

### ELEVATION PROJECT 3: EXPERIENCE INNOVATION CLUSTERS

Each of the defined cluster areas possess a natural portfolio of existing experiences through built and natural heritage. The opportunity to create scale and stimulate experience growth will be achieved through the development of thematic clusters, largely based on a logical geographic distribution of the area. While concentrated in specific areas, the objective is to develop a density of compelling visitor experiences, encouraging collaboration with other experiences across all clusters and areas within the *Ancient* geography.

A number of clusters are proposed. Activity, Food and Culture being the initial areas of focus. The creation of the food cluster approach will extend the cluster beyond a geographic focus, linking the Irish food story throughout the wider geography of the extended destination area. The heritage area around Brú na Bóinne forms a core heritage hub representing a major attractor to the destination. The creation of well functioning clusters must leverage off this opportunity and innovate around the core attractors.

Central to each cluster area is the location of the destination towns currently in development supported by towns that can emerge as cluster hubs. This targeted cluster focus will also support the industry capacity building process with key alignment with cluster themes.



# Section Five: Delivering the Plan



## 5.1 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the ADEDP 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 'Ancient' Boyne Valley Destination.

The ADEDP 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.



Donaghmore Round Tower and Church, Co. Meath

ACRONYM	STAKEHOLDER
BVT	Boyne Valley Tourism
CCC	Cavan County Council
DHLGH	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
FI	Fáilte Ireland
IWBNG	Inland Waterways – Boyne Navigation Group
LCC	Louth County Council
LEO	Local Enterprise Office
LTN	Local Tourism Network
MCC	Meath County Council
MnCC	Monaghan County Council
NMS	National Monuments Service
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
NTA	National Transport Authority
OPW	Office of Public Works
PS	Private Sector
SCC	Sligo County Council
SEUPB	Special EU Programmes Body
Údarás	Údarás na Gaeltachta
WCC	Westmeath County Council

## 5.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

To ensure the successful implementation of the ADEDP experiences and the creation of a sense of place, the following guiding principles have been established to guide certain recommendations and projects listed in this section

- All projects are self-sustainable, meaning they have access to capital and are not relying solely on grant aid to be developed or maintained.
- All projects are on-message with the DEDP experiences and aligned to the broader mission of the Ireland's Ancient East proposition and brand.
- All projects focus on setting the area apart from its competitors, contributing actively to creating a strong sense of place with a unique feel; and ensuring visitor needs are catered for across the day and evening time.
- All projects add value to the area and provide a direct and demonstrable link to either extending visitor length of stay, extending the length of the tourist season or developing a new market.
- Principles of responsible tourism development are embedded in each action, creating better places to live in and to visit.
- All stakeholders will demonstrate a strong and sustained willingness to working as a collaborative network.
- Each of the strategic partnership projects will be examined from a funding perspective to establish available grant supports to enable the delivery of each project.
- Increasing and promoting environmental enhancement through a sustainable tourism approach.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the ADEDP will be overseen by the creation of a working group. The ADEDP Working Group will operate until 2025 and tasked with supporting the following objectives:

- Support the delivery of the *Ancient DEDP*.
- Drive growth as per the agreed KPIs in the action plan.
- Lead and manage the action plan ensuring alignment around the prioritisation and delivery of key projects.
- Creation of a representative area wide body which ensures there is a mechanism in place that allows two-way communication between the implementation group and any sub groups which may be formed.
- Ensure that the catalyst and enabling projects support the delivery of experiences identified in the plan and are delivered within the 5 year timeframe.
- Provide a space where stakeholders can share new ideas with partners.
- Creation of a common tourism voice and a powerful tourism network that promotes each other's interests.

The ADEDP Working Group formed will represent key stakeholders and representatives from the area. It will be chaired by an independent chairperson with the ability to focus the group in the delivery of the actions required to implement the DEDP.

## FORMATION OF THE ADEDP WORKING GROUP

Implementation of the ADEDP and delivery of the experiences will require each stakeholder agency or organisation to adapt the way they tell their story and in the selection of projects and initiatives which 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 qualities of the *Ancient* area, and to leave feeling fascinated and enriched by brilliant experiences. 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 shared with our customers.



Carrickmacross Workhouse, Co. Monaghan



Carlingford Village, Co. Louth

### ADEDP WORKING GROUP

Fáilte Ireland will focus on working with industry that deliver the 'signature experience' and will help those businesses not currently doing so to start delivering and sharing their unique story. Fáilte Ireland will also support the international distribution efforts of tourism businesses.

**ADEDP Working Group** will focus on guiding key projects and monitoring the DEDP progress.

**Louth and Meath County Councils** will play a key role in industry and destination development through the implementation of the DEDP.

**Office of Public Works** will play a key role in the heritage experience delivery.

**Educators / Enterprise** as educators in tourism, the LEO, LEADER and Education and Training Boards can partner with Fáilte Ireland to 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 (Private Sector / Industry)** 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.

### 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.

### ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS

This plan has been aligned with all existing agency plans (LCC, MCC, OPW). These include Boyne Valley Tourism and Marketing Plan, Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Site Management Plan January 2017, Hill of Tara Conservation and Management Plan 2020 (forthcoming), Built and Archaeological Heritage Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan (DHLGH 2019), Heritage Ireland 2030 (forthcoming), Louth County Council Development Plan (Draft 2020), Meath County Council Development Plan (Draft 2020) including Heritage Objective 12 regarding World Heritage Site Business Plan. It includes alignment with any existing or proposed Conservation Management Plans for monuments in State care or not in State care. In doing so, it both supports these existing plans and seeks to gain leverage from their strategies and actions.

*NOTE: Recommendations listed do not guarantee funding. All projects will have to go through the same application process. It is important to examine what agencies are offering funding as new streams of funding may become available during the life-time of this plan.*

### PRODUCTS & EXPERIENCES REFERRED TO BY THIS PLAN

Products and Experiences both existing and potential referred to in this document are examples of such products only and are not intended to be an exclusive list. It is envisaged that others can and will be added during the lifetime of this plan.

### 5.3 MEASURING SUCCESS

DEMAND SIDE	
Measurement 1	Percentage increase in visitor numbers to key attractions
Measurement 2	Percentage increase in revenue in key attractions
Measurement 3	Percentage increase in footfall to free attractions
Measurement 4	Percentage increase in weekend international visitor footfall
Measurement 5	Visitors to Local Tourist info offices
Measurement 6	Visitor spend in destination
Measurement 7	Occupancy levels achieved

SUPPLY SIDE	
Measurement 1	Visitor Satisfaction
Measurement 2	Number of new tourism saleable experiences
Measurement 3	Employment levels in tourism enterprises
Measurement 4	New tourism enterprise development
Measurement 5	Bed stock growth in the destination
Measurement 6	Extension of periods of business operations – extension of business operations into off-season
Measurement 7	Volume of saleable experiences bookable online

DESTINATION SIDE	
Measurement 1	Use of Social media # (created in narrative)
Measurement 2	Industry training – Volume of DEDP related courses and levels of participation on courses
Measurement 3	Annual increase in number of new events / festivals in area

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

A DEDP Impact Measurement Model has been devised to assess the return on investment from the DEDP and measure performance across key outputs areas such as attractions and industry development.

It will also assess the longer term impact of developing the *Ancient* routes through an enhanced Boyne Valley Drive and Boyne Navigation and Greenway to become a major international ancient experience proposition.

Over the five years of the DEDP, visitor numbers to *Ancient* experiences are projected to return to sustained growth, post COVID-19. It will measure future growth from the point when the destination reaches pre Covid-19 industry performance levels. The immediate short-term focus concentrates on decision recovery as mapped out through the Tourism Recovery Plan 2020 - 2023.

The four areas of measurement to assess the impact of the DEDP are;

#### 1. MEASURING OUR STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP IMPACT – OPW AND DHLGH

Monitor the growth in visitor numbers and spend across fee paying attractions and visitor footfall to non-fee paying attractions.

This element will focus on assessing the impact of investment into major attractions across the destination that includes recent investment in Brú na Bóinne and proposed works at Trim Castle. The target outputs of this investment will include increased footfall. However, the wider destination impact will be examined through the overall measurement of footfall across all fee paying and non fee OPW sites. This will assess the dispersion impacts and associated dwell time across the *Ancient* geography arising from any targeted uplifts in major destination sites such as Brú na Bóinne and Trim Castle.

Annual tracking of visitor numbers will be collated for inclusion in the overall DEDP Impact Measurement System.



Round Tower and High Cross at Kells, Co. Meath





Beaulieu House, Co. Louth

## 2. MEASURING EXPERIENCE PERFORMANCE GROWTH – 'BASKET OF ANCIENT EXPERIENCES'

A 'basket of experiences' will be monitored to assess the experience return on investment derived from the ADEDP programmes to build industry capacity in addition to any future capital investment designed to create or enhance *Ancient* experiences across the destination.

The ADEDP has identified a number of experience providers that have committed to further experience development or enhancement of their existing experiences. A basket of experiences will be created through members of the tourism industry who are adopting the ADEDP as central to their own development focus. This will include members of the tourism industry identified as delivering experiences with high growth potential or strongly aligned with the themes and target sectoral clusters within the DEDP.

Participants within the IAEDP will be included in the 'basket of experiences' based on their commitment to work towards achieving the vision set out in the ADEDP. The 'basket' will be representative of the target sectoral clusters within the plan. A range of performance indicators will be agreed that will include elements such as annual tracking of visitor numbers, season extension, new experiences created and employment indicators.

## 3. KEY ACCOUNTS ACROSS THE BOYNE VALLEY ANCIENT ROUTE

The examination of ADEDP destination growth will be achieved through measuring the performance of key accounts distributed across the *Ancient* geography. The key transformational projects as outlined include the creation of *Ancient* Routes delivering World Leading Experiential Routes telling the Story of *Ancient*. This will be delivered through an enhanced Boyne Valley Drive and the Boyne Navigation and Greenway.

These projects will transverse the destination and become significant engagement platforms for the tourism industry. Measuring growth through Fáilte Ireland key accounts will monitor industry development across the geography of *Ancient* to ensure a representative mix of accommodation, attractions and activities are measured. This will identify the wider destination impact through key accounts. Duplication will be avoided to ensure no double counting with the 'basket' of experiences. Current monitoring of key accounts and associated metrics will feed into the annual tracking of performance for inclusion in the overall ADEDP Impact Measurement System.

## 4. ENVIRONMENT

Develop an effective management of the environment, including natural, cultural and heritage assets through the progression of a ADEDP Environmental Monitoring Programme.

## 5.4 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This Plan provides an opportunity to ensure that all existing and future tourism projects and initiatives for the *Ancient* Destination Experience Development Plan are planned, developed and managed in a sustainable and integrated manner. The VICE (Visitor, Industry, Community and Environment) Model for Sustainable Tourism is an approach that this Plan is developed from and strives to implement.

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 consideration including inland and coastal water quality and amenity, climate change, traffic, biodiversity, built and cultural heritage, landscape 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:

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

### 2. 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.

- **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 undertaken having full regard to SEA Directive 2001/42/EU and to Statutory Instrument No. 435/2004 as amended. The detailed outcomes of this process can be referenced in the relevant environmental documents that accompany this Plan.

- **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 detailed outcomes of this process can be referenced in the relevant environmental documents that accompany this Plan.

### 3. KEY FINDINGS OF THE SEA & AA PROCESS FOR THE PLAN

Having completed full SEA and AA on the *Ancient* 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.

*Cuchulainn Rollercoaster, Tayto Park, Co. Meath*





*Dunmoe Castle, Co. Meath*

The outcome of completing the above environmental assessments has resulted in the following;

- a. Identifying relevant potential negative environmental impacts resulting from the Plan and in some instances excluding actions that might lead to such negative impacts.
- b. Identifying relevant positive environmental impacts resulting from the Plan and ensuring the actions that result in environmental protection, enhancement and promotion from key actions at implementation e.g. visitor management actions environmental and sustainable education.
- c. Developing a suite of mitigatory actions to ensure that any negative environmental impacts are reduced or eliminated at plan implementation stage. These include;
  - the requirement to establish the status of the plan and its interrelationship with Statutory Decision making and consent-granting frameworks
  - Integrating the requirements for Environmental Compliance into the Plan with particular emphasis on requirements for lower-tier environmental assessment, the County Development Plans that cover the Plan area, the Climate Action Plan 2019, visitor management, consideration for infrastructural capacity and green infrastructure and eco system services,
- d. 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. Appendix 1 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 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 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 KPI's including monitoring of visitor numbers where relevant.

#### 4. SUSTAINABLE & RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

This Plan conforms and commits to sustainable growth of tourism in the *Ancient* region and in completing the above-mentioned assessments demonstrates the strong commitment to the VICE Model for Sustainable Tourism Development. The projects relating to heritage assets (natural, archaeological and / or architectural) identified within the Plan will be carried out in line with best conservation practice. The implementation of the following guiding principles is key to the success of the Plan;

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SUSTAINABLE & RESPONSIBLE TOURISM	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess the feasibility of developing and implementing visitor management plans where relevant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor the quality of visitor experiences and local social/cultural impact at key sites</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage the adoption of a responsible tourism approach with ongoing monitoring of environmental impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the <i>Ancient</i> visitor experiences are accessible to all where possible</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase awareness and appreciation of the <i>Ancient</i> regions unique landscape and environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support voluntary and community-led environmental protection projects, which in turn benefit tourism</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase environmental performance among tourism businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate for the protection of key environmental and tourism assets</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage sustainable modes of transport and ensure they are accessible to tourists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve tourist management, particularly in mature and established tourist areas</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce and implement minimum sustainable standards for tour guides</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage tourism related businesses to engage in the Leave No Trace Programme</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase and promote environmental protection and enhancement when progressing actions derived from this plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the EPA's Environmental Sensitivity Mapping Webtool is consulted when implementing projects resulting from this plan</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harness the importance of ecosystem services and protected sites to encourage sustainable levels of ecotourism growth and awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure crucial infrastructure including water &amp; wastewater services are in place and adequate</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure invasive species management is in place through the promotion of effective biosecurity measures</li> </ul>	

#### 5. IMPLEMENTATION & CONSENT

This Plan 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 Strategies (RSEs) and lower tier Development Plans and Local Area Plans.

Implementation of this Plan shall be consistent with and conform with the above and 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 this consent-granting framework.

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. INTEGRATING REQUIREMENTS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION & MANAGEMENT

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 this Plan does not guarantee funding. While funding is provided to certain projects, Fáilte Ireland is not the developer.

In order to achieve funding for land use or infrastructural development or land use activities, stakeholders shall be required to demonstrate compliance as relevant, with measures and requirements relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management.

These measures are further detailed in Section 9.3 of the accompanying SEA Environmental Report.

Projects included in the Plan will be in compliance with statutory requirements such as the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014, the primary legislation for the protection of archaeological heritage.

## 5.5 ACTION PLAN

The implementation of the ADEDP is based on stakeholder commitment to project delivery. Key stakeholders will partner on the delivery on the key tasks required to implement the ADEDP. It represents a five year operational plan creating a commercial focus for the development of tourism across the 'Ancient' Boyne Valley Destination.

The ADEDP is designed to build on existing project plans and integrate all related activity for a co-ordinated series of outputs. This 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 ADEDP. This includes the measurement of projects that will enhance tourism industry capacity development, experience creation and enhancement, catalyst and elevation destination enabling projects.

### TIMING

<b>SHORT-TERM</b>	<b>Year 1-2</b>	<b>2020 /2022</b>
<b>MEDIUM-TERM</b>	<b>Years 3-4</b>	<b>2023 / 2024</b>
<b>LONG-TERM</b>	<b>Years 5+</b>	<b>2025+</b>

ACRONYM	STAKEHOLDER
<b>BVT</b>	Boyne Valley Tourism
<b>CCC</b>	Cavan County Council
<b>DHLGH</b>	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
<b>FI</b>	Fáilte Ireland
<b>IWBNG</b>	Inland Waterways – Boyne Navigation Group
<b>LCC</b>	Louth County Council
<b>LEO</b>	Local Enterprise Office
<b>LTN</b>	Local Tourism Network
<b>MCC</b>	Meath County Council
<b>MnCC</b>	Monaghan County Council
<b>NMS</b>	National Monuments Service
<b>NPWS</b>	National Parks and Wildlife Service
<b>NTA</b>	National Transport Authority
<b>OPW</b>	Office of Public Works
<b>PS</b>	Private Sector
<b>SCC</b>	Sligo County Council
<b>SEUPB</b>	Special EU Programmes Body
<b>Údarás</b>	Údarás na Gaeltachta
<b>WCC</b>	Westmeath County Council



Ziptopia, Carlingford Lough, Co. Louth

## STRATEGIC PILLAR ONE: UNLOCK THE HERITAGE ASSETS

### PROJECT 1: BRÚ NA BÓINNE

1.1	<b>Continue to provide experience development support for the Brú na Bóinne development as a priority that supports the site in maximising the investment to create a world class attraction and visitor experience, developed with consideration to the carrying capacity of monuments within a World Heritage sites.</b>	<b>KPI's</b> Continuous site experience review and benchmarking.  Hosting of additional OPW & DHLGH <i>Ancient</i> sites information and other local experiences.
	<b>Commence:</b> 2020 – 2025	
	<b>Lead:</b> OPW & DHLGH	
	<b>Partners:</b> FI	
1.2	<b>Examine approach to cross sell other 'Ancient' sites and local activities.</b>	Complete pilot programme for Dark Sky Experience.
	<b>Commence:</b> 2020 – 2025	
	<b>Lead:</b> OPW & DHLGH	
	<b>Partners:</b> FI	
1.3	<b>Provide experience development support for the development of Dark Sky experience at the site along with other diversification of the offering.</b>	
	<b>Commence:</b> 2020 – 2025	
	<b>Lead:</b> OPW & DHLGH	
1.4	<b>Undertake and Implement the recommendations of the pilot training needs analysis review for Brú na Bóinne</b>	<b>KPI's</b> Complete pilot needs analysis review.
	<b>Commence:</b> 2020 – 2025	
	<b>Lead:</b> OPW & DHLGH	
	<b>Partners:</b> FI	

### PROJECT 2: LOUGHCREW CAIRNS

2.1	<b>Undertake an examination of existing site review documents to establish areas of prioritisation in addressing visitor management requirements for the site and future inclusion in strategic projects between OPW and Fáilte Ireland.</b>	<b>KPI's</b> Complete the review of site, condition of monuments and current visitor offering. Outline the impacts on future management plans and experience plans.
	<b>Commence:</b> 2021 – 2025	
	<b>Lead:</b> OPW & DHLGH	
2.2	<b>Provide experience development support for the identification of range of management options for the site accounting for the current archaeological management requirements of the site.</b>	
	<b>Commence:</b> 2021 – 2025	
	<b>Lead:</b> OPW & DHLGH	
	<b>Partners:</b> FI	

**PROJECT 3: TRIM CASTLE**

<b>3.1</b>	<b>Continue to provide experience development support for the development and a working group to continually review and upgrade the visitor experience requirements based on the agreed new investment into Trim Castle.</b>	<b>KPI's</b> Establish collaborative working group to develop the visitor experience.
	<b>Commence:</b> 2021 – 2025	
	<b>Lead:</b> OPW & DHLGH	
	<b>Partners:</b> MCC	
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Provide experience development support for the development of a visitor experience combining the development requirements of Trim Castle and Trim as identified in the Boyne Valley Masterplan and supported by the destination town activity.</b>	
	<b>Commence:</b> 2021 - 2025	
	<b>Lead:</b> OPW & DHLGH	
	<b>Partners:</b> MCC	

**PROJECT 4: KING JOHN'S CASTLE CARLINGFORD**

<b>4.1</b>	<b>Provide experience development support for the development of an operational and visitor development plan based on a new visitor experience approach to support and maximise the impact of the recent project investment in the site.</b>	<b>KPI's</b> Agree operational priorities for site.
	<b>Commence:</b> 2021 - 2025	
	<b>Lead:</b> OPW & DHLGH	
	<b>Partners:</b> FI	

**PROJECT 5: ARDEE CASTLE**

<b>5.1</b>	<b>Establish working group of all key stakeholders to implement next phases of visitor experience development.</b>	<b>KPI's</b> Establish and coordinate working group. Initiate and develop experience plan.
	<b>Commence:</b> 2021 - 2025	
	<b>Lead:</b> LCC	
	<b>Partners:</b> FI	
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Create and implement a Visitor experience plan.</b>	
	<b>Commence:</b> 2021 – 2025	
	<b>Lead:</b> LCC	

## PROJECT 6: BOYNE VALLEY DRIVE

<b>6.1</b>	<b>Conduct an audit of the Boyne Valley Drive and key visitor attractions and sites to review effectiveness in delivering great visitor experiences.</b>	<b>KPI's</b>  Complete audit process.  Prepare experiential route and visitor experience development priorities based on audit findings.  Implement site specific actions to grow visitor numbers.  Monitor implementation progress.  Identification of key ticketed and non-ticketed OPW sites across the Boyne Valley
	<b>Commence:</b> 2020	
	<b>Lead:</b> FI	
	<b>Partners:</b> MCC, LCC, OPW, DHLGH	
<b>6.2</b>	<b>Identify projects to establish the Boyne Valley Drive route as a best in class visitor experiential route.</b>	
	<b>Commence:</b> 2020	
	<b>Lead:</b> FI	
	<b>Partners:</b> MCC, LCC, OPW, DHLGH	
<b>6.3</b>	<b>Prepare an experience development action plan to create a world leading 'Ancient Experience Trail'.</b>	
	<b>Commence:</b> 2022	
	<b>Lead:</b> FI	
	<b>Partners:</b> MCC, LCC, OPW, DHLGH	
<b>6.4</b>	<b>Assess site requirements to grow visitor numbers at key sites along the Boyne Valley Drive such as the plans for Oldbridge – Battle of the Boyne Site.</b>	
	<b>Commence:</b> 2021 - 2025	
	<b>Lead:</b> OPW & DHLGH	
	<b>Partners:</b> MCC, LCC, FI	
<b>6.5</b>	<b>Continue the implementation programme for the Boyne Valley Masterplan and miscellaneous works outlined in the Masterplan while working with Fáilte Ireland to identify the key ticketed and non ticketed sites for visitor flow enhancement and inclusion in the visitor numbers monitoring system.</b>	
	<b>Commence:</b> 2021 - 2025	
	<b>Lead:</b> OPW & DHLGH	
	<b>Partners:</b> MCC, LCC, FI	

## PROJECT 7: HILL OF TARA

<b>7.1</b>	<b>Continue to develop the Conservation Management Plan currently in progress for the Hill of Tara.</b>	<b>KPI's</b>  Complete assessment of current visitor servicing requirements.
	<b>Commence:</b> 2021 - 2025	
	<b>Lead:</b> DHLGH	
	<b>Partners:</b> FI, MCC, OPW	
<b>7.2</b>	<b>Create a working group to implement the final recommendations of Hill of Tara Conservation Management Plan when completed.</b>	
	<b>Commence:</b> 2021 - 2025	
	<b>Lead:</b> OPW & DHLGH	
	<b>Partners:</b> FI, MCC	
<b>7.3</b>	<b>Undertake an assessment of the immediate visitor servicing requirements to support the recommendations of the Hill of Tara Conservation Management Plan that will enhance site interpretation and visitor facilities.</b>	
	<b>Commence:</b> 2021 - 2025	
	<b>Lead:</b> OPW & DHLGH	
	<b>Partners:</b> FI, MCC	



## STRATEGIC PILLAR TWO: REVEAL THE NATURAL ASSETS

### PROJECT 8: BOYNE NAVIGATION AND GREENWAY

8.1	Complete the Boyne Navigation and Greenway planning process through a partnership approach that will include MCC, LCC, FI, OPW, DHLGH, Inland Waterways, NPWS – Boyne Navigation Group and local communities.		<b>KPI's:</b> Complete Boyne Navigation and Greenway planning process. Establish a working group.
	Commence:	2020 - 2025	
	Lead:	MCC	
	Partners:	FI, OPW, LCC, DHLGH, IWBNG, NPWS	
8.2	Undertake consultations with all stakeholders as part of planning process.		Devise plan to action feasibility study findings. Prioritise immediate programme of works to run concurrent to feasibility
	Commence:	2020 - 2025	
	Lead:	MCC	
8.3	Develop a plan to create an innovative interpretative walk on the existing stretch between Drogheda town centre to area adjacent to the Battle of the Boyne site.		
	Commence:	2021 – 2025	
	Lead:	MCC, LCC	
8.4	Undertake programme of works to upgrade the appropriate elements of the Navan to Boyne Valley Blueway.		
	Commence:	2021 – 2025	
	Lead:	MCC	

### PROJECT 9: INTEGRATED ANCIENT TRAILS

9.1	Review the experience development potential of existing and proposed trails including Greenways and Blueways across the destination with the objective of immersing the visitor in the <i>Ancient</i> story and linking all trails.		<b>KPI's:</b> Complete audit of current trails and planned projects to assess capacity to link all. Agree priority projects to deliver <i>Ancient</i> Trails Experiences. Initiate an experience development plan for priority trails. Complete assessment of <i>Ancient</i> Camino experience. Undertake review of Táin Experience and act on recommendations.
	Commence:	2021	
	Lead:	MCC, LCC	
	Partners:	FI, NMS, NPWS, DHLGH, OPW	
9.2	Examine the potential of the Boyne Camino to develop as a multi-day experience linking key <i>Ancient</i> sites as a Camino 5000.		
	Commence:	2021	
	Lead:	LCC	
9.3	Review of the visitor experience development potential of the Táin March and the enhancement of the existing Táin Trail as an appealing walking and cycling route.		
	Commence:	2022	
	Lead:	LCC	
9.4	Support the development of new and emerging trails that collectively increase the range of options for visitors to extend dwell time and explore new places e.g. Louth Heritage Trail, Cooley Camino.		Undertake a development needs review of Louth Heritage Trails and Cooley Camino experience and act on key recommendations.
	Commence:	2021	
	Lead:	LCC	
	Partners:	FI	

## PROJECT 10: RECONNECTING TO THE RIVER BOYNE

<b>10.1</b>	<b>Undertake audit of directional and interpretation signage for the River Boyne linked to the Boyne Valley Drive review.</b>		<b>KPI's:</b> Complete signage audit. Implement Boyne viewing points and place making recommendations.
	<b>Commence:</b>	2020	
	<b>Lead:</b>	MCC, LCC, FI	
	<b>Partners:</b>	PS, OPW, NPWS	
<b>10.2</b>	<b>Identify River Boyne viewing points to create 'sharable' experiences for visitors through innovative interpretation and place making installations linked to the Boyne Valley Drive Review.</b>		Establish working group to examine 'source to mouth' opportunity.
	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	MCC, LCC	
	<b>Partners:</b>	NPWS	
<b>10.3</b>	<b>Establish a working group to examine the wider experience development opportunities that exist through a River Boyne visitor proposition.</b>		
	<b>Commence:</b>	2022	
	<b>Lead:</b>	MCC, LCC	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	

## PROJECT 11: GREENWAYS & BLUEWAYS DEVELOPMENT

<b>11.1</b>	<b>Develop the Navan to Kingscourt Greenway incorporating the rail line.</b>		<b>KPI's:</b> Seek funding to complete greenway.
	<b>Commence:</b>	2020	
	<b>Lead:</b>	MCC	
<b>11.2</b>	<b>Create an experience plan for the development and usage of the Blueway from Trim to Bective.</b>		Create Blueway experience/growth plan to launch Blueway. Review and cost extension of Blueway from Bective to Navan.
	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	MCC	
<b>11.3</b>	<b>Review the feasibility of extending the Blueway from Bective to Navan creating a trailhead in Navan.</b>		Complete review of trailhead requirements.
	<b>Commence:</b>	2023	
	<b>Lead:</b>	MCC	
<b>11.4</b>	<b>Undertake a review of the requirements to create a more accessible and user friendly Blueway trail head in Trim.</b>		Completion of Royal Canal Greenway and opening of 130km route incorporating elements of the <i>Ancient</i> geography supported by experience development planning.
	<b>Commence:</b>	2022	
	<b>Lead:</b>	MCC	
	<b>Partners:</b>	OPW	
<b>11.5</b>	<b>Complete signage and ancillary signage on the Royal Canal Greenway.</b>		
	<b>Commence:</b>	2020	
	<b>Lead:</b>	MCC	
	<b>Partners:</b>	WI, FI	

<b>11.6</b>	<b>Develop the Great Eastern Greenway as a new walking and cycling route starting with the development of the partially constructed elements on the old railway line between Omeath and Carlingford. This will form part of a greenway stretching from Lough Neagh to Dublin. Complete the Cross Border Omeath to Victoria Lock &amp; Carlingford Marina to Carlingford Village element for 2023.</b>		<b>KPI's:</b> Seek Funding to complete greenway.
	<b>Commence:</b>	2022	
	<b>Lead:</b>	LCC	
	<b>Partners:</b>	SEUPB	
<b>11.7</b>	<b>Great Eastern Greenway: Review the feasibility of completion of the greenway from Carlingford - Greenore - Templetown Beach.</b>		<b>KPI's:</b> Seek funding for feasibility of extension of existing greenway to Greenore Village and Templetown Beach.  Increased numbers of walkers and cyclist using the Carlingford Lough ferry.  Increased numbers of cyclist / walkers in Carlingford, Omeath, Greenore Villages
	<b>Commence:</b>	2022	
	<b>Lead:</b>	LCC	
<b>11.8</b>	<b>Review the feasibility of incorporating a Greenway into a coastal defence project from Dundalk to Blackrock.</b>		<b>KPI's:</b> Seek additional funding for Greenway incorporated into the Dundalk / Blackrock Coastal Defence Project  Further development of the Great Eastern Greenways
	<b>Commence:</b>	2022	
	<b>Lead:</b>	LCC	
	<b>Partners:</b>	OPW	
<b>11.9</b>	<b>Review the feasibility of incorporating a Greenway into a coastal defence project in Drogheda</b>		<b>KPI's:</b> Seek additional funding for Greenway incorporated into the Drogheda Coastal Defence Project
	<b>Commence:</b>	2022	
	<b>Lead:</b>	LCC	
	<b>Partners:</b>	OPW	

<b>11.10</b>	<b>Review the feasibility of completion of the greenway from Blackrock to Drogheda.</b>		<b>KPI's:</b>  Seek funding to complete Greenway.  Completion of approx. 70km of the Great Eastern Greenway in County Louth
	<b>Commence:</b>	2023	
	<b>Lead:</b>	LCC	
<b>11.11</b>	<b>Review the feasibility of extending the Boyne Greenway through Drogheda to link up with Public Transport Hubs and the proposed Drogheda to Mornington Greenway.</b>		<b>KPI's:</b>  Seek Funding for feasibility study and completion of extension of the greenway.  Increase use of Boyne Greenway
	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	LCC, MCC	
	<b>Partners:</b>	NTA	
<b>11.12</b>	<b>Review the feasibility of the greenway from Dundalk to Sligo as part of East West Road Project [Dundalk to Sligo (Route 1) National Cycle Strategy].</b>		<b>KPI's:</b>  Secure funding for feasibility of the project
	<b>Commence:</b>	2023	
	<b>Lead:</b>	CCC	
	<b>Partners:</b>	LCC, MCC, SCC	
<b>11.13</b>	<b>Review the feasibility of the proposed Dundalk to Inniskeen Greenway along old rail track.</b>		<b>KPI's:</b>  Secure funding for feasibility of the project
	<b>Commence:</b>	2022	
	<b>Lead:</b>	LCC	
	<b>Partners:</b>	MnCC	

## STRATEGIC PILLAR THREE: INTRODUCE THE ANCIENT LEGENDS

### PROJECT 12: EXPERIENCE INNOVATION CLUSTER - ANCIENT ACTIVITY EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

12.1	Create an <i>Ancient</i> Activity cluster to become the catalyst for immersive ancient experiences on land and on water.		<b>KPI's:</b> Establish Activity Cluster group, identify priorities and agree terms of reference.  Complete audit and gap analysis of current activity base.  Devise cluster plan to create integrated activity experiences.  Create business support for cluster.
	<b>Commence:</b>	2022	
	<b>Lead:</b>	FI	
	<b>Partners:</b>	LCC, MCC	
12.2	Gap analysis of current experiences, activities, trails and supporting experiences identifying the core experiences for <i>Ancient</i> Activity and Lough of Legends development.		
	<b>Commence:</b>	2022	
	<b>Lead:</b>	FI	
	<b>Partners:</b>	LCC, MCC	

### PROJECT 13: EXPERIENCE INNOVATION CLUSTER - FOOD & DRINK EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

13.1	Undertake an audit of current food experiences to identify year round food experiences with growth potential.		<b>KPI's:</b> Complete food experience audit.  Develop programme of food industry specifics aligned to experience development.  Devise an <i>Ancient</i> Food Trail linking in destination food experiences.  Creation of the <i>Ancient</i> Seafood trail - Sea Louth.  Create 6 saleable food experiences.  Complete review of agri-tourism experiences to incorporate into Food Trail.  Assess food story hub potential with Devenish.  Create a business support programme for the food cluster.
	<b>Commence:</b>	2020	
	<b>Lead:</b>	FI	
	<b>Partners:</b>	MCC, LCC	
13.2	Develop an <i>Ancient</i> Food Trail route linking year round 'fish and farm to fork' experiences across the entire <i>Ancient</i> destination.		
	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	FI	
	<b>Partners:</b>	LCC, MCC	
13.3	Create the <i>Ancient</i> seafood trail, Sea Louth, based on the Louth coastline, linking 'tide to table' experiences and as a basis for development of new seafood experiences.		
	<b>Commence:</b>	2020	
	<b>Lead:</b>	LCC	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
13.4	Develop an agri-tourism visitor experience network to align with the food cluster opportunity.		
	<b>Commence:</b>	2022	
	<b>Lead:</b>	MCC, LCC	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
13.5	Examine the heritage of food innovation interpretation opportunity in association with Dowth and Devenish and scope out the story to focus the site experience.		
	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
13.6	Support the creation of best in class whiskey experiences through Slane and Boann Distilleries.		
	<b>Commence:</b>	2022	
	<b>Lead:</b>	FI	
	<b>Partners:</b>	PS	

### PROJECT 14: EXPERIENCE INNOVATION CLUSTER - ANCIENT CULTURE & CREATIVE

14.1	<b>Examine the development of an <i>Ancient</i> Culture &amp; Creative hub in Kells.</b>		<b>KPI's:</b> Complete assessment of cluster requirements to deliver day and night experiences.
	<b>Commence:</b>	2022	
	<b>Lead:</b>	MCC	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI, LTN	
14.2	<b>Review the requirements to create a world class visitor experience linking Kells to the story of the Book of Kells integrating St Columcille's House with the broader Kells experiences focused on cultural experiences.</b>		Review experience requirements to create saleable experiences in Kells.  Examine operational model and experience development for St Columcille's House.  Initiate discussions with TCD to examine linking Book of Kells visitors to cluster.
	<b>Commence:</b>	2022	
	<b>Lead:</b>	MCC	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI, OPW	
14.3	<b>Examine the development of a strategic alliance between Trinity College Dublin (TCD) and Kells to link to the Book of Kells story through possible community outreach / engagement model.</b>		
	<b>Commence:</b>	2022	
	<b>Lead:</b>	MCC	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	

### PROJECT 15: PÚCA - HALLOWEEN FESTIVAL

15.1	<b>Develop a Púca working group to create, review and implement festival development proposals for the 3 areas of Trim, Drogheda and Athboy.</b>		<b>KPI's:</b> Continue implementation of Púca plan.  Agree priorities for growth in 2021 based on year 1 outputs.  Devise industry support programme.  Examine year-round saleable experience potential to further internalise the Púca narrative.
	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	FI	
	<b>Partners:</b>	MCC, LCC, BVT	
15.2	<b>Devise a growth strategy for the Púca festival incorporating industry opportunities to sustain year-round experiences in Trim, Drogheda and Athboy.</b>		
	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	FI	
	<b>Partners:</b>	MCC, LCC, BVT	
15.3	<b>Create an industry training programme to support the growth of Púca through the creation of Halloween experiences throughout the destination.</b>		
	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	FI	
	<b>Partners:</b>	MCC, LCC, BVT	

## PROJECT 16: LIVING HISTORY

16.1	<b>Examine the requirements to build on existing living history re-enactments throughout the destination combined with new opportunities for immersive visitor experiences through existing cultural and visual arts facilities.</b>		<b>KPI's:</b> Complete review of enhancement options for Living History visitor experiences.  Assess operational considerations and feasibility of delivery Living History / enactments programming.
	<b>Commence:</b>	2023	
	<b>Lead:</b>	MCC, LCC	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI, LTN, BVT	

## PROJECT 17: DESTINATION IMAGERY

17.1	<b>Review gaps in Ireland's content pool for relevant local <i>Ancient</i> content.</b>		<b>KPI's:</b> Continue to enhance <i>Ancient</i> content pool stock based on DEDP themes and clusters.
	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	FI	

## STRATEGIC PILLAR FOUR: DEVELOP THE INDUSTRY BASE

### PROJECT 18: ACCOMMODATION CAPACITY GROWTH

18.1	<b>Complete an accommodation needs analysis for the Boyne Valley.</b>		<b>KPI's:</b>  Initiate accommodation growth plan.  Completion of needs analysis
	Commence:	2020	
	Lead:	FI	
	Partners:	MCC, LCC	
18.2	<b>Prepare an accommodation growth plan.</b>		Devise industry supports for development of quality niche accommodation experiences.  Delivery of a capability development programme for the accommodation sector
	Commence:	2022	
	Lead:	FI	
	Partners:	MCC, LCC	
18.3	<b>Support the development of niche accommodation development (e.g. eco and rural tourism) in line with the outputs of the accommodation needs analysis for the Boyne Valley.</b>		
	Commence:	2022	
	Lead:	FI	
	Partners:	MCC, LCC	
18.4	<b>Develop the capability levels of the accommodation sector to consistently raise product and service quality standards to match the visitor promise of a world leading <i>Ancient</i> destination.</b>		
	Commence:	2022	
	Lead:	FI	

### PROJECT 19: EVENING ECONOMY

19.1	<b>Create an evening economy development plan using existing cultural and heritage venues for destination towns.</b>		<b>KPI's:</b>  Complete audit of evening economy provision.  Work with Local Authority and tourism industry to develop evening economy plan.  Develop 4 new evening economy experiences.
	Commence:	2021	
	Lead:	FI, BVT	
	Partners:	MCC, LCC, OPW, PS	
19.2	<b>Undertake a review to examine existing evening time entertainment provision to create easily accessible schedule of current evening activity.</b>		Complete review by Arts Offices of short to long term evening culture opportunities.  Create a central evening activity information portal easily accessed by visitors.
	Commence:	2021	
	Lead:	MCC, LCC	
19.3	<b>Examine the creation of a unique <i>Ancient</i> or regionally themed music evening hosted throughout the destination on agreed evenings e.g. Boyne Sessions.</b>		
	Commence:	2021	
	Lead:	FI	
	Partners:	MCC, LCC	



**PROJECT 20: ANCIENT EXPERIENCE INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

20.1	<b>Create a dedicated <i>Ancient</i> Experience Industry Development Programme approach for high potential experiences.</b>		<b>KPI's:</b> Create a bespoke <i>Ancient</i> Experience Development Programme to work with high potential experiences. Identify high potential experiences. Implement programme based on key clusters and growth targets. Monitor performance of programme participants.
	<b>Commence:</b>	2022	
	<b>Lead:</b>	FI	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI, LEADER, MCC, LCC, Údarás, LEO	

**PROJECT 21: TOURISM DESTINATION TOWN - DROGHEDA**

21.1	<b>Develop a masterplanning approach for Drogheda to build on the destination town potential to become a tourism destination of scale connecting all existing heritage assets e.g. Linear mile while examining the potential of an attraction of scale for the town.</b>		<b>KPI's:</b> Develop a masterplan for Drogheda to create a tourism hub of scale.  Implement a project monitoring system with Local Authority on destination town priorities.  Complete review of linking Drogheda to Battle of Boyne as part of Boyne navigation project.  Complete Fleadh Cheoil legacy plan.
	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	LCC, FI	
21.2	<b>Develop a legacy plan from Drogheda's hosting of the Fleadh Cheoil to focus on developing the evening economy opportunity.</b>		
	<b>Commence:</b>	2022	
	<b>Lead:</b>	LCC	
21.3	<b>Undertake a review of the operational options for Laurence's Gate, Tholsel and Millmount Museum to build on their capacity to attract increased visitor numbers in line with the Drogheda masterplan development.</b>		
	<b>Commence:</b>	2022	
	<b>Lead:</b>	LCC	

**PROJECT 22: TOURISM DESTINATION TOWN - TRIM**

22.1	<b>Create a tourism destination town development plan for Trim.</b>		<b>KPI's:</b> Devise a co-ordinated destination town strategy for Trim.  Porchfields project completed and measuring level of site usage.  Assess local industry capacity requirements and create business supports programme.
	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	MCC	
22.2	<b>Develop the Porchfields project to create an animated visitor and community space.</b>		
	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
22.3	<b>Undertake a capacity review of the tourism trade to identify immediate tourism industry training requirements and accommodation provider capabilities.</b>		
	<b>Commence:</b>	2022	
	<b>Lead:</b>	FI	
	<b>Partners:</b>	MCC, BVT	

### PROJECT 23: TOURISM DESTINATION TOWNS

<b>23.1</b>	<b>Create a measurement system to assess the impact of the Tourism Destination Town activity through a system of annual review with all stakeholders.</b>		<b>KPI's:</b> Creation of agreed benchmarking system.
	<b>Commence:</b>	2022	
	<b>Lead:</b>	FI	
	<b>Partners:</b>	MCC, LCC, OPW	

### PROJECT 24: DEVELOPING NAVAN AS A TOURISM BASE

<b>24.1</b>	<b>Devise a destination town approach for Navan initially targeting the day time visitor.</b>		<b>KPI's:</b> Complete destination development plan for Navan with day time focus. Form collaborative working group. Create industry supports programme.
	<b>Commence:</b>	2023	
	<b>Lead:</b>	MCC	
<b>24.2</b>	<b>Create an industry group to focus on the day time opportunity to attract international visitors through the quality of the food, drink and retail provision.</b>		
	<b>Commence:</b>	2023	
	<b>Lead:</b>	MCC	
<b>24.3</b>	<b>Create a dedicated training supports programme to develop the day time visitor economy opportunity to support the industry group.</b>		
	<b>Commence:</b>	2023	
	<b>Lead:</b>	MCC	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	

### PROJECT 25: SLANE EXPERIENCE INNOVATION CLUSTER

<b>25.1</b>	<b>Undertake a review of the experience development requirements for Slane and Slane Estate aligned with the review of the Boyne Valley Drive.</b>		<b>KPI's:</b> Agree a collaborative measurement approach to assess destination tourism impact.
	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	FI, MCC	

### PROJECT 26: DEVELOP CARLINGFORD AS A TOURISM HUB

<b>26.1</b>	<b>Undertake a masterplanning development process to develop a long term vision and enhance the visitor experience in Carlingford and surrounding area that will support its development as a key activity hub.</b>		<b>KPI's:</b> Complete masterplanning review of Carlingford as a visitor hub. Agree priorities with Local Authority.
	<b>Commence:</b>	2020	
	<b>Lead:</b>	LCC	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>26.2</b>	<b>Support the advancement of potential destination transformation projects such as the proposed Sky Adventure / Tree Top proposition as an anchor project supporting the creation of the Ancient Activity Cluster, introducing innovative ways of telling the Ancient story.</b>		<b>KPI's:</b> Agree priorities with Local Authority. Complete review of key requirements to progress project.
	<b>Commence:</b>	2022	
	<b>Lead:</b>	LCC, PS	

**PROJECT 27: DEVELOP DUNDALK AS A TOURISM HUB**

<b>27.1</b>	<b>Undertake a review of the experience development requirements for Dundalk to establish it as a visitor base and tourism hub developing the visitor experience through enhancement of existing heritage and cultural assets.</b>	<b>KPI's:</b> Creation of a collaborative working group  Creation of an industry development supports programme  Visitor experience plan for the County Museum
	<b>Commence:</b> 2024	
	<b>Lead:</b> LCC	
	<b>Partners:</b> FI	
<b>27.2</b>	<b>Support the visitor experience at the County Museum as a 'Designated Museum' association with the National Museum of Ireland examining opportunities to showcase the 'Ancient' theme through the National Collection.</b>	
	<b>Commence:</b> 2023	
	<b>Lead:</b> LCC	
	<b>Partners:</b> FI	

**PROJECT 28: MONAGHAN/CAVAN/MEATH/WESTMEATH CLUSTERS**

<b>28.1</b>	<b>Develop a tourism industry cluster strategy to develop new visitor experiences and integrate saleable experiences in Carrickmacross, Virginia/Oldcastle and North Westmeath adopting the themes of the DEDP.</b>	<b>KPI's:</b> Creation of cluster groups.  Provision of industry trade support programme.  Develop industry collaboration between local and regional experiences.  Integrate with Activity, Food, Craft and Culture cluster opportunities.
	<b>Commence:</b> 2021	
	<b>Lead:</b> MnCC, CCC, MCC and WCC	
	<b>Partners:</b> Lead - FI Partners - MnCC, CCC	
<b>28.2</b>	<b>Support the enhancement of the visitor experience at the Monaghan and Cavan County Museums through their 'Designated Museum' association with the National Museum of Ireland examining opportunities to showcase the 'Ancient' themes</b>	<b>KPI's:</b> Visitor experience plan for the County Museums
	<b>Commence:</b> 2022	
	<b>Lead:</b> MnCC, CCC	
	<b>Partners:</b> FI	

## PROJECT 29: SUPPORTING OUR TOURISM PARTNERS

<b>BOANN DISTILLERY</b> Provide experience development support for the development of a new visitor attraction by 2021.	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	<b>KPI's:</b>  Agree priorities with the businesses and the respective local authorities.  Complete review of key requirements to progress project.
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>LAND OF MYTH</b> Provide experience improvement support for the expansion of a Visitor Attraction Development in Slane adopting the theme of myths and legends.	<b>Commence:</b>	2023	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>SLANE ESTATE</b> Provide experience development support to maximise the collective estate potential of Slane Castle, Slane Distillery and Slane Rock Farm while ensuring connectivity to the village of Slane that continues to grow the local economy impact of the estate.	<b>Commence:</b>	2020	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>FINNEGAN'S FARM</b> Provide experience improvement support for the expansion of a Farm and Food Experience Development.	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>LEMONROCK BIKE TOURS</b> Provide experience development support for the development to establish Trim as national base for incoming motor bike tours.	<b>Commence:</b>	2022	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>BOYNE VALLEY ACTIVITIES</b> Provide experience development support for the expansion of water activities at Trim base based on opening of the Blueway.	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>BOYNE BOATS</b> Provide experience development support for the expansion of water activities on the River Boyne	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>GLYDE INN, ANNAGASSAN</b> Provide experience development support for the development of the Tastes and Sounds experience.	<b>Commence:</b>	2020	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>CAUSEY FARM</b> Provide experience development support for the launch of a new FIT focused experience (all groups to date).	<b>Commence:</b>	2020	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>SLANE FOOD CIRCLE</b> Provide experience development support for the development of the Slane Food Circle.	<b>Commence:</b>	2020	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>BEE WISE</b> Provide experience development support for the development of the new Mead Making and Bee Experience.	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>LOUGHCREW MEGALITHIC CENTRE</b> Provide experience development support for the development of new experiences linked to sunrise tours.	<b>Commence:</b>	2023	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>TAYTO PARK</b> Provide experience development support for the enhancement of existing experiences opportunity through the Púca Halloween events and MICE opportunities.	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>THE BACON TOURS</b> Provide experience development support for the development of a new bacon / farm experience.	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	

<b>THE CIDER MILL</b> Provide experience development support for the development of a national cider museum and enhance cider tour experience / food heritage story.	<b>Commence:</b>	2020	<b>KPI's:</b>  Agree priorities with Local Authority.  Complete review of key requirements to progress project.
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>THE SMOKING BUTCHER</b> Provide experience development support for the development of a Viking smoking experience and 'hands' on butchery experience.	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>CARLINGFORD ADVENTURE CENTRE</b> Provide experience development support for the development of new visitor Tree Top attraction with German investor EAK.	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>CARLINGFORD OYSTERS</b> Provide experience development support for the development of a new visitor experience and visitor centre.	<b>Commence:</b>	2020	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>CARLINGFORD</b> Provide experience development support for the opportunity to develop destination profiling experiences with tourism operators such as Carlingford Ferry focusing on the Lough of Legends and accessing the <i>Ancient</i> clusters.	<b>Commence:</b>	2020	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>NEWGRANGE GOLD</b> Provide experience development support for the development of a new visitor experience.	<b>Commence:</b>	2020	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>LISTOKE DISTILLERY</b> Provide experience development support for the enhancement of the existing visitor experience.	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>UISNEACH</b> Provide experience development support for the enhancement of the existing visitor experience.	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>HILL OF WARD</b> Provide experience development support for the development of a new year round visitor experience celebrating the birthplace of Halloween at the Hill of Ward.	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>CELTIC ADVENTURES, CLOGHERHEAD</b> Provide experience development support for the enhancement of the existing visitor experience.	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>LOUTH ADVENTURES, CARLINGFORD</b> Provide experience development support for the enhancement of the existing visitor experience.	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>EAST COAST COOKERY SCHOOL</b> Provide experience development support for the enhancement of the existing visitor experience.	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	
<b>THE COTTAGE MARKET, DROGHEDA</b> Provide experience development support for the enhancement of the existing visitor experience.	<b>Commence:</b>	2021	
	<b>Lead:</b>	PS	
	<b>Partners:</b>	FI	

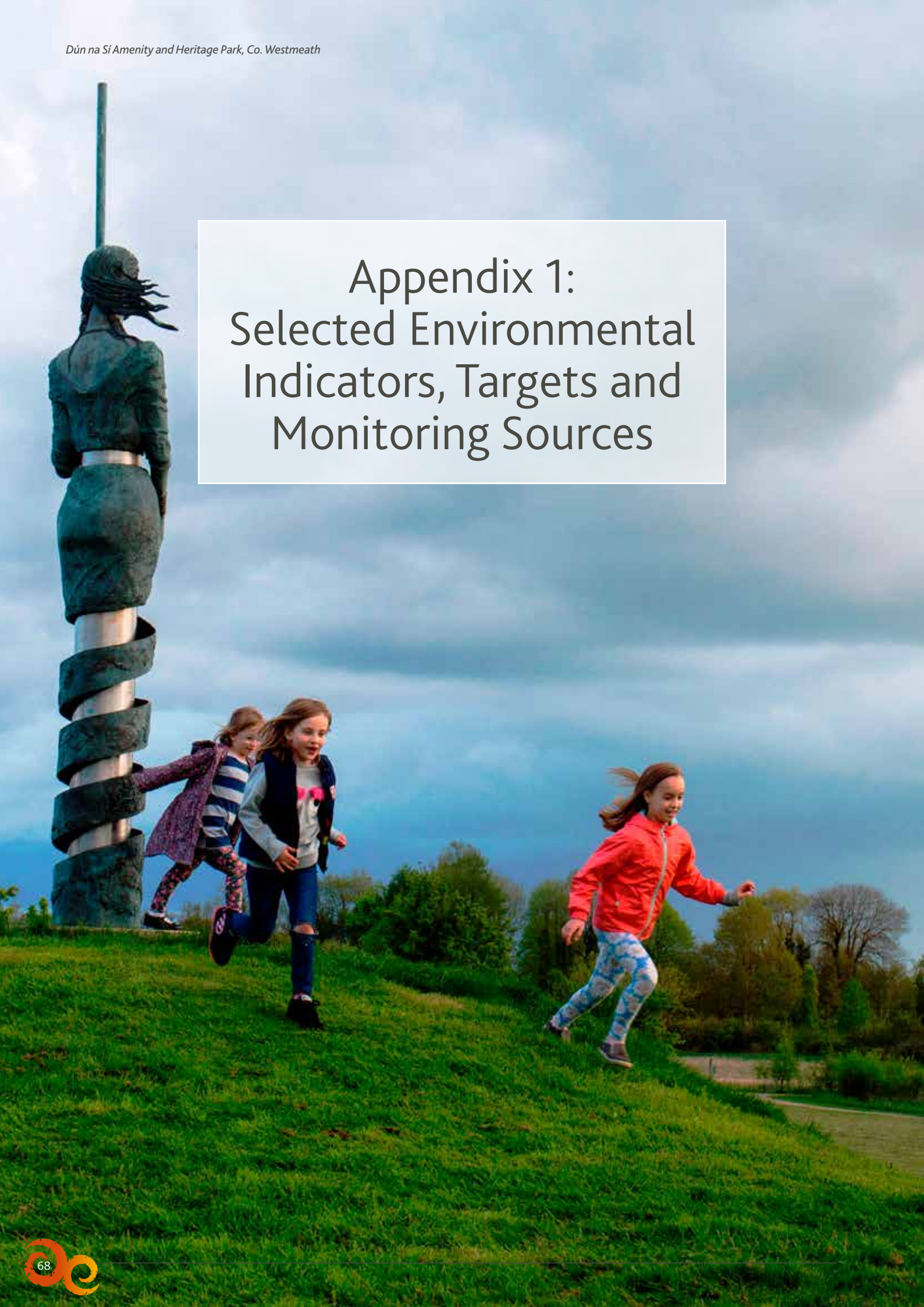
**NOTE:**

The above industry project list reflects members of the tourism trade who attended the non-accommodation industry workshop and who committed to developing new visitor experiences within the timeframe of this plan.

This listing does not indicate a guarantee of funding or priority access to supports from Fáilte Ireland or any other stakeholders / funders. All projects will go through the same application process should funding become available. It is important to examine what agencies are offering funding as new streams of funding may become available during the life-time of this plan.

Products and Experiences, both existing and potential, referred to in this document are examples of such product opportunities only. They are not intended to be an exclusive list. It is envisaged that others can and will be added during the lifetime of this plan.

# Appendix 1: Selected Environmental Indicators, Targets and Monitoring Sources



## SELECTED ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS, TARGETS AND MONITORING SOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENT	INDICATORS	TARGETS	SOURCE AND (WHERE AVAILABLE) FREQUENCY
<b>BIODIVERSITY, FLORA AND FAUNA</b>	B1: Conservation status of habitats and species as assessed under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive	B1: Maintenance of favourable conservation status for all habitats and species protected under National and International legislation to be unaffected by implementation of the Plan <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management"</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive - as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every 6 years)</li> <li>• Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's National Monitoring Report for the Birds Directive under Article 12 (every 3 years)</li> <li>• Consultations with the NPWS</li> <li>• CORINE mapping resurvey (every c. 5 years)</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>
	B2: Percentage loss of functional connectivity without remediation resulting from 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	
<b>POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH</b>	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 of the plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management"</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• Consultations with the HSE and EPA</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>

1. Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be: (a) No alternative solution available; (b) Imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the programme to proceed; and (c) Adequate compensatory measures in place.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENT	INDICATORS	TARGETS	SOURCE AND (WHERE AVAILABLE) FREQUENCY
<b>SOIL</b>	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%."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management"</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• CORINE mapping resurvey (every c. 5 years)</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>
<b>WATER</b>	<p>W1i: Classification of Overall Status (comprised of ecological and chemical status) under the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (SI No. 272 of 2009)</p> <p>W1ii: Mandatory and Guide values as set by the EU Bathing Water Directive and transposing Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008)</p> <p>W2: Interactions with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC resulting from development adhering to the Plan</p> <p>W3: Compliance of relevant lower tier assessments and decision making with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines</p>	<p>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</p> <p>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</p> <p>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</p> <p>W3: For lower tier assessments and decision making to comply with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management"</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• Data issued under the Water Framework Directive Monitoring Programme for Ireland (multi-annual)</li> <li>• EPA The Quality of Bathing Water in Ireland reports</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring</li> </ul>

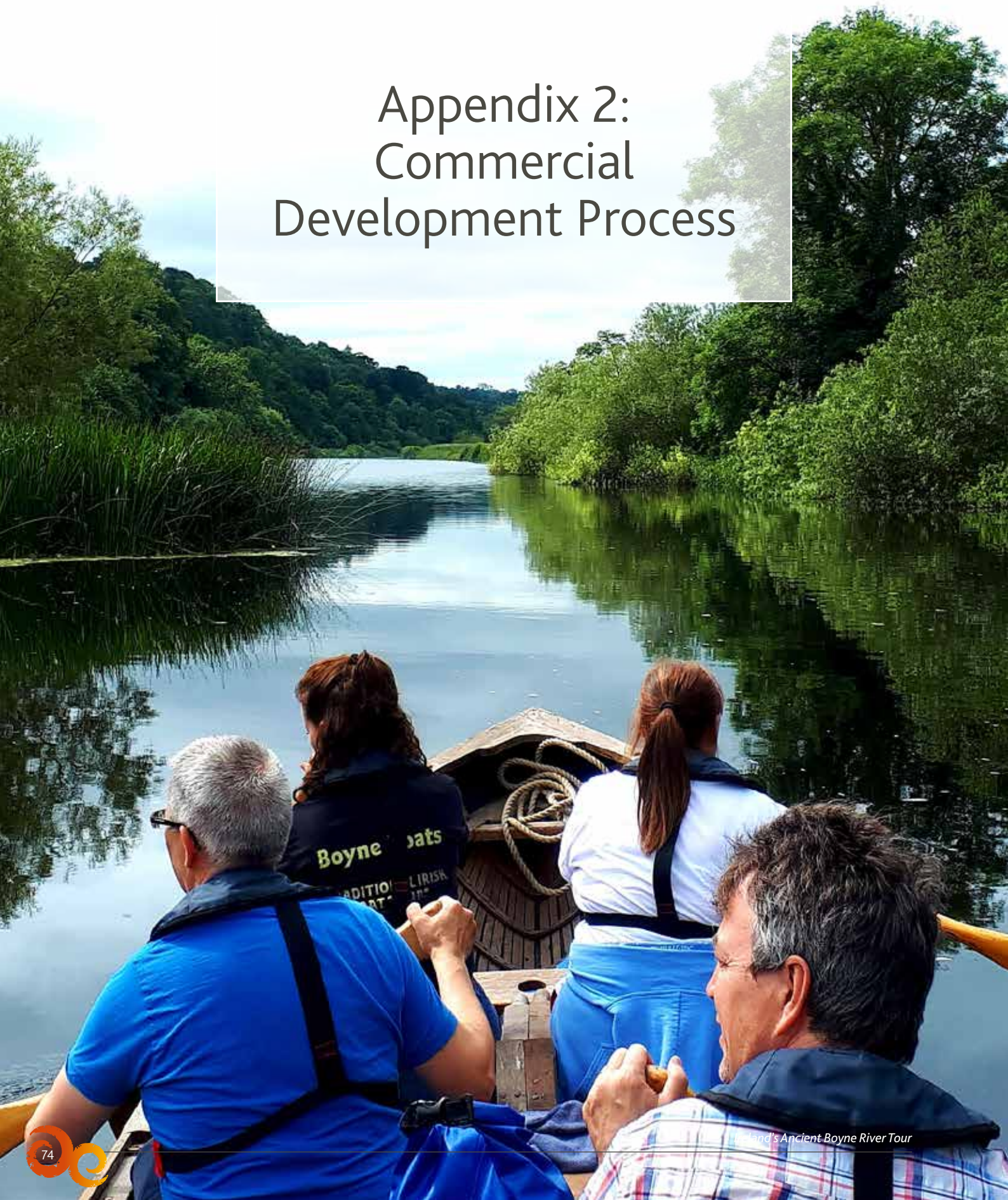


ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENT	INDICATORS	TARGETS	SOURCE AND (WHERE AVAILABLE) FREQUENCY
<p><b>AIR AND CLIMATIC FACTORS</b></p>	<p>AC1: Demonstration of compliance with provisions relating to climate adaptation and mitigation have been integrated into the Plan.</p>	<p>C1: To maximise the amount of measures relating to climate adaptation and mitigation being implemented.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management"</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>
<p><b>MATERIAL ASSETS</b></p>	<p>M1: Number of instances whereby the potential impact on existing infrastructure (with respect to infrastructural capacity, including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) as well as the potential environmental effects of a likely increase in tourism-related traffic volumes along any routes resulting from the relevant initiative are not considered and mitigated as appropriate, where relevant.</p>	<p>M1: No instances whereby the potential impact on existing infrastructure (with respect to infrastructural capacity, including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) as well as the potential environmental effects of a likely increase in tourism-related traffic volumes along any routes resulting from the relevant initiative are not considered and mitigated as appropriate, where relevant.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management"</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> </ul>
	<p>M2: Number of significant adverse effects on the use of or access to public assets and infrastructure</p>	<p>M2: No significant adverse effects on the use of or access to public assets and infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultations with the partners such as the EPA, Irish Water, Meath, Louth, Monaghan, Cavan, Westmeath County Councils and Sligo County Council (as appropriate)</li> </ul>
	<p>M3: Preparation and implementation of construction and environmental management plans</p>	<p>M3: For construction and environmental management plans to be prepared and implemented for relevant projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENT	INDICATORS	TARGETS	SOURCE AND (WHERE AVAILABLE) FREQUENCY
<p><b>CULTURAL HERITAGE</b></p>	<p>CH1: Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places protected from significant adverse effects arising from</p>	<p>CH1: No unauthorised adverse effects on archaeological heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management"</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>
	<p>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</p>	<p>CH2: No unauthorised adverse effects on architectural heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management"</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>
<p><b>LANDSCAPE</b></p>	<p>L1: Number of unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in the land use plans of Meath, Louth, Monaghan, Cavan, Westmeath County Councils and Sligo County Council (as appropriate)</p>	<p>L1: No unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in the land use plans of Meath, Louth, Monaghan, Cavan, Westmeath County Councils and Sligo County Council (as appropriate)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management"</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>



# Appendix 2: Commercial Development Process



The research and development phases of the DEDP are aligned with a programme of commercial evaluation. This assesses the DEDP accounting for the views of the buyers and suppliers and suitability of the emerging product development themes and areas of focus. This plan is assessed annually.

## DEDP INITIATED









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