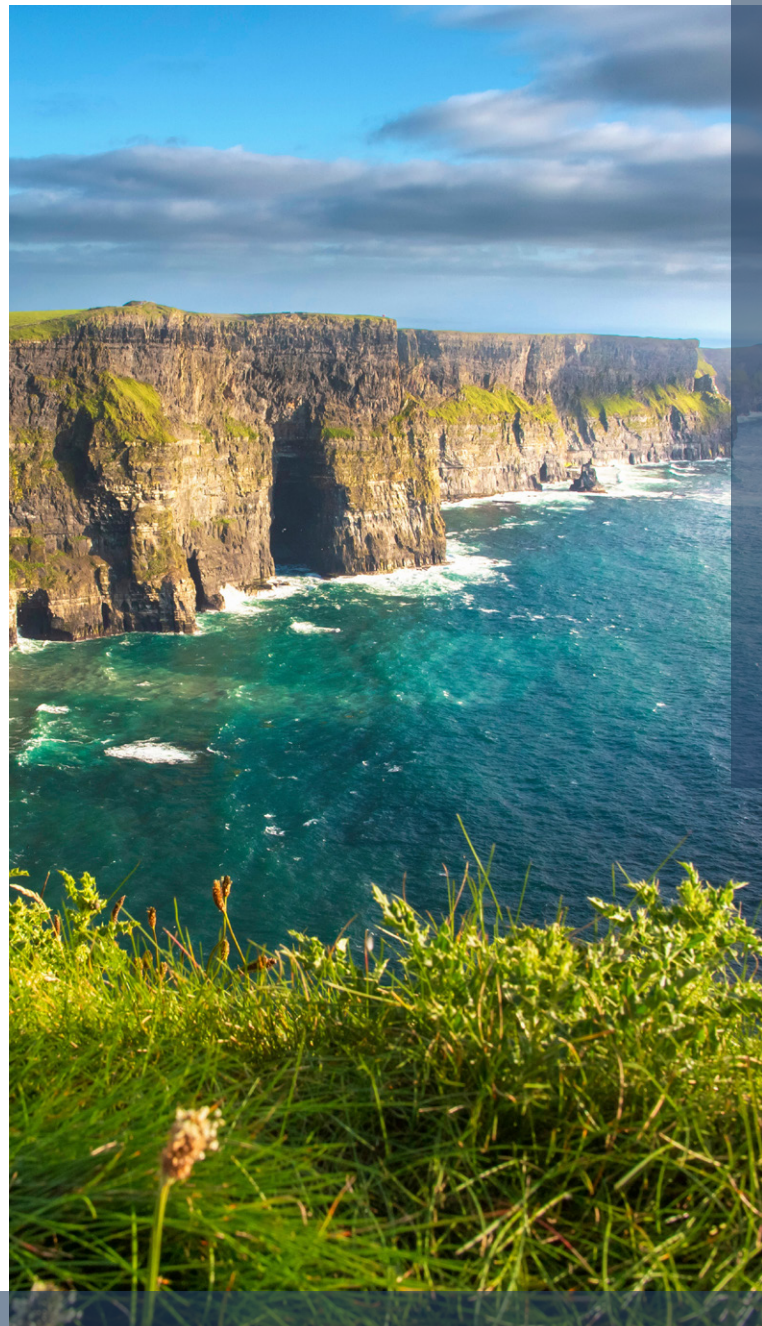


Strategic Environmental Assessment Monitoring Report

of the Burren and Cliffs Of Moher Visitor Experience Development Plan

May 2025



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APPENDIX A SEA MONITORING PROGRAMME

**APPENDIX B SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT OF ACTIONS FROM THE
PLAN**

ACRONYM LIST

AA	Appropriate Assessment
AC	Air and Climate
ACA	Architectural Conservation Area
AQHI	Air Quality for Health Index
BEN	Burren Ecotourism Network
BFCP	Burren Farming for Conservation Programme
B&CM	Burren and Cliffs of Moher
CAP	Climate Action Plan
CCC	Clare County Council
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
CFRAM	Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management
CH	Cultural Heritage
CLDC	Clare Local Development Company
COM	Cliffs of Moher
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DAFM	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
DCHG	Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
DEHLG	Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
DHLGH	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
EEA	European Economic Area
EEC	European Economic Community
EC	European Commission
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EU	European Union
FI	Fáilte Ireland
GCC	Galway County Council
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
GSI	Geological Survey of Ireland
HSE	Health Service Executive
LA	Local Authority
LAP	Local Area Plan
LCA	Landscape Character Areas
LTN	Local Tourism Network
OPW	Office of Public Works
NBAP	National Biodiversity Action Plan
NHA	Natural Heritage Area
NIS	Natura Impact Statement
NMS	National Monuments Service

NPF	National Planning Framework
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
NTA	National Transport Authority
PHH	Population and Human Health
pNHA	Proposed Natural Heritage Area
RMP	Record of Monuments and Places
RPA	Register of Protected Areas
RPS	Record of Protected Structures
RBMP	River Basin Management Plan
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEO	Strategic Environmental Objective
SI No.	Statutory Instrument Number
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSFRA	Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VEDP	Visitor Experience Development Plan
WFD	Water Framework Directive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fáilte Ireland (FI) is the National Tourism Development Authority with the role of supporting the long-term sustainable growth in the economic, social, cultural and environmental contribution of tourism in Ireland. Fáilte Ireland also 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.

The *Burren and Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience Destination Plan* (hereafter referred to as “The Plan”) was launched by Fáilte Ireland in January 2020 and organised into an ongoing development framework. The Plan focusses largely on the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark, as well as tourism initiatives in the surrounding area. The Plan was developed with members of the tourism industry to provide guidance for tourism development and economic generation through projects adopted by all stakeholders. It is intended to achieve the objectives of addressing seasonality, increasing visitor numbers, improving dwell time and visitor dispersion across the destination. A key source of information regarding the progress and monitoring data on the projects was through consultations with Fáilte Ireland and the Plan Implementation Group.

The Plan was informed by the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process in accordance with the SEA Directive 2001/42/EEC (as amended). Under Article 10 of the SEA Directive requires, “the significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan are monitored in order, inter alia, to identify at an early-stage unforeseen adverse effects, and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action”. Monitoring is an important tool for evaluating whether the SEA is fulfilling its core objective of providing for a high level of protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development.

This SEA monitoring has been completed approximately five years into the implementation phase of the Plan. The Plan’s SEA Statement (CAAS, 2020a) details the monitoring programme to be used to assess the likely significant effects on the environment. The monitoring programme contains fifteen environmental indicators accompanied by environmental targets, which are used to assess the likely significant effects of implementing the Plan.

This monitoring report provides an update to the baseline environmental receptors relevant to the monitoring programme and identifies any changes in the baseline since the preparation of the SEA Environmental Report and the Plan. This step informs the monitoring team of any changes or trends in the environment, which is subsequently used to inform the need for additional mitigation measures or remedial action.

The SEA monitoring was undertaken on the 46 actions included in the Plan. The projects were screened and assessed for their potential to result in significant environmental effects. As a result of the environmental screening process, 19 projects relating to marketing, staff training, and other tourism development goals were determined not to pose any significant impact on the environment. A further 22 had not progressed to a level capable of environmental monitoring. The remaining five projects were taken forward for monitoring and assessed against the targets and indicators developed in the SEA Statement stage. The assessment found that the Plan has had a neutral effect on most of the SEA indicators. However, broader social, economic, and environmental benefits have been identified associated with the implementation of the Plan. A number of recommendations are included in this monitoring report which should be considered as part of the next monitoring programme.

1. INTRODUCTION

The *Burren and Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience Development Plan (VEDP)* (hereafter referred to as “The Plan”) was published in January 2020 by Fáilte Ireland. The Plan was informed by the Strategic Environmental Assessment¹ (SEA) process throughout its development. The *SEA Directive 2001/42/EC* requires under Article 10 that, “the significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan are monitored in order, inter alia, to identify at an early-stage unforeseen adverse effects, and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action”. This report is the first SEA Monitoring Report for the Plan approximately five years into the implementation of the Plan.

This SEA monitoring report has been prepared having regard to the relevant legislation namely the SEA Directive - Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of Ministers, on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, and the relevant national statutory instrument for tourism plans which is transposed by S.I. No. 435 of 2004 (European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004), as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 (European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011).

1.1 Fáilte Ireland

As the National Tourism Development Authority, Fáilte Ireland's role is to support the long-term sustainable growth in the economic, social, cultural, and environmental contribution of tourism in Ireland. Fáilte Ireland works in partnership with Government, State agencies, local authorities, representative groups, and industry to develop tourism across Ireland by creating visitor and destination development plans and networks and investing in infrastructure, activities, visitor attractions and festivals. Fáilte Ireland also provides consumer and buyer insights, mentoring, business support, training programmes, and buyer platforms to help tourism businesses innovate and grow.

In addition, Fáilte Ireland supports business tourism, managing the bidding for and securing of larger conferences, meetings, and events to be hosted in Ireland. Fáilte Ireland are also responsible for domestic holiday marketing across four regional experience brands: Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East, Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, and Dublin.

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. Any reference made to such projects included in the Plan does not guarantee funding. While funding is provided to certain projects, Fáilte Ireland is not the developer.

¹ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt it.

2. SUMMARY OF THE PLAN

The Plan, published in January 2020, was developed with members of the tourism industry to provide guidance for tourism development and economic generation through projects developed with inputs from key regional stakeholders. The overarching vision of the Plan, is to increase dwell time and inspire visitors and the next generation to become custodians of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher.

The Plan seeks to improve upon the region's guiding principles, to increase sustainable tourism, build community support for tourism, boost visitor connection and satisfaction and maximise the value of tourism experiences. The geographic area to which the Plan relates is identified in Figure 2-1 below.

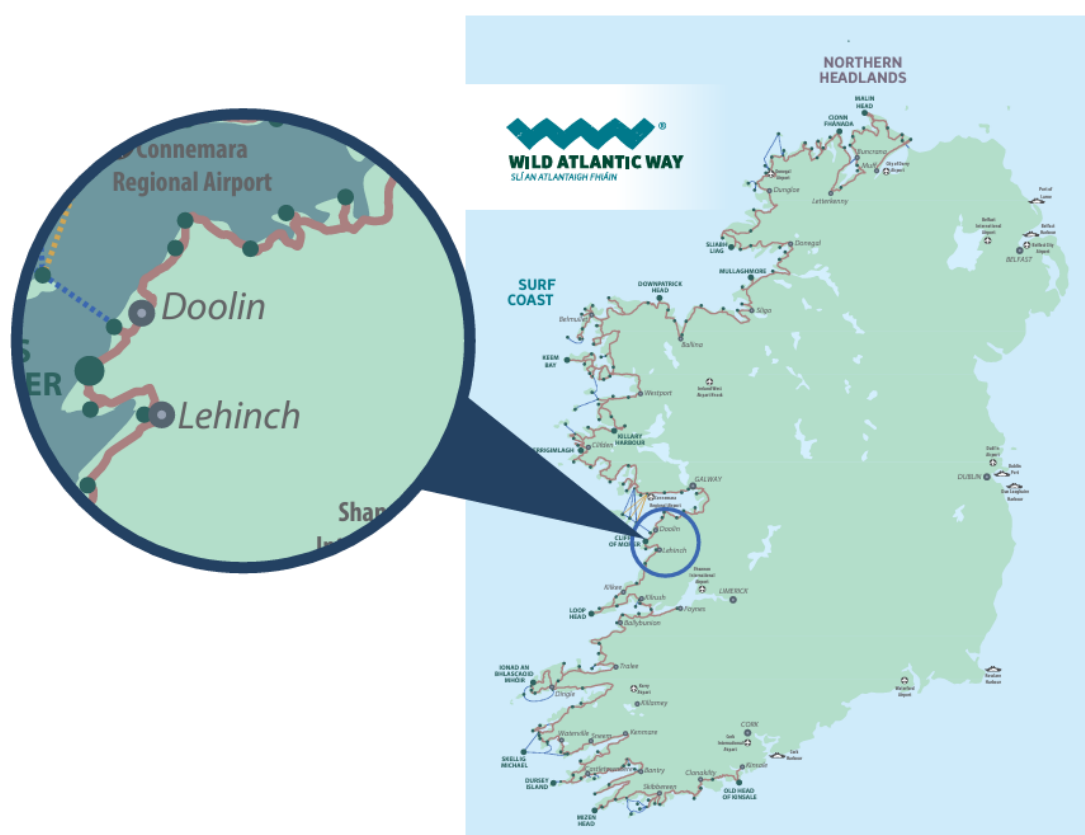
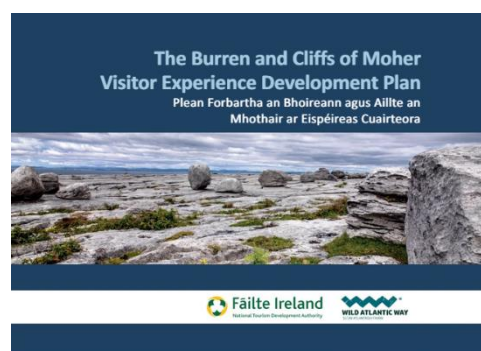


Figure 2-1 Area to which the Plan relates (Fáilte Ireland, 2020)

The Plan area includes the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark. The Geopark is known for its geological, cultural and archaeological history and is a top tourist destination in Ireland.

The purpose of the Plan is to address challenges and opportunities facing tourism business, stakeholders and visitors in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher. The Plan is organised into nine key catalyst projects. The catalysts, in order of priority, are:

1. Develop and implement an Integrated Traffic and Transport Strategy for the Burren and Cliffs of Moher;
2. Upgrade of 2km of the Cliff Walk (1km either side of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre) through a partnership with land owners and National Parks to develop a management plan and future funding model that supports the land owners and allows for reinvestment and a sustainable walking infrastructure;

3. Develop a winter Burren Music, Dance & Story Trail connecting visitors with music, dance, stories and traditions of the place- people and villages;
4. Create a 'Wellness the Wild Atlantic Way; programme and dedicate sections on the Fáilte Ireland website that looks at the broader definition of 'wellness' including connection, time in nature, and the need to sleep well, as well as the traditional, relation, healthy food and exercise elements;
5. Develop the Burren Discovery Trail to assist in dispersing independent travellers eastward to the Burren Lowlands and provide interpretive content to interpret the landscape and reveal the underlying stories;
6. Support farmers keen to diversify their business to include tourism with a business support programme and guidance on insurance and planning requirements and investment in sustainable tourism experiences;
7. Be a Custodian for a day- join the Geopark to experience what is involved in managing a Global Geopark;
8. Facilitate workshop(s) to assist in further developing and promoting a series of cultural events that encourage year-round visitation through dedicated timely funding; and
9. Encourage the establishment of new eco-friendly, responsible adventure experiences such as new cycling experiences along the green roads including mountain-biking and the 'edge' experience.

The objectives of the Plan are to develop experiences that will:

- Motivate visitors to stay longer and spend more;
- Extend the length of the season;
- Align to relevant brand, target markets and segments;
- Sustain and increase job creation in the local area; and
- Protect the special environmental character of the region.

The Burren and Cliffs of Moher is a key part of the larger Wild Atlantic Way Experience Brand. The Wild Atlantic Way has three brand themes:

- **Land Shaped by the Atlantic**
You can get up close and personal with traditions and spiritual Gaelic Ireland and immerse yourself in the real Ireland where the traditions of the past are very much alive in the music, the song, the dance, storytelling, games and the Irish language.
- **Where Land Meets Sea**
On the very edge of Europe, the ocean's force has carved a coast of wild, raw beauty. Huge Atlantic rollers crash and churn, shaping jagged ocean crags, islands and the sheet granite of Europe's tallest sea cliffs. It provides a breathtaking backdrop for active exploration of untamed land and seascapes. Enjoy up close encounters with the elements.
- **Connectedness**
The feeling of connecting to the people and the landscape, of being a part of something 'bigger' and reflecting on what is important in your life. Feeling renewed and energised by the place, its people and its story. Your reward from a journey of discovery and being immersed in an ancient landscape.

Section 5 of the Plan outlines instructions to support the delivery of the Plan and its catalysts. It identified lead organisations and partners and establishes an Implementation Group of representatives.

2.1.1 Integrating environmental protection and management into the Plan

The implementation of the Plan is required to be consistent with and conform with the higher-level plans and policy, including the *National Planning Framework (NPF)*, *Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028*, *Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029*, and relevant Local Area Plans (LAPs), which include provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection, and environmental management that have been integrated into these

documents. In order to be realised, projects / actions included in the Plan (in a similar way to other projects from any other sectors) will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment (AA), Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment (SSFRA) and other consenting / licencing requirements as appropriate that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework, of which the Plan is not part of and does not contribute towards.

The legislation, policies, plans, and programmes include:

- Requirements for lower-tier environmental assessment, including EIA, AA and SSFRA;
- *Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028* and *Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029*, including the SEA environmental monitoring and provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection, and environmental management;
- The national annual Climate Action Plan, and;
- *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework 2024* (and any subsequent versions) etc.

The SEA team worked with the Plan preparation team at Fáilte Ireland in order to integrate requirements for environmental protection and management during the Plan preparation stage. The SEA Statement, dated September 2020, details the final SEA Environmental Monitoring Programme which is also included in Appendix 1 of the Plan. The selected indicators, targets and monitoring sources identified as part of the SEA Statement stage are the starting point for this monitoring report.

3. METHODOLOGY

Undertaking monitoring helps evaluate whether the SEA is fulfilling its core objective of providing for a high level of protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development as required under Article 1 of the SEA Directive.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) *Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment Statements and Monitoring* (EPA, 2023a) identify a number of overarching aims with regard to the SEA monitoring process:

- Reveal the “real” effects of implementing the Plan (i.e., the Plan’s environmental performance). This would be through comparing the environmental assessment results with the environmental effects that occur. In turn, this will help improve or refine the SEA assessment methods.
- Fill data gaps, reducing uncertainties in the assessment.
- Measure targets and indicators over time to identify long-term changes and trends in the environment, building knowledge on how the trends will affect or be affected by the Plan and help identify the need for additional mitigation measures or remedial action where issues are identified.
- Identifying unforeseen effects that may not have been identified during the assessment.
- Gather information through monitoring to provide up-to-date baseline environmental data readily available, thus informing the review and preparation of subsequent iterations of the Plan.

Key relevant guidance documents that have informed this monitoring report include but are not limited to, the following:

- *Good practice guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Tourism Sector*, EPA (2023);
- *Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment Statements and Monitoring*, EPA (2023);
- *Good practice guidance on Cumulative Effects Assessment in SEA*, EPA (2020);
- *Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) And Climate Change: Guidance for Practitioners*, EPA (2013);
- *Strategic Environmental Assessment: Guidelines for Regional Assemblies and Planning Authorities*, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (2022).

3.1 Assessment Methodology

This section details the methodology used to monitor the likely significant effects on the environment from the implementation of the Plan. Likely significant effects on the environment are considered in accordance with the ‘*Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*’ referred to hereafter as ‘EPA EIAR Guidelines’ published by the EPA in 2022 (EPA, 2022). Determining the likely significant effects on the environment include considerations such as, the location and sensitivities of environment; and the nature and characteristics of the project that will impact environmental factors. The potential magnitude of the effect, which considers duration and spatial extent of the impact on the environment and whether the effect(s) is direct, indirect, residual or cumulative informs the significance of the effect. Effects can be described as positive, negative or neutral effect and can be temporary, short-term, medium-term, long-term, permanent or reversible effects.

The methodology for this monitoring report includes a review and update of the baseline, relevant to the SEA indicators and targets defined during the SEA Statement stage, replicated in Appendix A of this report. The baseline updates are presented under each environmental factor relevant to the monitoring period i.e. 2020 to 2025, regard has been given the baseline information presented at the SEA Environmental Report stage and is not duplicated in this report.

Given the geographically defined nature of Fáilte Ireland projects, a review of project-specific effects is a key pillar of the assessment approach informing the likely significant environmental effects. Firstly, an update on the progress related to each 'Project' in the Plan is provided, which was informed by Fáilte Ireland and/or the partners responsible for implementing the Project. The Projects were subsequently put into a matrix and based on the Project description and relevant update it is screened for the potential to result in significant environmental effects. Project updates for each Action are described in Appendix B.

The screening process for likely significant effects follows the assessment of likely significant effects in accordance with the EPA EIAR Guidelines. If the screening identified potential for significant environmental effects the Project is brought forward for detailed monitoring. The staged monitoring process is described in the sections below and illustrated in Figure 3-1.

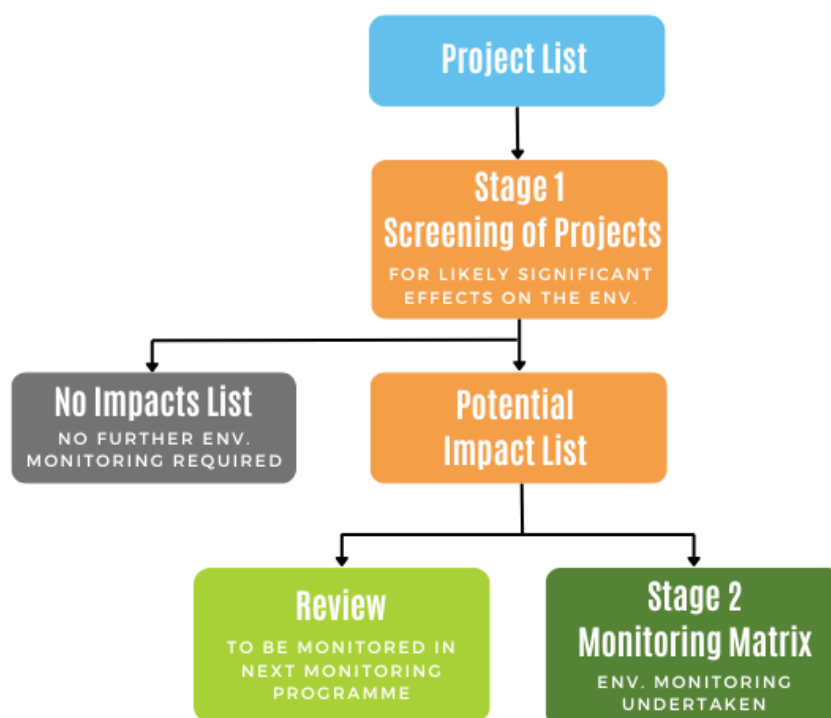


Figure 3-1 Screening the Projects under the Plan for likely significant environmental effects

Stage 1 – Screening: Screening is used to determine if the Projects are likely to have a significant effect on the environmental indicators and targets. This stage is a high-level environmental screening process which includes considerations such as whether the nature and/or scope of the Project will result in physical works and therefore, likely to have an impact on the environment. If there is no potential for significant environmental effects identified (for example, this could include Projects relating to development of branding materials or re-advertising existing experiences, etc.), these Projects are identified as not requiring environmental monitoring and are screened out. When screened out, it is intended that these Projects would not require future environmental monitoring, however, this should be reviewed as part of the next monitoring programme. Actions that were screened out for environmental monitoring are greyed out in Appendix B.

For the Projects that are identified as having the potential for environmental effects, they are screened in and included in the 'Potential Impact List' and brought forward for environmental monitoring.

The '**Potential Impact List**' is further refined for assessment based on the progress associated with the Project. The Projects are then divided into a '**Review**' list and a '**Monitoring**' list. The Review list relates to those Projects that cannot be taken any further in this monitoring programme due to insufficient information or limited and/or no progress. These Projects are

identified in the column '**Review**' and are recommended to be reviewed as part of subsequent monitoring programme. The '**Monitoring**' list are the Projects that have progressed and can be subjected to detailed environmental monitoring under the SEA environmental indicators. Full actions descriptions and rational to Stage 1 sifting can be found in Table B-1 in Appendix B.

Stage 2 - Monitoring results: The Projects brought forward for detailed monitoring are placed into a separate Monitoring Matrix (Refer to Section 5 of this report). Any supplementary updates after the initial screening stage are included at this stage. The Projects are assessed across all environmental indicators. The same acronyms as those presented in the SEA Statement are used, for example, 'B1' signifies Biodiversity related indicators, 'S1' signifies the Soil related indicator, etc. (refer to **Appendix A** in this Report for full details).

The Project is assessed against the specific indicators with an environmental assessment rating assigned, reflecting if the Project has had a Positive (✓) Negative (X), Neutral (0), and / or Unknown (?) effect on the indicator being assessed. As previously stated, the criteria for the assessment of effects are based on the EPA EIAR Guidelines identified in Table 3.4 of the Guidelines. A commentary/narrative is included to provide a more detailed rationale for the assessment and whether there is a positive, negative, neutral or unknown effect.

Should the occurrence of persistent or significant adverse environmental effects which are directly attributable to the Plan be identified, this would necessitate consideration of the effects in the context of the Plan and a possible review of part(s) of the Plan, including the monitoring programme. Remedial measures are included if required and will form part of the next monitoring programme.

Data sources

Publicly available sources of data listed in the *SEA Statement for the Burren and Cliffs of Moher VEDP* were used to inform the updates to the baseline for each environmental factor which are referenced in each section. Relevant sources of information to inform the report includes, but is not limited to:

- *SEA Environmental Report for the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience Development Plan*;
- *SEA Statement Burren and Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience Development Plan*; and
- *Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028* and *Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029*, and their supporting environmental assessments.

There were no significant data gaps associated with completing the monitoring report.

Consultation with Fáilte Ireland and the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Implementation Group has been a key source of information particularly relating to the individual Projects and implementation that is included in this report.

This section provides a baseline update following on from the *SEA Environmental Report* (CAAS, 2020), which is relevant to the indicators and targets under each environmental factor over the monitoring period. A review of the baseline trends helps inform the monitoring assessment across each of the targets and indicators. The baseline updates and the monitoring results are informed by the relevant sources of data identified in the SEA Environmental Monitoring Programme (Appendix A) and any other sources that are identified as being relevant. The baseline report was further informed by the *2019 Ecological Study of Visitor Movement Areas* by CAAS, where relevant.

3.2 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

3.2.1 Policy and Legislation update

Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (2023 – 2030) (NPWS, 2023), in accordance with the Convention on Biological Diversity, is a framework for the conservation and protection of Ireland's biodiversity, with an overall objective to secure the conservation, including, where possible, the enhancement and sustainable use, of biological diversity in Ireland and to contribute to collective efforts for conservation of biodiversity globally.

Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) contains five overall Objectives:

1. Adopt a Whole-of-Government, Whole-of-Society Approach to Biodiversity.
2. Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs.
3. Secure Nature's Contribution to People.
4. Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity.
5. Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity Initiatives

The Nature Restoration Law was adopted in 2024 and legally binds EU Member States to restore at least 20% of the EU's land and sea areas by 2030, and all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050. The regulation contains the following specific targets (EC, 2024):

- **Targets Based on Existing Legislation (for Wetlands, Forests, Grasslands, River and Lakes, Heath & Scrub, Rocky Habitats and Dunes)** – improving and re-establishing biodiverse habitats on a large scale and bringing back species populations by improving and enlarging their habitats.
- **Pollinating Insects** – reversing the decline of pollinator populations by 2030, and achieving an increasing trend for pollinator populations, with a methodology for regular monitoring of pollinators.
- **Forest Ecosystems** – achieving an increasing trend for standing and lying deadwood, uneven aged forests, forest connectivity, abundance of common forest birds and stock of organic carbon.
- **Urban Ecosystems** – no net loss of green urban space and tree cover by 2030, and a steady increase in their total area from 2030.
- **Agricultural Ecosystems** – increasing grassland butterflies and farmland birds, the stock of organic carbon in cropland mineral soils, and the share of agricultural land with high-diversity landscape features; restoring drained peatlands under agricultural use.
- **Marine Ecosystems** – restoring marine habitats such as seagrass beds or sediment bottoms that deliver significant benefits, including for climate change mitigation, and restoring the habitats of iconic marine species such as dolphins and porpoises, sharks and seabirds.
- **River Connectivity** – identifying and removing barriers that prevent the connectivity of surface waters, so that at least 25,000km of rivers are restored to a free-flowing state by 2030.

3.2.2 Baseline update

Under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), each member state is obliged to report to the European Commission every six years on the conservation status of the natural habitats and species protected under this Directive and on the implementation of the measures taken under the Directive. In April 2019, Ireland submitted the third assessment of conservation status for fifty-nine habitats and sixty species (including three overview assessments of species at a group level). A further eight species are considered to be vagrant in Ireland.

According to the Article 17 reports, the majority of the habitats that were assessed are considered to be in unfavourable status and just under half are in decline, including marine, peatland, grassland, and woodland habitats (NPWS, 2019). The Article 17 reports also indicate that populations of 72% of species protected under the Habitats Directive are stable or improving and that 57% of species assessed have a favourable conservation status (NPWS,

2019). More detail on status and trends of these habitats and species is provided in Table 3-1 and Table 3-2 below.

Table 3-1 Status and trends of habitats protected under the *Habitats Directive* according to Article 17 reporting (NPWS, 2019).

Status				Trend			
Favourable	Inadequate	Bad	Unknown	Stable	Improving	Declining	Unknown
15%	46%	39%	0%	52.5%	2%	45.5%	0%

Table 3-2 Status and trends of species protected under the *Habitats Directive* according to Article 17 reporting (NPWS, 2019).

Status				Trend			
Favourable	Inadequate	Bad	Unknown	Stable	Improving	Declining	Unknown
57%	15%	15%	13%	55%	17%	15%	13%

According to the EPA (EPAb, 2020), the main pressures and threats on Ireland's protected habitats and species include the following:

- Agriculture
- Extraction of resources and forestry
- Urbanisation
- Recreation
- Invasive species
- Climate change

Recreation is identified by the EPA as one of the main pressures and threats to protected habitats and species. Other sectors may also be influenced indirectly by tourism, such as recreation or amenities activities. Additionally, developments and travel linked with tourism can result in further urbanisation, potentially resulting in the spread of invasive species, and contributing to climate change.

In accordance with Article 12 of the *Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)*, Member States are also obliged to report on the status and trends of bird populations protected under the Birds Directive. The following conclusions have been drawn from the most recent Article 12 reporting which was published in 2018 and is reported on in the *Ireland's Environment – An Integrated Assessment 2020* (EPA, 2020b).

Approximately 20% of Ireland's breeding bird species are in long-term decline, and approximately 30% of breeding species populations are stable or have increased over the long term (EPA, 2020b). A number of breeding farmland songbirds are under increasing pressures from the modernisation and intensification of agricultural practices, and breeding populations of waders have declined by 93% over the long term (EPA, 2020b).

Most wintering species that were assessed are waterbirds and are seasonal visitors in Ireland. Ireland is internationally important for hundreds of thousands of visiting waterbirds every year.

The populations of more than half of these species are declining in the short term. This includes waders and duck species which have seen a decline of 91% in the short term. Many winter waterbird species are showing a northeasterly shift in their range across Europe which may be due to climate change. Additionally, decades of habitat degradation and land use change have resulted in large declines in ground nesting bird populations (EPA, 2020b). More information on the short and long-term trends in breeding and wintering bird species is identified in Table 3-3 and Table 3-4 below.

Table 3-3 Short and long-term breeding population trends of bird species protected under the Bird's Directive (EEA, 2020)

Short-term Trend				
Increasing	Stable	Decreasing	Uncertain	Unknown
43%	25%	21%	4%	8%
Long-term Trend				
Increasing	Stable	Decreasing	Uncertain	Unknown
22%	7%	19%	1%	51%

Table 3-4 Short and long-term wintering population trends of bird species protected under the Bird's Directive (EEA, 2020a)

Short-term Trend				Long-term Trend			
Increasing	Stable	Decreasing	Unknown	Increasing	Stable	Decreasing	Unknown
10%	3%	53%	34%	21%	0%	23%	56%

The Burren is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (East Burren Complex SAC), and the Cliffs of Moher is a Special Protection Area (SPA). These European sites are designated for the habitats and species listed in Table 3-5 (NPWS, 2022a, b):

Table 3-5 Qualifying Interests for the East Burren Complex SAC and the Cliffs of Moher SPA

East Burren Complex SAC	Cliffs of Moher SPA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. [3140] • Turloughs [3180] • Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitans</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260] • Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] • <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] • Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i> [6130] • Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] • Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510] • Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210] • Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220] • Alkaline fens [7230] • Limestone pavements [8240] • Caves not open to the public [8310] • Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0] • Marsh fritillary (<i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>) [1065] • Lesser Horseshoe Bat (<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>) [1303] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009] • Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] • Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199] • Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A200] • Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>) [A204] • Chough (<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>) [A346]

East Burren Complex SAC	Cliffs of Moher SPA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355] 	

Table 3-6 to Table 3-9 below displays the habitats and species designated for the East Burren Complex SAC and the Cliffs of Moher SPA, and their overall trends in Ireland. The Qualifying Interest habitats in the East Burren Complex SAC, and their range in Ireland, area covered by habitat in Ireland, and tourism and recreation-related threats and pressures are displayed in Table 3-6. This data pertains to the overall status of these habitats in Ireland, and is not specific to their status in the Burren or the Cliffs of Moher SAC. None of the habitats ranges or areas covered were found to be increasing in Ireland. Many of the habitats do not have threats and pressures which directly relate to tourism and recreation.

The abstraction of ground and surface waters (including marine) for public water supply and recreational use (F33) is a medium-importance threat and pressure for hard oligo-mesotrophic waters (3140), however the range of the habitat, and the area covered by the habitat are both stable in the short and long-term.

Sports, tourism and leisure activities (F07) is a medium-importance threat and pressure for Alpine and Boreal heaths (4060), Calaminarian grasslands (6130), and Petrifying springs (7220). The overall range of Alpine and Boreal heaths is stable, however the overall area covered by the habitat in Ireland is decreasing. The short-term trends for the range and the area covered by petrifying springs are stable, and decreasing for Calaminarian grasslands, no data is available for long-term trends of these habitats.

The conversion from other land uses to housing (F01) is a medium-importance threat for Limestone pavements (8240)., this habitat has an overall stable trend of its range, however the overall area covered by the habitat in Ireland is decreasing.

The qualifying interest species in the East Burren Complex SAC, and their overall populations and overall range in Ireland, and tourism and recreation-related threats and pressures are displayed in Table 3-7. This data pertains to the overall status of these species in Ireland and is not specific to their status in the Burren or the Cliffs of Moher SAC. Conversion to forest from other land uses, or afforestation (excluding drainage)(B01) is a high-importance threat and pressure for marsh fritillary. The short-term range population and range trends for marsh fritillary in Ireland are increasing, however there is uncertainty regarding their long-term trends.

Lesser horseshoe bat are subject to medium-importance threats and pressures including: conversion from other land uses to housing, settlement or recreational areas (F01); construction or modification (e.g. of housing and settlements) in existing urban or recreational areas (F02); residential or recreational activities and structures generating noise, light, heat or other forms of pollution (F24); and, other human intrusions and disturbance not mentioned above (dumping, accidental and deliberate disturbance of bat roosts (e.g. caving))(H08). The overall population of lesser horseshoe bat in Ireland is increasing, the short-term trend for the overall range of this species is decreasing, and data on the long-term trend is not available.

The short-term population trend for otter is increasing, and the long-term population trend is stable. The overall trend for the range of otter is stable in Ireland, no tourism and recreation-related threats and pressures are listed for this species.

Data was collected on Ireland's breeding seabirds from 2013 to 2018 under the *National Seabird Monitoring Programme*, and reported by *Cummins et al. in 2019*. Table 4-8 presents the overall population and overall range in Ireland, percentage change in the Cliffs of Moher since 2000, and tourism and recreation-related threats and pressures for fulmar, kittiwake, guillemot, and razorbill. the status of Ireland's breeding puffin population has not yet been published. The overall short and long-term trends on the breeding population and distribution of fulmar, guillemot and razorbill in Ireland has increased. There was a 36% increase in the fulmar population and a 75% increase in the guillemot population at the Cliffs of Moher between 2003 and 2018, however the razorbill population at the site decreased by 48%. Local changes in prey availability is thought to be a cause in the regional differences in population trends for

razorbill (*Cummins et al.*, 2019). While the breeding distribution of kittiwake in Ireland has increased, the breeding population has decreased, and there was a decline of 48.3% of the population at the Cliffs of Moher between 2003 and 2018.

A national survey of chough was undertaken by *Colhoun et al.* in 2021. As displayed in Table 3-9, there has been a 75% decrease in breeding pairs of chough from 2002 to 2021. In 2002 and 2003, there were an estimated 12 breeding pairs of chough, however in 2021, only one breeding pair was confirmed, along with one possible breeding pair, and a pair that exhibited no evidence of breeding (*Colhoun et al.*, 2024). Disturbance and the restoration of buildings leading to a loss of nest sites are tourism and recreation-related pressures which chough are subject to. The reason for a decline in breeding pairs at the Cliffs of Moher is not certain, however given that human activity is high at this site is, human-related disturbance may be a cause, though this is understudied (*Colhoun et al.*, 2024). Another possible reason for the decrease in breeding pairs at the cliffs of Moher is regional movements. The overall numbers of breeding pairs recorded for Co. Clare increased between 2002 and 2021, as such, breeding pairs may be moving to other nest locations, resulting in short or long-term changes in breeding pairs at the site. For example, fluctuations between Chough on the Aran Islands and the Cliffs of Moher may be breeding and non-breeding pairs moving between these islands and the mainland in different years (*Carroll et al.*, 2010).

Table 3-6 The overall trends of EU Protected habitats in Ireland (NPWS, 2019b)².

Habitat Code relevant to East Burren Complex SAC	Range		Area covered by habitat		Tourism and Recreation-related Threats and Pressures ³	
	Short-term trend Direction	Long-term trend Direction	Short-term trend Direction	Long-term trend Direction	Threats	Pressures
3140	Stable	Stable	Stable	Stable	F33 Abstraction of ground and surface waters (including marine) for public water supply and recreational use (M)	F33 Abstraction of ground and surface waters (including marine) for public water supply and recreational use (M)
3180	Stable	Stable	Stable	Not available	N/A	N/A
3260	Stable	Not available	Stable	Not available	N/A	N/A
4060	Stable	Stable	Decreasing	Decreasing	F07 Sports, tourism and leisure activities (M)	F07 Sports, tourism and leisure activities (M)
5130	Stable	Stable	Stable	Stable	No threats listed	No pressures listed
6130	Decreasing	Not available	Decreasing	Not available	F07 Sports, tourism and leisure activities (M)	F07 Sports, tourism and leisure activities (M)
6210	Stable	Stable	Decreasing	Decreasing	N/A	N/A
6510	Decreasing	Decreasing	Decreasing	Decreasing	N/A	N/A
7210	Stable	Not available	Stable	Not available	N/A	N/A
7220	Stable	Not available	Stable	Not available	F07 Sports, tourism and leisure activities (M)	F07 Sports, tourism and leisure activities (M)
7230	Stable	Not available	Decreasing	Not available	N/A	N/A
8240	Stable	Stable	Decreasing	Decreasing	F01 Conversion from other land uses to housing (M)	F01 Conversion from other land uses to housing (M)
8310	Stable	Not available	Stable	Not available	No threats listed	No pressures listed
91E0	Stable	Stable	Decreasing	Decreasing	N/A	N/A

² It should be noted that this data pertains to habitats and species in Ireland and is not specific to the Burren or the Cliffs of Moher.

³ M = Medium Importance; H = High Importance

Table 3-7 The overall trends of EU Protected species in Ireland which are designated for the East Burren Complex SAC (NPWS, 2019c)³.

Species	Overall Population		Overall Range		Tourism and Recreation-related Threats and Pressures ⁴	
	Short-term trend Direction	Long-term trend Direction	Short-term trend Direction	Long-term trend Direction	Threats	Pressures
Marsh fritillary	Increasing	Uncertain	Increasing	Uncertain	B01 Conversion to forest from other land uses, or afforestation (excluding drainage) (H)	B01 Conversion to forest from other land uses, or afforestation (excluding drainage) (H)
Lesser Horseshoe Bat	Increasing	Increasing	Decreasing	Not available	F01 Conversion from other land uses to housing, settlement or recreational areas (M) F02 Construction or modification (e.g. of housing and settlements) in existing urban or recreational areas (M) F24 Residential or recreational activities and structures generating noise, light, heat or other forms of pollution (M) H08 Other human intrusions and disturbance not mentioned above (Dumping, accidental and deliberate disturbance of bat roosts (e.g. caving)) (M)	F01 Conversion from other land uses to housing, settlement or recreational areas (M) F02 Construction or modification (e.g. of housing and settlements) in existing urban or recreational areas (M) F24 Residential or recreational activities and structures generating noise, light, heat or other forms of pollution (M) H08 Other human intrusions and disturbance not mentioned above (Dumping, accidental and deliberate disturbance of bat roosts (e.g. caving)) (M)
Otter	Increasing	Stable	Stable	Stable	No threats listed	No pressures listed

Table 3-8 Overall trends of Fulmar, Kittiwake, Guillemot, Razorbill and Puffin in Ireland (Cummins et al., 2019).

Species	Ireland Breeding Population ³		Ireland Breeding Distribution ³		% change in the Cliffs of Moher since 2000	Tourism and Recreation-related Threats and Pressures ⁴	Percentage Relevance
	Short-term trend	Long-term trend	Short-term trend	Long-term trend			
Fulmar	0%	+ 68%	+ 14%	+ 4%	+ 36%	F22 Residential or recreational activities and structures generating marine macro- and micro- particulate pollution (e.g. plastic bags, Styrofoam)	54%
Kittiwake	- 32%	- 35%	+ 38%	+ 23%	- 48.3%		54%
Guillemot	+ 28%	+ 72%	+ 27%	+ 8%	+ 75%	F23 Industrial or commercial activities and structures generating marine macro- and micro- particulate pollution (e.g. plastic bags, Styrofoam)	46%
Razorbill	+ 23%	+ 45%	+ 46%	+ 21%	- 48%		46%
Puffin	<i>Insufficient data</i>					F07 Sports, tourism and leisure activities G01 Marine fish and shellfish harvesting (professional, recreational) causing reduction of species/prey populations and disturbance of species G10 Illegal shooting/killing	4%

Table 3-9 Overall trends of Chough in the Cliffs of Moher SPA (Colhoun et al., 2024).

Number of confirmed breeding pairs in the Cliffs of Moher	% change of breeding pairs in the Cliffs of Moher from 2002/03 - 2021	Tourism and Recreation-related Threats and Pressures
1	- 75.0%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restoration of buildings leading to loss of nest sites Disturbance caused by general surroundings/farming environment e.g. floodlighting, farm activities, visitors to historic buildings (include castles and Martello towers)

⁴ For all Seabirds in Ireland.

The Burren Life Programme

The Burren Life Programme is a joint agri-environmental initiative between the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) designed to conserve the habitats of the Burren. The Programme commenced in 2010 and is aimed at mainstreaming the findings of the BurrenLIFE Project.

The objectives of the BurrenLIFE Project are:

- To ensure the implementation of up to 170 focussed farm plans aimed at maintaining and/or enhancing the quality of the environment in the Burren, in particular those habitats listed in Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive that occur within the Burren
- To work towards an improvement in the conservation quality of the Annex I habitats, as assessed under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive.
- To ensure sustainable agricultural management of high nature value farmland within the Burren
- To contribute to improvements in water quality within the Burren
- To maintain the high quality of the Burren landscape and cultural heritage

Burren in Bloom

Approximately 70% of Ireland's native wildflower species are found in the Burren, including 23 of Ireland's 27 native orchid species (Burren Beo Trust, 2020). These species contribute to the composition of Qualifying Interest habitats of the East Burren Complex SAC, including Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) (a dominant species in Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060]), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Bird's-Foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), and Devil's-Bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*) (positive indicator species for Lowland hay meadows [6510] (O'Neill *et al.*, 2010). Devil's-Bit Scabious also supports the Qualifying Interest species Marsh fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*) [1065], which relies on it as the host plant for its larvae. The Burren in Bloom festival is a community-led event which aims to promote the biodiversity found in the Burren. The event primarily involves guided walks through the Burren. Funding is provided by the Heritage Council under the Heritage Capacity Funding 2023 (Burren Beo Trust, 2025).

Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040

The Draft Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040 (CCC, 2024a) was prepared on behalf of Clare County Council by a multi-disciplinary team of international consultants, with guidance provided by representatives from the Local Authority, Cliffs of Moher Experience, Fáilte Ireland, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, private industries and the wider community. Extensive consultation has also been undertaken with Elected Members, the tourism and hospitality sector, and the local community over a three-year period. The strategic aim of the Strategy is to enhance significantly the visitor experience within a restored and re-wilded natural landscape, create sustainable access to and within the enlarged site, and encourage managed dispersal of visitors across the area to deliver widespread economic benefits for local communities. The draft strategy was informed by a Natura Impact Statement, and the SEA process

3.2.3 Monitoring Results

Results from sources of data consulted:

- Article 17 and 12 reports outline changes in the conservation status of habitats and species listed under the *Habitats Directive* and bird species listed under the *Birds Directive*, respectively. Additionally, they discuss the pressures and threats that have led to declines in populations and conservation status of habitats and species where relevant which can be linked back and are assessed under the Projects arising from the Plan.
- Article 17 reports have not been updated since the Plan was prepared. Article 17 reports are produced every six years, and the most recent reports were produced in 2019. The next Article 17 were supposed to be published in 2024 but at the time of writing have not yet been published.

- Article 12 reports have not been updated since the Plan was prepared. Article 12 reports are supposed to be produced every three years; however, the most recent Article 12 reports were published in 2018.
- The CORINE mapping has not been updated since the development of the Plan. CORINE mapping is updated every five years. It was last updated in 2018, therefore, there is nothing to report in respect of this data source.
- Since the preparation of the Plan, the Fáilte Ireland national monitoring includes one site in the Burren area The Flaggy Shore which was monitored in 2019.
- As a consequence of the BurrenLIFE project, the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme (BFCP) was launched by DAFM in 2010. By 2013, over 14,500 ha of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) were covered by the BFCP, covering about 46% of the Burren SAC area. This work has directly informed the expansion of Targeted Output Based Agri Environmental Projects in the planned Irish RDP 2014-2020. This includes an expansion of the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme. The BurrenLIFE project was selected as one of the "Best of the Best" LIFE Nature projects in Europe in 2010, and DG Agri is using the project as an example of a successful interactive group to guide future European Innovation Partnerships. (Teagasc, undated).
- The *Draft Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040* was published in 2024 for consultation, it is accompanied by A Natura Impact Statement and Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report.

Monitoring Indicator (B1) – Conservation status of habitats and species as assessed under Article 17 of the *Habitats Directive*.

Result B1: The maintenance of favourable conservation status for all habitats and species protected under National and International legislation affected by the implementation of the Plan to date is unknown as there are no results available since the preparation of the Plan. Therefore, the plan has had an unknown effect on this indicator.

Monitoring Indicator (B2): Percentage loss of functional connectivity without remediation resulting from Plan.

Result B2: No significant ecological networks or parts thereof which provide functional connectivity have been lost resulting from the projects implemented to date under the Plan, therefore, the implementation of the plan has had a neutral effect on this indicator.

Monitoring Indicator (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.

Result B3i: Significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from the Plan have not been recorded and / or have been avoided, therefore, the implementation of the plan has had a neutral effect on this indicator.

Monitoring Indicator (B3ii): Number of significant impacts on the protection of listed species.

Result B3ii: No significant impacts on the protection of listed species resulting from the implementation of the Plan, therefore, the implementation of the plan has had a neutral effect on this indicator.

Table 3-10 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna Monitoring Results

Indicator	Target	Monitoring Status
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	Neutral effect / No results to report.
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	Neutral effect / No results to report.
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	Neutral effect / No results to report.
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	Neutral effect / No results to report.

3.3 Population and Human Health

3.3.1 Baseline update

The Plan area covers western County Clare from Lahinch to Kinvara, which lies within counties Clare and Galway. The population of County Clare increased from 118,817 in 2016 to 127,938 in 2022 representing a 7.7% increase (CSO, 2022). The increase indicates that County Clare is slightly below the population projections for the county in the *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region* (RSES) which ranged from 8.8% to 10.5% increase from 2016 to 2026.

The main settlements/towns in the Plan area are Ennistymon, Lisdoonvarna, and Kinvara. The population differences from 2016 to 2022 are shown in Table 3-11 below. Ennistymon and Lisdoonvarna populations increased by 91 (8.8%) and 105 persons (12.7%) respectively. By contrast, Kinvara's population decreased by 13 persons (1.7%) between 2016 and 2022.

Table 3-11 Population of the main settlements/towns in the Plan area (CSO, 2022)

Settlement/Town	2016	2022	% change
Ennistymon	1,045	1,137	+8.8%
Kinvara	734	721	-1.7%
Lisdoonvarna	829	934	+12.7%

The average age of County Clare's population, as per the Census 2022, was 40.1 years, compared with 38.5 years in April 2016 (CSO, 2023). Nationally, the average age of the population was 38.8 in 2022, up from 37.4 as recorded in the Census 2016. National population projections anticipate large increases in the 15–24 years (+26%), 45–64 years (+14%) and 65+ years (+56%) age groups between 2016 and 2031 (CSO, 2022). The projected changing age profile will impact both how tourism and support services are delivered locally, and likely to influence the offering provided to tourists (domestic and foreign) visiting the region in the future.

Fáilte Ireland's Survey of Visitor Attractions ranked the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience as the second highest fee-charging attraction in the Ireland in 2023 with 1.3 million visits. The Doolin Cave is the second most popular visitor attraction in both the county and Plan area with 105,000 visitors in 2023.

Tourism supported approximately 6,600 jobs in County Clare in 2019, contributing an estimated €270 million to the county's economy (Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029). In rural Clare, where the Plan area is concentrated, tourism-related jobs account for 1 in 5 jobs along the western coast (Clare Rural Development Strategy 2026).

Tourism, recreation, and development pressure is likely to influence population dynamics within the Plan area and if not managed appropriately, could create pressure on biodiversity, infrastructure and waste facilities, heritage, and the landscape. Population can positively influence climate objectives through well-informed and climate conscious tour guides, sustainable tourism initiatives and behavioural shifts towards sustainable transport usage. These opportunities are actioned through Actions 3.2, 3.4 and 4.2.

Sport Ireland carried out an inspection of the Cliffs of Moher/Burren Way walking trail in August of 2024 following two tragic falls along the Cliffs earlier in the season. Sport Ireland's inspection found the walking trail unfit to handle the capacity of visitors, and several people ignoring warning signs to get closer to the cliff edge. As a result, a 5km section of the trail, shown in Figure 3-2, was closed on the 22nd August 2024, and connection to Doolin and Hag's Head are temporarily severed, pending safety improvements. It is anticipated that these closures will remain in place for the 2025 tourism season.

A study on documented deaths of international tourists between 1993 and 2017 reported that, 50% were suicides or open verdicts (Flaherty and Caumes, 2018). Signage with buoys were placed around the site by Clare County Council with the Samaritans Samaritan's phone number. The Samaritans offer emotional support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to anyone who is in distress, lonely, struggling to cope or feeling suicidal

A Management Plan for the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk is currently being prepared by Clare County Council and FI to address the capacity issues, degradation, poor trail condition and safety issues and ensure the long-term sustainability of site.



Figure 3-2 Cliffs of Moher Temporary Closures (Cliffs of Moher, 2025)

3.3.2 Monitoring Results

Monitoring Indicator (PHH1) – 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.

Sources of Data consulted:

- Publicly available data available through the HSE and EPA have been consulted to inform the monitoring report. There is nothing to report in respect of this source of information.
- Air Quality as it relates to human health is addressed in the Air and Climatic Factors Section 4.5.1 below.
- Bathing water quality is addressed in the Water Section 4.4.1.

National trends in general health from 2016 to 2022 show a slight decrease in those reporting 'Very Good' health by 6.2% and no change in those reporting 'Very Bad' health 0.3% for both Counties Clare and Galway. The trend for reported 'Very Good' health has decreased between 2016 and 2022 by approximately 6.8% and 4.6%, with no change in reported 'Very Bad' health across all regions. Reported general health is in line with national trends and similar to that before the implementation of the Plan.

Table 3-12 Reported very good and very bad health 2016 and 2022, County Clare, Galway and all Ireland (CSO, 2023⁵)

Self-Reported General Health	County Clare		County Galway		All Ireland	
	2016	2022	2016	2022	2016	2022
Very Good	58.4%	51.6%	59.4%	54.8%	59.4%	53.2%
Very Bad	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%

Result PHH1:

There have been no reported spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of the implementation of this Plan identified to the HSE or EPA, however there are reoccurring safety incidences related to tourists visiting the Cliffs of Moher.

The Plan proposes a number of actions relating to the Cliffs of Moher trail improvements and visitor management. The proposed upgrades to the trail and the preparation of a Visitor Management Plan for the trail will improve the accessibility, capacity and safety issues of the trail resulting in significant positive effects to visitors and in turn avoiding and/or reducing future safety incidents at the site.

It is recommended that the SEA indicator and target is revised to be more specific to this plan to include safety considerations, refer to the Recommendations Section 6.1 of this report.

Table 3-13 Population and Human Health SEA Monitoring Result

Indicator	Target	Monitoring Status
PHH1: Occurrence (any) of a spatially concentrated deterioration in human health arising from environmental factors resulting from the Plan, as identified by the Health Service Executive and Environmental Protection Agency	PHH1: No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result the Plan	Neutral effect on this indicator. However, there are actions that are being developed to improve safety at the Cliffs of Moher site. Refer to Action 1.1

⁵ Central Statistics Office SO <https://data.cso.ie/table/F4061>

3.4 Soil

3.4.1 Baseline update

There are no specific updates relating to soil resources since the preparation of the SEA Environmental Report. There is still no legislation which is specific to the protection of soil resources in Ireland however there is currently a European Union (EU) Thematic Strategy on the protection of soil that includes a proposal for a *Soil Framework Directive* proposing common principles for protecting soils across the EU. The ultimate objective of the proposed law is to have “all soils in health condition by 2050”, in line with the EU Zero Pollution ambition.

Relevant to the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area, the EPA soil maps identify rock, surface-water gleys (fine loamy drift with siliceous stones) and peat as the dominant soils of the Plan area. Other present soil types include:

- Rendzinas (loamy over limestone bedrock and loamy over calcareous gravels);
- Brown earth (fine loamy drift with limestones);
- Luvicol (fine loamy drift with limestones);
- Tidal marsh; and
- Blown sand/dune.

While soil quality in Ireland is regarded as generally good, protection against land use change which can result in soil sealing is the main soil quality pressure (CORINE land cover survey).

To establish the soil baseline, CORINE 2018 land cover maps were consulted, which predate the implementation of the VEDP. The Plan area has minimal artificial land cover concentrated around towns including Liscannor, Lahinch, Ennistymon, Lisdoonvarna, Ballycaughan and Kinvara.

GSI reports that the cliff edge has high landslide susceptibility and has a history of a landslide event occurring near Doolin. Significant numbers of tourists walking along the cliff edge off the designated pathways have the potential to further destabilise the soil and contribute to premature erosion.

3.4.2 Monitoring Results

Monitoring Indicator S1: Artificial surfaces land cover extent

Sources: *Clare County Council Development Plan 2023-2029*, *Galway County Council Development Plan 2022-2028* and Teagasc National Soils Map (2021)

Result S1: The last survey was undertaken in 2018, therefore, there is nothing new to report in respect of this data source. No noted change in artificial land cover extent in the Plan Area.

Table 3-14 Soil Monitoring Results

Indicator	Target	Monitoring Status
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%”	Unknown effect/ No changes to report

3.5 Water

3.5.1 Baseline update

The baseline trends serve as a reference point for evaluating any deviations or changes in the water quality and ecosystem dynamics resulting from the Plan, emphasising the significance of preserving the integrity of the water resources for sustainable economic and environmental well-being. The Government has produced a roadmap to better water quality, known as the *River Basin Management Plan* (RBMP) which is now on its third cycle (2022-2027) and is now

based on a single national river basin district. It states that for assessment, reporting, and management purposes waterbodies have been divided into clearly defined groundwater, rivers, lakes, estuarine and coastal waterbodies.

The main river waterbodies in the Plan area are the Ballymacravan, Ballyea, Aille, Cooleen, Caher, Dealagh and Beaghy Rivers. There are two transitional waterbodies in the Plan area, the Aille Clare Estuary and the Inagh Estuary. There are also several smaller loughs and lagoons at the northern edge of the Plan area on the southern edge of the Galway Bay. The Plan area coastline connects with five coastal waterbodies, which are Aughinish Bay, Ballyvaghan Bay, Outer Galway Bay, Shannon Plume, and Liscannor Bay. The Plan area is underlain by several ground waterbodies, most of which are karstic.

3.5.2 Monitoring Results

Monitoring Indicator 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)

The WFD 2013-2018 monitoring period is used as a source for pre-implementation status of surface water in the Plan area. The 2016-2021 WFD monitoring period is used as a post-implementation source to compare against refer to Table 3-15 below.

Table 3-15 Waterbody Quality in the Plan area

Surface Water Body Name	WFD surface water status 2013-2018	WFD surface water status 2016-2021
Ballymacravan River	Poor	Poor
Ballyea River	Good	Moderate
Aille River	Poor	Moderate
Cooleen River	Poor	Good
Caher River	Good	Poor
Dealagh River	Moderate	Good
Beaghy River	Moderate	Moderate
Aille Clare Estuary	Moderate	Moderate
Inagh Estuary	Moderate	Moderate

Result W1i: There has been a deterioration in the status of two of the surface water bodies, namely the Ballyea and Caher rivers. This deterioration has not been linked to the implementation of Actions in the Plan. Consequently, there is no adverse effect upon the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status' as a result of the Plan.

Indicator W1ii: Mandatory and Guide values as set by the EU Bathing Water Directive and transposing Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008).

Table 3-16 below displays the WFD Bathing Water status comparing monitoring periods from 2018 and 2022.

Table 3-16 Bathing Water quality in the Plan area

Bathing Water Body Name	2018 Water Quality	2023 Water Quality
Lahinch	Excellent	Excellent
Bishopsquarter	Excellent	Excellent
Fanore	Excellent	Excellent

Result W1ii: There has been no change to any of the bathing water locations within the Plan area. All the waters have maintained excellent quality. While water quality is reported as excellent across both water quality monitoring periods, historical restrictions have been reported in some bathing waters due to agricultural diffuse pollution affecting water quality, caused by a) agricultural runoff or b) expected heavy rainfall which risks the deterioration of water quality. These types of events are not associated with the Plan and can generally be managed so that bathers are not adversely affected.

Monitoring Indicator W2: Interactions with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC resulting from development adhering to the Plan.

Table 3-17 Ground Waterbody quality in the Plan area

Ground Water Body Name	WFD surface water status 2013-2018	WFD surface water status 2016-2021
Milltown Malbay	Good	Good
Slieve Elva	Good	Good
Burren	Good	Good
Ballyvaughan Uplands	Good	Good
Gortboyheen Turlough	Good	Good
Kinvara-Gort	Good	Good
Muckinish Turlough	Good	Good
Ballyvelaghan Turlough	Good	Good

The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) rates groundwater according to both their productivity and vulnerability to pollution. There has been no change in the aquifer vulnerability and productivity since the Plan was prepared. Thus, aquifer vulnerability and productivity has not been affected by the implementation of the Plan.

Table 3-18 below displays the WFD Groundwater status comparing data periods from 2013-2018 with 2016-2021. The WFD status for the present groundwater bodies are defined as being of 'Good' status, meeting the objectives of the WFD.

Table 3-18 Monitoring Results (W2): WFD Status of GW Bodies

Ground Water Body Name	2013-2018 GW Status	2016-2021 GW Status
Milltown Malbay	Good	Good
Slieve Elva	Good	Good
Ballyvaughan Uplands	Good	Good
Burren	Good	Good
Kinvara-Gort	Good	Good

Result W2: The compliance with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC is not affected by the implementation of the Plan, therefore, the implementation of the plan has had a neutral effect on this indicator.

Indicator W3: Compliance of relevant lower tier assessments and decisions making with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines.

Result W3: There is no evidence of any Action under the Plan completing or requiring a site-specific flood risk assessment, to date. Based on the information available on the Actions, they have complied with the relevant lower-tier assessments and decision-making, including with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines. The implementation of the Plan has had a neutral effect on this indicator.

Table 3-19 Water Monitoring Results

Indicator	Target	Status
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)	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	Neutral effect / No results to report
W1ii: Mandatory and Guide values as set by the EU Bathing Water Directive and transposing Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008)	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	Neutral effect / No results to report
W2: Interactions with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC resulting from development adhering to the Plan.	W2: Not to affect the ability of groundwaters to comply with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC, subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the WFD.	Neutral effect / No results to report
W3: Compliance of relevant lower tier assessments and decision making with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines.	W3: For lower tier assessments and decision making to comply with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines.	Neutral effect / No results to report

3.6 Air and Climatic Factors

3.6.1 Baseline update

The baseline update focuses on the air quality and climatic factors in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher, providing a reference point for gauging any changes resulting from the implementation of the Plan. This includes consideration of the current state of Ireland's Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, ambient air quality, and adherence to World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines.

The *Climate Action Plan 2024* (Government of Ireland, 2023a) sets out the commitment for Ireland to achieve a 51% reduction in GHG emissions from 2021 to 2030. As a result of the *Climate Action and Low Carbon (Amendment) Act 2021* every Local Authority (LA) in the country is required to develop a Local Authority Climate Action Plan (LACAP) that will be in effect for five years. The LACAPs for the Plan area are the *Galway County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029* (GCC CAP) and the *Clare Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024-2029* (CLA CAP). The development of the LACAP will ensure a coordinated local response to climate change and bring together critical stakeholders across local government, communities, and businesses to build a vision for a climate neutral and resilient future. The CLA CAP is monitoring the impact of tourism in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Geopark on the local climate through Action C2.7⁶, which measures the number of tourism businesses with environmental action plans and tracks the cumulative biennial CO₂ emissions.

Air Quality

There is a local monitoring station in Ennistymon and a national monitoring station in Ennis. The Ennis monitoring station has had the most PM exceedances⁷ per year of any station in Ireland from 2018-2024. Most recently in 2024 the station had PM₁₀ exceedance for nine total days: six in January, one in November and two in December (EPA, 2025). The EPA's *Air quality in Ireland 2023* report highlights solid fuel burning to heat homes during colder months as a key contributor to high quantities of particulate matter in the air. One of the Plan's objectives is to "extend the length of the season" of tourism to the Burren and Cliffs of Moher.

⁶ Action C2.7- Supporting the engagement of tourism business in North Clare with the Geopark Code of Practice for Sustainable Tourism Businesses through the implementation of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark's Management Plan 2024-2029

⁷ An exceedance is defined as a day where PM₁₀ is greater than the daily limit of 50ug/m³

Achieving this objective and overall higher rates of tourism during the winter may put additional strain on air quality through an increase in solid fuel burning to heat accommodation. In 2025, air quality readings are following a similar trend, with five PM₁₀ exceedances at the station in Ennis recorded in January 2025 (EPA, 2025). The air quality in the Plan area can be seen in Figure 4-2, which shows much of the plan area is included in a 'good' and 'fair' air quality.

Air quality readings while writing the report, indicate a change in air quality for example, on January 8th Air Quality Index for Health (AQHI) was 'Very Poor' due to PM₁₀ exceedance, while on January 23rd AQHI was 'Good'. On 8th January 2025, the local station in Ennistymon showed a reading of 'Good' and the national station in Ennis showed a reading of 'Very Poor' (See Figure 4-2).

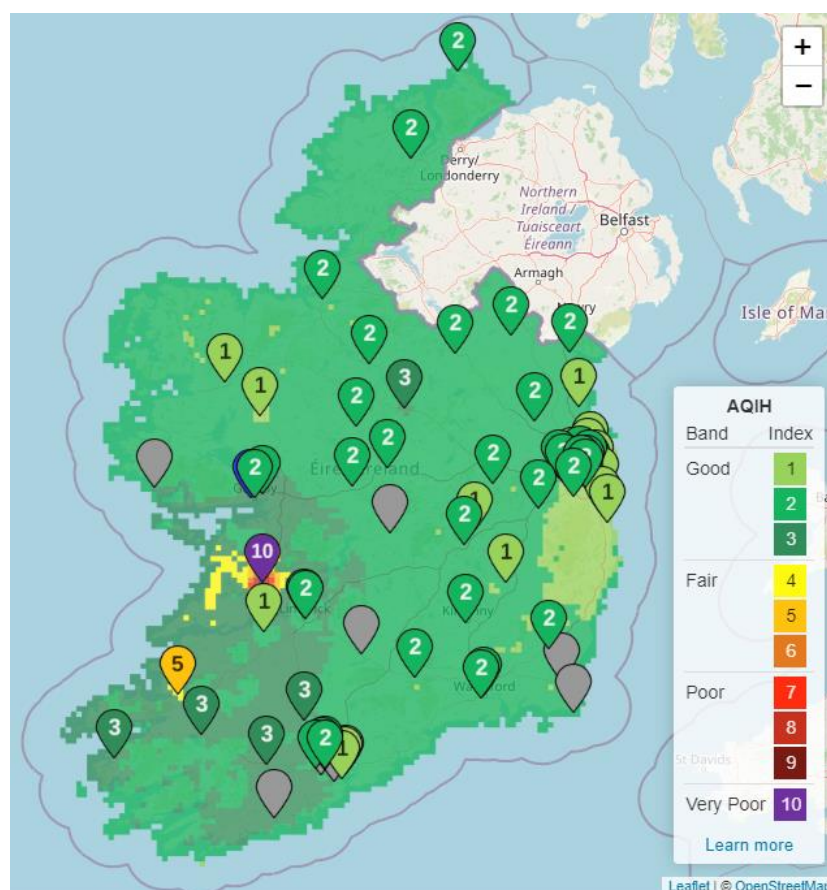


Figure 4-2 Locations of Air Quality Monitoring Stations across Ireland and their AQHI rankings (Source: EPA, 2025)

3.6.2 Monitoring Result

Monitoring Indicator AC1: Demonstration of compliance with provisions relating to climate adaptation and mitigation have been integrated into the Plan.

Result AC1: All actions stemming from the Plan that require planning permission or EPA licensing will be required to continue to demonstrate compliance with the relevant air quality and climate legislation/provisions including any required emissions reductions. While there are no specific Actions focused on climate adaptation or mitigation, the project objectives encourage sustainable tourism practices, that will have a positive indirect impact on air and climatic factors. The objective to increase year around visitors is likely to increase fossil fuel burning in hotels and building stock particularly in winter months which may exacerbate an already existing air quality issue. To mitigate, Fáilte Ireland should continue to promote and resource their Climate Action Programme that is designed to support tourism businesses as they reduce costs, improve efficiency and lower their environmental impact.

Table 3-20 Air and Climatic Factor SEA Monitoring Results

Indicator	Target	Monitoring Status
AC1: Demonstration of compliance with provisions relating to climate adaptation and mitigation have been integrated into the Plan.	C1: To maximise the number of measures relating to climate adaptation and mitigation being implemented.	Neutral effect / No results to report

3.7 Material Assets

3.7.1 Baseline update

Tourism relies on well-functioning infrastructure including transport infrastructure and utilities (water supply, wastewater, internet connection/broadband). The availability and access to a destination's existing infrastructure and services are necessary to meet the needs of visitors, improve satisfaction during their stay, and for the development of the tourism sector. As the population is projected to increase across the County, it will be important to ensure that tourism does not create pressure on infrastructure in the area including on housing and services, which could occur particularly during seasonal (peak) periods.

The *SEA Environmental Report for the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience Development Plan* identified the main aspects of the baseline environment relating to material assets to include wastewater, water supply, public assets and infrastructure, and waste management. The baseline is reviewed and updated in this context.

The EPA has highlighted environmental issues that Uisce Éireann must address in order to preserve the environment from the harmful effects of wastewater discharges. Two of these environmental priorities are to

- 'Ensure waste water treatment at all large urban areas complies with European Union standards' and
- "Eliminate discharged of raw sewage" (EPA, 2023e).

Previous to the implementation of the Plan, 'Urban Waste Water Treatment' in 2017 reports that wastewater treatment at 28 of Ireland's 179 large urban areas did not meet relevant standards in 2017 (EPA, 2023d). This has reduced to 15 large urban areas not meeting European Union treatment standards in 2022 (EPA, 2023e), representing an improvement in standards. Furthermore, it is reported that raw sewage is released into the environment from 38 urban areas in 2017 which decreased to 16 urban areas by mid-2024 (EPA, 2024a). Two of these sixteen areas are in County Clare, near the Plan area namely in Ballyvaughan and Kilkee. Lahinch is also listed as a priority area for failing to meet mandatory EU water treatment standards.

3.7.2 Monitoring Results

Monitoring Indicator M1: Number of instances whereby additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries of funding towards areas in the Plan area where adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity is unavailable.

Result M1: There have been no reported instances whereby additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries of funding towards areas with inadequate critical infrastructure. However, there are sites that have been reported as not having adequate facilities for existing tourists, including the Cliffs of Moher visitor centre. The existing footpaths at the Cliffs of Moher are also narrow and subject to overcrowding during peak season.

The Cliffs of Moher visitor centre does not plan to increase capacity but is working to have a more even spread of visitors throughout the day, and year. This is hoped to be achieved through Ticket prices have been adjusted to encourage visitor before and after peak times, and improvements to widen and improve the flow of the footpaths are ongoing at the Cliffs of Moher.

Monitoring Indicator M2: Number of significant adverse effects on the use of or access to public assets and infrastructure.

Result M2: One of the actions relevant to this indicator is **Action 1.2** that proposed improvements to the visitor centre to better accommodate large crowds. Visitor feedback collected for the *Draft Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040* described the visitor centre as difficult to navigate and move about freely when the site is near capacity. This action will contribute to improve the use of and access of this amenity asset and reduce overcrowding in the centre.

Monitoring Indicator M3: Preparation and implementation of construction and environmental management plans.

Result M3: Where planning consent requires that construction environmental management plans (CEMPs) must be prepared on projects, the developer/contractor will be required to implement the relevant plans. To date, there have not been any actions under the Plan that have progressed to the extent whereby CEMPs have been prepared and/or implemented therefore, the implementation of the Plan has had a neutral effect on this indicator. A Management Plan for the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk is currently being developed by Tobin Consulting on behalf of CCC, FI, and in collaboration with other key stakeholders, which aims to address capacity issues, habitat degradation, safety issues, and poor trail condition ensuring the long-term sustainability of the site.

Table 3-21 Material Assets Monitoring Results

Indicator	Target	Monitoring Status
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.	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.	Neutral/ to Positive effect
M2: Number of significant adverse effects on the use of or access to public assets and infrastructure	M2: No significant adverse effects on the use of or access to public assets and infrastructure	Neutral/ to Positive effect
M3: Preparation and implementation of construction and environmental management plans.	M3: For construction and environmental management plans to be prepared and implemented for relevant projects	Neutral/ to Positive effect.

3.8 Cultural Heritage

3.8.1 Baseline update

The *Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029* (CCC, 2023) provides a summary of the archaeological, architectural, and cultural heritage in County Clare, and more specifically the Burren and Cliffs of Moher.

There are six Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) within the Plan Area: Ballyvaughan Village Centre, Ballyvaughan Auxiliary Workhouse, Corofin, Lisdoonvarna, Kilfenora, and Ennistymon.

3.8.2 Monitoring Results

Monitoring Indicator CH1: Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan.

Result CH1: There have been no unauthorised adverse effects on archaeological heritage including RMPs from implementation of the Plan. Action 4.2 encourages the active conservation of stone walls and ancillary structures that make up boundaries of protected monuments in the Burren. Repairs to the walls will be done by volunteers under the supervisor of master stone masons, farmers and local archaeologists. A neutral to positive effects is anticipated as repairs will only be carried out as needed and may not be required on a regular basis.

Monitoring Indicator CH2: Percentage of entries to the RPSs or ACAs and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan.

Result CH2: There have been no reported unauthorised adverse effects on architectural heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan. Action 4.2 encourages the active conservation of stone walls and ancillary structures within ACAs in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher. Repairs to the walls will be done by volunteers under the supervisor of master stone masons, farmers and local archaeologists. A neutral to positive effects is anticipated as repairs will only be carried out as needed and may not be required on a regular basis.

Table 3-22 Cultural Heritage Monitoring Results

Indicator	Target	Monitoring Status
CH1: Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan	CH1: No unauthorised adverse effects on archaeological heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan	Neutral/ to Positive effect
CH2: Percentage of entries to the Records of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan	CH2: No unauthorised adverse effects on architectural heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan	Neutral/ to Positive effect

3.9 Landscape

3.9.1 Baseline update

The landscape features of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher are examined and updated considering changes since the implementation of the Plan, including topography, landscape character assessment, and protected views. The assessment also considers changes to relevant policies guiding the implementation of the Plan.

A high-level policy framework for landscape protection, management, and planning is outlined in the *National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025* (Government of Ireland, 2015). A key initiative for this framework is the creation of a national landscape character assessment, which has not currently been developed. The strategy emphasises integrating landscape policies and objectives into local developments plans, ensuring the identification and protection of areas with landscape and scenic views by land-use zoning and designations. It also highlights the synergy of landscape protection with biodiversity and climate change, as well as aligning with EU Directives such as the *Water Framework Directive* and relevant national legislation.

Landscape Character Areas

The Landscape Character Assessment identified seven Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) within the Plan area:

- LCA 1: Burren Uplands;
- LCA 2: Low Burren;
- LCA 3: Cliffs of Moher and Lahinch;
- LCA 4: Fergus Loughlands;
- LCA 8: Lower Burren (County Galway Portion);
- LCA 13: East Galway Bay; and

- LCA 15: Kilnamona High Drumlin Farmland.

LCAs 8 and 13 are located with County Galway, the other five are within County Clare. The five within Clare are classified as Heritage Landscapes, recognised for their high concentration of national monuments. LCA 8 is considered a 'Unique' landscape, and LCA 13 as a 'High' sensitivity landscape.

3.9.2 Monitoring Results

Monitoring Indicator 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 Clare and Galway County Councils.

Result L1: There have been no reported unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in the land use plans of Clare and Galway County Councils. Therefore, the implementation of the Plan has had a neutral effect on this Indicator.

Table 3-23 Landscape Monitoring Results

Indicator	Target	Monitoring Status
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 Clare and Galway County Councils	L1: No unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in the land use plans of Clare and Galway County Councils.	Neutral effect/ no results to report

4. MONITORING RESULTS BY ACTION

In accordance with the methodology presented in Section 3, out of the 46 Actions that were screened (**Refer to Appendix B**) five Actions were brought forward for detailed environmental monitoring. The monitoring results are presented in Table 4-1 below.

The Plan comprises 46 Actions. The SEA monitoring focuses on the actions that have progressed to a level that are capable of being monitored and are likely to have a significant effect on the environment, for example, due to physical works/construction impacts, and/or other works which could require planning permission and/or subject to environmental assessment for example, EIA, AA or SSFRA.

Table 4-1 SEA Monitoring Results of Actions Screened in for potential environmental effects

Experience	ID	Action	Lead	Time Frame	Action Status & Update	Monitoring result - likely significant effects on the SEA environmental Indicators X - Negative, 0 - Neutral, √ - Positive, ? - Unknown																Assessment Narrative		
						B1	B2	B3i	B3ii	PHH1	S1	W1i	W1ii	W2	W3	AC1	M1	M2	M3	CH1	CH2		L1	
Walk on the Edge of the World along the Cliffs of Moher	1.1	CATALYST 2: Upgrade 2km of the Cliff Walk (1km either side of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre) through a partnership with land owners to develop a management plan and future funding model that supports the land owners and allows for reinvestment, sustainable walking infrastructure.	CCC, COM, CLDC	Short-Term / Medium-Term	<p>This action has progressed through the development of the <i>Draft Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy</i> by Clare County Council and FI. A public consultation of the draft strategy including an SEA ER and NIS were undertaken in June of 2024. To date, a budget of €1.1m has been invested into improving 3.5km of the walk.</p> <p>Long-term, the strategy recommends moving the cliff walk away from the cliff-edge and create a no-walk-zone.</p> <p>Short-term, the Strategy recommends widening the existing paths to accommodate for crowding, as visitors often step off the paths to pass a larger group. New railing made of cables and mesh will be installed to deter climbing while preserving visual access.</p> <p>During the Summer of 2024 Clare Local Development Company (CLDC) started works on improving safety measures at points where walkers most commonly step off the official 14km trail.</p> <p>Clare County Council has commissioned a Habitat Management Plan an Management Plan for the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk. The objective of the Management Plan is to address capacity issues, degradation, poor trail condition and safety issues and ensure the long-term sustainability of site.</p>	0 ?	0	√	0	√	x	0	0	0	0	0	0	√	√	√	0	0	?	<p>The upgrades to the trail and the preparation of a Visitor Management Plan for the trail will improve access, capacity and safety issues of the trail resulting in positive effects on PHH and Material assets indicators. Significant positive effects are likely to visitors due to improvements in safety of the cliff walk and in turn avoiding and/or reducing future safety incidents at the site. Habitat degradation should reduce positively impacting habitats and species relying on it. The reduction of visitors at the Cliff Edge is likely to reduce disturbance with the potential to have a positive indirect effect on seabirds at Cliffs.</p> <p>The long-term recommendation to move the cliff walk away from the cliff-edge will directly benefit the cliff vegetation. Walkways will be adjusted to preserve coastal grasslands, wetlands, and prevent further erosion from tourism through active restoration works in-situ.</p> <p>The development of a new path is likely to lead to paving new areas, leading to reduction in soil resources impacting S1 target and potential changing the landscape all of which will be subject to site specific assessment once project details are defined.</p>
	1.2	Improve the Visitor experience through on-site visitor management and interpretation along the Cliffs of Moher (within the Cliffs boundary) during	FI, CCC/ COM	Short-Term / Medium-Term	<p>Visitor management is being improved as part of the <i>Draft Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy</i> which has been subjected to environmental assessments referenced in Action 1.1 above.</p> <p>Clare County Council has commissioned a Management</p>	0	0	0	0	√	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	√	√	0	0	0	0	<p>The improvements of the visitor experience through on-site visitor management and interpretation is likely to positively influence visitors during the peak season leading to direct, positive effects on PHH as large</p>

Experience	ID	Action	Lead	Time Frame	Action Status & Update	Monitoring result - likely significant effects on the SEA environmental Indicators X - Negative, 0 - Neutral, √ - Positive, ? - Unknown																Assessment Narrative	
						B1	B2	B3i	B3ii	PHH1	S1	W1i	W1ii	W2	W3	AC1	M1	M2	M3	CH1	CH2		L1
		peak season to help better manage visitor flows during these periods and work with land owners.			Plan for the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk. The objective of the Management Plan is to address capacity issues, degradation, poor trail condition and safety issues and ensure the long-term sustainability of the site. The current visitor centre does not have the capacity to accommodate tourists at peak times, with long queues and limited space to move around. The interior of the visitor centre has limited signage, and visitors find the space hard to navigate. The Strategy recommends crowd control solutions including park-and-ride schemes, off-peak travel pricing and spreading out coach drop-off locations.																		crowds will be managed at the visitor centre and on the paths improve the safety and accessibility for all visitors and the overall experience of the site. This action is also likely to have positive effects on infrastructure at the site leading to positive effects on Material assets indicators. The assessment of the targets has found that this Action has had a neutral effect on all other targets. It is recognised that there are wider positive social, economic, and environmental effects, particularly to material assets as a result of improving the flow of visitors through the site, reducing the strain on facilities.
Walk the Burren Way through the Living Landscape shaped by 360 million years of water and Thousands of Years of Farming Traditions	3.2	Develop a ‘Burren Guides’ training programme for all guides and bus drivers including an accreditation programme similar to that used in other UNESCO sites (Uluru, Galapagos, Antarctica, Savannah Guides). This should be a prerequisite to getting a bus license/stop approval and would ensure that proper respect is given to these significant sites.	CCC/ GEOP ARK	Short-Term	The Ambassadors programme has been developed by Clare County Council, the Cliffs of Moher Experience and Fáilte Ireland. Coach drivers and tourism-related business owners are encouraged to register for the training module which promotes the conservation of culture, heritage and the natural environment in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher. The training course provides background knowledge on the geology, biodiversity and culture in the Geopark, as well as an overview of sustainable tourism practices such as Leave No Trace. The training programme has been fully developed and is available for inbound tour guides, as well as on-site Cliffs of Moher staff. The training provides guides with more knowledge of the area to offer more informative tour experiences and greater visitor satisfaction.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	√	0	0	0	0	√	This Action has a neutral effect on the majority of indicators. The programme encourages guides to engage with sustainable tourism and transport options which has the potential to positively impact material assets by reducing tourism-related adverse impacts on public assets and infrastructure. A direct positive impact on the landscape of the site is likely from the Leave No Trace initiative on site.
	3.4	Reinvigorate the Wildflower Walk Season with local walking guides to share this iconic	BEN	Short-Term	This action is being developed alongside the 'Burren in Bloom' annual festival in the area. The festival and action seek to increase awareness of the natural beauty and wildflowers in the Burren.	?X	0	? X	? X	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The diverse array of flora in the Burren contributes to the composition of Qualifying Interest habitats of the East Burren Complex SAC, and supports Qualifying Interest	

Experience	ID	Action	Lead	Time Frame	Action Status & Update	Monitoring result - likely significant effects on the SEA environmental Indicators X - Negative, 0 - Neutral, √ - Positive, ? - Unknown																Assessment Narrative	
						B1	B2	B3i	B3ii	PHH1	S1	W1i	W1ii	W2	W3	AC1	M1	M2	M3	CH1	CH2		L1
		May experience with visitors.			while simultaneously noting the need for conservation of these plants. Visitors are being encouraged to take photos of the wildflowers while visiting the site, with possible incentivisation through a competition to win local art. This project is still being developed, and no specific 'Wildflower Walks' have been identified prior to this monitoring cycle.																	species. Recreation and human activities associated with this Action is likely to bring visitors to sensitive habitats which has the potential to result in trampling or direct removal of species (flower picking), or support less invasive recreation in areas of sensitive flora. This could lead to a direct loss of protected species and habitats in the Burren, including in the East Burren Complex SAC. The Action 3.4 is still being developed, and it is recommended that an ecologist is included as part of the development of any such walking trails and appropriate measures implemented to ensure conservation of the sensitive habitat and species in the Burren.	
See Life Shaped by the Ancient Farming Landscape of the Burren to see the Ancient Traditions continue.	4.2	CATALYST 7: Education and Awareness Provision – join the Geopark to ‘clean-up’ a site or fix a dry-stone wall. Discover what is involved in managing a Global Geopark.	CCC, GEOP ARK	Short-term	Community clean-up days and other conservation events in the Burren are organised by the Burrenbeo Trust members and volunteers. Clean-ups are further supported by the Geopark and Clare County Council. All active conservation events organised by the Burrenbeo can be tracked on their website. The Burrenbeo also educates about the Burren’s built heritage and archaeological sites and monuments registered on the SMR and subsequent RMP. Conservation activities in the area work to preserve built heritage structures, including repairing dry stone walls. Volunteers working on the dry-stone walls are trained and supervised by local master stone masons.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0?	√	0	√?	√?	0√	Dry stone walls are ubiquitous in the Burren, a large number are included in the NIAH as RMPs as ‘Enclosures’ or as boundaries to define other archaeological heritage sites. The assessment of this Action against the targets indicate a potential positive effect on cultural heritage, material assets and landscape indicators. All other indicators are rated as neutral. It is recognised that wider social and economic benefits are likely as a result of this action. The action relates to routine maintenance and conservation measures for example including removing scrub growth, repairing fallen stone walls, and monitoring visitor numbers.

5. REMEDIAL MEASURES FOR NEXT MONITORING CYCLE

No likely significant negative effects have been identified as a result of the implementation of the Plan therefore no remedial measures are required. A number of recommendations are included for consideration which would inform the next monitoring cycle.

5.1 Recommendations

Data gaps: Some sources listed in the monitoring programme have not yet been updated at the time of undertaking this monitoring, sources of data should be reviewed and updated as appropriate for any relevant changes to feed in to the next monitoring cycle.

Plan area: The Plan boundary of the VEDP is not clearly defined in the Plan either by Electoral Divisions, or other geographical boundaries. This monitoring report has identified boundaries and collected data where it is available under each environmental factor as appropriate.

To assist with the long-term monitoring of the Plan it is recommended to define the boundary area of the Plan. This should be delineated on a map either by Electoral Division or administrative area, or similar to facilitate ease of monitoring over time. Any coastal or marine areas that fall under the Plan Area should also be identified, as appropriate.

Biodiversity Recommendations:

- Fáilte Ireland's national monitoring programme or other monitoring programmes should include the Burren or the Cliffs of Moher site(s) so as to more accurately evaluate the impacts of recreation and tourism on the site(s).
- Action 3.4** is associated with reinvigorating The Wildflower Walk Season which is being developed alongside the 'Burren in Bloom' annual festival. It is recommended that an ecologist is included as part of the development of any such walking trails and appropriate measures implemented to ensure conservation of the sensitive habitat and species in the Burren. Once walking routes have been identified, and monitoring should be undertaken to assess the impacts of these routes on the habitats and vegetation surrounding them.

5.1.1 Proposed Revisions to SEA Targets and Indicators

After completing the monitoring programme, some of the indicators used to assess the actions were positioned at a strategic and or national level. Consideration should be given to revising the monitoring targets and indicators to be more meaningful to the Burren and Cliffs of Moher region. These revisions should be flexible enough to monitor significant changes resulting from the plan including the nature of the actions, potential effects relating to tourism and sources of data that are readily available.

An example of potential changes to some of the targets and indicators are provided below in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1 Proposed EA targets and indicators for the next monitoring cycle

Env. Topic	Indictors	Targets
Material Assets		
Existing Indicator	M1: Number of instances whereby additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries of funding towards areas in the Plan area where adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity is unavailable.	M1: No instances whereby additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries of funding towards specific locations in instances where significant problems with critical infrastructure have been identified (drinking water, wastewater, waste, transport), by stakeholders such as the EPA, Irish Water, Clare County Council and/or Galway County Council.

Env. Topic	Indictors	Targets
Replacing M1 with a new target and indicator	M1: Number of funding applications where additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries towards areas where critical infrastructure is inadequate and or where funding will address infrastructure issues to sustainably manage/provide for visitors.	M1: Funding shall be directed towards areas where adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity is available and/or is delivered as part of funding (i.e. water, wastewater, electricity, access to the site – e.g. sufficient carparking, transportation, etc.)
Population and Human Health		
Existing Indicator	PHH1: Occurrence (any) of a spatially concentrated deterioration in human health arising from environmental factors resulting from the Plan, as identified by the Health Service Executive and Environmental Protection Agency PHH1: No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result the Plan	PHH1: Occurrence (any) of a spatially concentrated deterioration in human health arising from environmental factors resulting from the Plan, as identified by the Health Service Executive and Environmental Protection Agency PHH1: No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result the Plan
Proposed revision: Add PHH2	PHH2: Percentage change of safety incidents, falls or fatalities moving towards no instances.	PHH2: No safety incidences occurring within the Plan area.
Proposed revision: Add PHH3	PHH3: Stable population working in the tourism sector in the Plan Area.	PHH3: Continued sustainable growth of the tourism industry in the Plan Area.
Air and Climatic Factors		
Existing Indicator	AC1: Demonstration of compliance with provisions relating to climate adaptation and mitigation have been integrated into the Plan.	C1: To maximise the number of measures relating to climate adaptation and mitigation being implemented
Proposed Revision: Add AC2	AC2: Percentage change in number of days of air quality exceedances moving toward no instances for closest air quality station in plan area, namely Ennis, Co. Clare,	A1: Good air quality in the Plan area year-round.
Land and Soils		
Existing Indicator	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%."
Proposed addition S2:	S2: Percentage change in landslide events and reduction of soil erosion.	S2: No project contributing to soil erosion, degradation or landslides.

6. CONCLUSION

The Burren and Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience Development Plan was created to guide and expand the growth of tourism in these world-renowned destinations. This monitoring report identifies that there are no significant changes to the baseline environment since the preparation of the Plan. The monitoring results indicate that of the 46 actions detailed in the Plan, five actions have been progressed to a stage where they can be assessed for potential effects on the environment. 19 actions were screened out of future SEA monitoring programmes as they do not have the potential to significantly impact the environment. 22 actions do not have sufficient information to complete SEA monitoring.

The monitoring undertaken on the five actions found that overall, there has been a neutral effect on the environmental indicators, with no actions resulting in significant negative and/or positive effects on the environment. However, the monitoring has identified that the actions have delivered broader social, economic, and environmental benefits to the area associated with the implementation of the Plan.

Some remedial measures are identified to be required several recommendations have been included in this monitoring report which should be considered as part of the next monitoring programme. It can be concluded that the SEA is fulfilling its core objective of providing for a high level of protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development.

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APPENDIX A ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING PROGRAMME

Table A-1 is the SEA Monitoring programme which was finalised and published in the *SEA Statement for the Burren and Cliffs of Moher VEDP*. It identifies the selected indicators, targets and monitoring sources for the monitoring of significant environmental effects of the Plan. It informs the methodology for the monitoring which is contained in this report.

Table A-1 Selected Indicators, Targets and Monitoring Sources

Environmental Component	Indicators	Targets	Source and (where available) Frequency
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	B1: Conservation status of habitats and species as assessed under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive	B1: Maintenance of favourable conservation status for all habitats and species protected under National and International legislation to be unaffected by implementation of the Plan ⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation demonstrating compliance with “Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management” Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) 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) Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht’s National Monitoring Report for the Birds Directive under Article 12 (every 3 years) Consultations with the NPWS CORINE mapping resurvey (every c. 5 years) Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes
	B2: Percentage loss of functional connectivity	B2: No significant ecological networks or parts thereof which provide functional connectivity to be lost without remediation resulting from the Plan	
	B3i: Number of significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from the Plan	B3i: Avoid significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from the Plan	
	B3ii: Number of significant impacts on the protection of listed species	B3ii: No significant impacts on the protection of listed species resulting from the Plan	
Population and Human Health	PHH1: Occurrence (any) of a spatially concentrated deterioration in human health arising from environmental factors resulting from the Plan, as identified by the Health Service Executive and Environmental Protection Agency	PHH1: No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation demonstrating compliance with “Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management” Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) Consultations with the HSE and EPA

⁸ 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
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes
Soil	S1: Artificial surfaces land cover extent	S1: Contribute towards the target of the National Planning Framework's SEA (2018) to "Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4%."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) CORINE mapping resurvey (every c. 5 years) Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes
Water	W1i: Classification of Overall Status (comprised of ecological and chemical status) under the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (SI No. 272 of 2009) W1ii: Mandatory and Guide values as set by the EU Bathing Water Directive and transposing Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008)	W1i: No deterioration in the status of any surface water or adverse effect upon the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status' as a result of the Plan W1ii: No deterioration in the value of bathing waters or adverse effect upon the ability of any bathing water to achieve Mandatory values and, where possible, Guide values as a result of the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities Data issued under the Water Framework Directive Monitoring Programme for Ireland (multi-annual) EPA The Quality of Bathing Water in Ireland reports SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes
	W2: Interactions with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC resulting from development adhering to the Plan	W2: Not to affect the ability of groundwaters to comply with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC, subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the WFD	
	W3: Compliance of relevant lower tier assessments and decision making with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines	W3: For lower tier assessments and decision making to comply with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines	
Air and Climatic Factors	AC1: Demonstration of compliance with provisions relating to climate adaptation and mitigation have been integrated into the Plan.	C1: To maximise the amount of measures relating to climate adaptation and mitigation being implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities

Environmental Component	Indicators	Targets	Source and (where available) Frequency
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes
Material Assets	M1: Number of instances whereby additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries of funding towards areas in the Plan area where adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity is unavailable	M1: No instances whereby additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries of funding towards specific locations in instances where significant problems with critical infrastructure have been identified (drinking water, wastewater, waste, transport), by stakeholders such as the EPA, Irish Water, Clare County Council and/or Galway County Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) Consultations with the partners such as the EPA, Irish Water, Clare County Council and/or Galway County Council Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes
	M2: Number of significant adverse effects on the use of or access to public assets and infrastructure	M2: No significant adverse effects on the use of or access to public assets and infrastructure	
	M3: Preparation and implementation of construction and environmental management plans	M3: For construction and environmental management plans to be prepared and implemented for relevant projects	
Cultural Heritage	CH1: Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan	CH1: No unauthorised adverse effects on archaeological heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes
	CH2: Percentage of entries to the Records of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan	CH2: No unauthorised adverse effects on architectural heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan	
Landscape	L1: Number of unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in the land use plans of Clare and Galway County Councils	L1: No unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in the land use plans of Clare and Galway County Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities

Environmental Component	Indicators	Targets	Source and (where available) Frequency
			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes

APPENDIX B

SCREENING AND ASSESMENT OF ACTIONS FROM THE PLAN

Table B-1 displays the screening and assessment undertaken for each of the actions in the Plan. It notes the anticipated timeframe and the lead organisation(s) for implementing each action. The action assessment section has been prepared with input from Fáilte Ireland on the latest progress. Several actions are in early stages of development and cannot be fully assessed at this time. Other actions are not anticipated to have any environmental impact and are screened out for further assessment which is indicated in the assessment and is illustrated by grey shading.

Table B-1 VEDP Action Screening and Assessment

Number	Action Description	Timeframe	Lead	Action Assessment	No Env. Impact	Review	Monitoring
Hero Experience 1: Walk on the Edge of the World along the Cliffs of Moher							
1.1	CATALYST 2: Upgrade 2km of the Cliff Walk (1km either side of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre) through a partnership with land owners to develop a management plan and future funding model that supports the land owners and allows for reinvestment, sustainable walking infrastructure.	Short-Term / Medium-Term	CCC, COM, CLDC	This action has progressed through the Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy by Clare County Council. A public consultation was done of a draft SEA for the strategy in June of 2024. To date, a budget of 1.1m has been invested into improving 3.5km of the walk. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. This project is taken forward to SEA monitoring.			X
1.2	Improve the Visitor experience through on-site visitor management and interpretation along the Cliffs of Moher (within the Cliffs boundary) during peak season to help better manage visitor flows during these periods and work with land owners.	Short-Term / Medium-Term	FI, CCC / COM	Visitor management is being improved as part of the larger Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy. The Strategy's draft SEA went through public consultation in June 2024 and is being progressed by Clare County Council. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. This project is taken forward to SEA monitoring.			X
Hero Experience 2: Adventure On and Under the Burren: diving, surfing, caving – ‘the Edge’							
2.1	CATALYST 9: Encourage the establishment of new Eco-friendly, Responsible Adventure experiences such as new cycling experiences along the green roads and the ‘edge’ experience. Investigate the feasibility of a leisure Bike Trail along the old Green roads (similar to Lough Avalla and Rocky Road). De-zone the Green roads for safety.	Medium-Term	CCC, CLDC, FI	The feasibility for this action is still being explored. Landowner negotiations are ongoing to identify possible routes through private lands. ASSESSMENT: This action is currently at the planning stage with insufficient information to complete environmental monitoring. This action will be reviewed during the next monitoring cycle.		X	

Number	Action Description	Timeframe	Lead	Action Assessment	No Env. Impact	Review	Monitoring
2.2	Create a Caving experience in the region that will once again bring new adventurers to the region.	Medium-Term	Aillwee Cave, Doolin Cave, BEN	Caving experience improvements are still being conceptualised with ideas on how to expand on existing experiences in Ailwee. ASSESSMENT: This action is still in the concept stage with insufficient information to complete environmental monitoring. This action will be reviewed during the next monitoring cycle.		X	
2.3	Research and identify Off-road Cycling trails through the Burren Highlands and Lowlands.	Medium-Term	CLDC	Research for off-road cycling routes is on-going, in line with guidelines set by the National Trails office and Sport Ireland. ASSESSMENT: This action is still in the planning stage with insufficient information to complete environmental monitoring. This action will be reviewed in the next monitoring cycle.		X	
2.4	Identify a Blueway for Kinvara Bay, The Flaggy Shore, Ballyvaughan Bay and the River Inagh – Ennistymon to Lahinch.	Medium-Term	CCC, CLDC, LTGs	Potential Blueway sites will be identified by the new Outdoor Education Officer, in compliance with the Blueway Tool Kit and best practice guidelines. This action will be progressed following the appointment of a new Outdoor Education Officer. <i>2019 Ecological Study Of Visitor Movement Areas Environmental Surveying And Monitoring</i> prepared FI undertaken by CAAS which can be used to inform the future development of this report. ASSESSMENT: This action has not yet been progressed enough to complete environmental monitoring. This action will be reviewed in the next monitoring period.		X	
2.5	Elevate and promote the Rock Climbing experiences of the Burren where interest and demand for climbing outdoors has grown (already attracting foreign climbers, especially from the US).	Short-Term	FI, CCC, CLDC, LEs, LTGs	This action is still being developed, and no specific opportunities have been identified yet. ASSESSMENT: It is not yet known if this action will result in physical works, and thus there is insufficient information to complete environmental monitoring. This action will be reviewed in the next monitoring cycle.		X	

Number	Action Description	Timeframe	Lead	Action Assessment	No Env. Impact	Review	Monitoring
Hero Experience 3: Walk the Burren Way through the Living Landscape shaped by 360 million years of water and Thousands of Years of Farming Traditions							
3.1	Consolidate the position and brand of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark as a landscape of international significance.	Short-Term	CCC	The Burren and Cliffs of Moher brand is managed by Clare County Council and builds upon the Wild Atlantic Way Experience Brand. An estimated 800,000 people visit the Geopark annually. ASSESSMENT: This action related to the image and profile of the area. It is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment, therefore, it is sifted out of this monitoring programme.	X		
3.2	Develop a 'Burren Guides' training programme for all guides and bus drivers including an accreditation programme similar to that used in other UNESCO sites (Uluru, Galapagos, Antarctica, Savannah Guides). This should be a prerequisite to getting a bus license/stop approval and would ensure that proper respect is given to these significant sites.	Short-Term	CCC / GEOPARK	The Ambassadors programme has been developed by Clare County Council, the Cliffs of Moher Experience and Fáilte Ireland. Coach drivers and tourism-related business owners are encouraged to register for the training module which promotes the conservation of culture, heritage and natural environment in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher. ASSESSMENT: This action has been developed and implemented in the area. There is potential for significant environment effects to occur. This project is taken forward to SEA monitoring.			X
3.3	Work with OPW/DCHA and CCC to review and redesign the approach and experience at Poul nabrone to create a greater sense of arrival and revise the interpretation to reflect the new findings from the archaeology that explains the international significance of the site (over 1000 years of use of the same portal tomb).	Medium-Term	OPW / NATIONAL MONUMENTS, OPW / DCHA, CCC	The approach and experience at Poul nabrone Dolmen is still being reviewed. No changes to the experience have been identified for this monitoring cycle. ASSESSMENT: This action is related to experience development. It has not progressed at the time of writing. It will be reviewed as part of the next monitoring cycle.		X	
3.4	Reinvigorate the Wildflower Walk Season with local walking guides to share this iconic May experience with visitors.	Short-Term	BEN	This action is being developed alongside the 'Burren in Bloom' annual festival in the area. The festival and action seek to increase awareness of the natural beauty and wildflowers in the Burren, while simultaneously noting the need for conservation of these plants. Visitors are encouraged to take photos of the wildflowers while			X

Number	Action Description	Timeframe	Lead	Action Assessment	No Env. Impact	Review	Monitoring
				visiting the site, with possible incentivisation through a competition to win local art. This project is still being developed, and no specific 'Wildflower Walks' have been identified prior to this monitoring cycle. ASSESSMENT: This action is being implemented in coordination with the Burrenbeo in the Plan area. There is potential for environmental effects to occur. This project is taken forward to SEA monitoring.			
3.5	Continue to collate information about the walking and cycle routes in the region and encourage visitors to get off the beaten track through Guided Experiences with Local Guides whose knowledge of the Holy Wells, sacred sites, and natural phenomenon are core to the Wild Atlantic Way's principal theme of Connectedness.	Short-Term	GEO PARK, BEN, CLDC	Walking tours are still being developed in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher GeoPark. Guided walks are currently being operated at the site but there is not sufficient information to complete monitoring of visitor interest in these tours. ASSESSMENT: This action has not progressed enough to date, therefore, due to insufficient information monitoring is currently not possible. This action will be reviewed during the next monitoring cycle.		X	
Hero Experience 4: See Life shaped by the Ancient Farming Landscape of the Burren to see the Ancient Traditions Continue							
4.1	CATALYST 6: Support Farmers keen to Diversify their business to include tourism with a business support programme and guidance on insurance, planning requirements and investment in sustainable tourism experiences that will create future hero experiences. Create an Agri-Tourism Farm Diversification programme for the Burren farmers and landowners to enable them to sustain their "Living Landscape" through new opportunities in visitor experiences, access to heritage sites, food produce, accommodation, etc.	Short-Term	IFA, AT, CLDC	This action supports farmers who seek to diversify their farmers to include tourism assets. Farmers are directed to follow <i>Branching Out: A Guide to Farm Diversification in Ireland</i> as published by Teagasc in July 2024. The guide provides funding opportunities and guidance on facilities and experiences to invest in. ASSESSMENT: This action is still being progressed but does not currently have enough information to undergo environmental monitoring. This action will be reviewed during the next monitoring cycle.		X	
4.2	CATALYST 7: Education and Awareness Provision – join the Geopark to 'clean-up' a site	Short-Term	CCC / GEO PARK	Community clean-up days and other conservation events in the Burren are organised by the Burrenbeo Trust members and volunteers. Clean-ups are further supported by the Geopark and			X

Number	Action Description	Timeframe	Lead	Action Assessment	No Env. Impact	Review	Monitoring
	or fix a dry-stone wall. Discover what is involved in managing a Global Geopark.			Clare County Council. All active conservation events organised by the Burrenbeo can be tracked on their website. The community is focused on preserving the natural, built and cultural heritage of the Burren and upskilling the next generation to protect the Geopark for generations to come. ASSESSMENT: This action is being progressed through partnerships with the Burrenbeo and Clare County Council. Education and awareness events will be tracked as part of this monitoring cycle. There is potential for environmental effects to occur, this project is taken forwards to SEA monitoring.			
4.3	Create an International Educational-tourism Cluster of Products that can actively promote the region and its links to farming, conservation, sustainable best practice and sustainable tourism.	Medium-Term	GEOPARK, BEN, CLDC	This project relates to creating an International Educational-tourism Cluster of Products. Education relating to farming, conservation, sustainable practices and tourism has the potential for indirect positive environmental effects. ASSESSMENT: There is insufficient information to complete environmental monitoring. This action will be reviewed during the next monitoring cycle.		X	
4.4	Due to the synergy between the Burren, Cliffs of Moher and Aran Islands, it will be important to have regard to other plans, programmes and policies for the Aran Islands and/or Connemara when seeking to deliver a more sustainable and holistic visitor experience in connecting the stories, activities and experiences of both destinations.	Short-Term	FI	Both the Burren & Cliffs of Moher VEDP and the Connemara & Aran Islands VEDP will be developed with neighbouring destinations in mind, and with consultation from specialists such as Fáilte Ireland's Islands Manager. ASSESSMENT: This action will be progressed in the planning stage to provide a more cohesive visitor experience. There are unlikely to be any significant environmental effects, and thus this action is screened out of environmental monitoring.	X		
Hero Experience 5: Experience Wellness the Wild Atlantic Way through Immersion of the Senses							
5.1	CATALYST 4: Create a 'Wellness the Wild Atlantic Way' programme and dedicated	Short-Term	FI, BEN	This project relates to the marketing objectives of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher as places for	X		

Number	Action Description	Timeframe	Lead	Action Assessment	No Env. Impact	Review	Monitoring
	section on the Fáilte Ireland website that looks at the broader definition of 'wellness' including connection, time in nature, and the need to sleep well, as well as the traditional relaxation, healthy food and exercise.			wellness and relaxation. The Burren Eco-Tourism Network is working on developing this action. ASSESSMENT: This action is unlikely to environmental effects and is focused on highlighting existing wellness opportunities in the Plan area. Therefore, this action is screened out of the environmental monitoring process.			
5.2	Collective bundling and marketing of the Burren Wellness Experiences connecting the villages and businesses within the Burren.	Short-Term	BEN, CT, FI	Fáilte Ireland has offered training courses for businesses to adapt their customer experiences in terms of pricing, product offering and opportunities. ASSESSMENT: This project related to the advertising of visitor experiences in the Burren. While this action is likely to have positive economic effects, no environmental impacts are likely as no new experiences are be created through this action. Therefore, this project is screened out of the environmental monitoring process.	X		
5.3	A locally Guided Holy Sites Experience to be developed for sites that are deemed suitable for visitation. The guided experience would include a set of visitor guidelines for visiting the sites including an instruction not to leave objects at the sites.	Short-Term	CCC / GEOPSTK, BEN	Records of holy well sites in County Clare is available and managed by the County Clare Heritage Office. Holy well sites can be found using a map search feature, which may help visitors identify which sites are enroute. The County Clare Heritage Offices notes most wells are on private property and some on inaccessible lands. This action would involve another sorting feature to identify holy well sites freely and easily accessible to visitors. ASSESSMENT: With the current information available, there is insufficient information to complete environmental monitoring. This action will be reviewed during the next monitoring period.		X	

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Hero Experience 6: Savour the Unique Local Flavours of the Burren							
6.1	CATALYST 6: Support Farmers keen to Diversify their business to include food tourism initiatives to expand the immersive food experiences of the Burren Food Trail creating future hero experiences	Short-Term	CCC/GEOPARK, CLDC	<p>The Burren Food Experiences are already developed and active in the community. This action will improve the linkage between farms, restaurants and food markets for a clustered visitor experience.</p> <p>SSESSMENT: This is a supportive action for farms to opt-in to being part of an existing food tourism experience in the Burren. As such, no environmental effects are anticipated, and this action is screened out of the environmental monitoring process.</p>	X		
6.2	Expand the Burren Food Trail through encouragement of the benefits of participation and membership to non-BEN members, and adoption of the Geopark Code of Practice for Sustainable Tourism.	Short-Term	BEN	<p>Businesses that adhere to the Geopark Code of Sustainable Practice are added to the Burren Ecotourism Network (BEN). These businesses follow the same six guiding principles to foster sustainable tourism development. All businesses that join the Burren Ecotourism Network also must meet training and accreditation minimums.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: This action is building upon the existing Burren Ecotourism Network and guidelines required of the network's members. However, there is currently limited information on the members that make up with Network, therefore there is insufficient information to complete environmental monitoring. This action will be reviewed in the next environmental monitoring cycle.</p>		X	
Hero Experience 7: Immerse yourself in the Music and Dance of the Burren and see the Lineage of Stories, Songs & Sounds of the Sea							
7.1	CATALYST 3: Develop a winter Burren Music, Dance and Story Trail connecting visitors with music, dance, stories and traditions of the place – people and villages. This trail has the potential to become a world class experience as it builds on the authenticity and quality of Clare musicians and their stories.	Short-Term	CCC/GEOPARK, BEN	<p>The informational flipbook has been completed and is available to the public online.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: There are no likely environmental effects as a result of this action as the flipbook has been distributed digitally. This action has been screened out of the environmental monitoring process.</p>	X		

Number	Action Description	Timeframe	Lead	Action Assessment	No Env. Impact	Review	Monitoring
7.2	Establish a Retail Experience Mentoring programme using existing enterprises that have high quality and Burren connected retail.	Medium-Term	BEN, LEO	ASSESSMENT: This action is related to delivery of a retail mentoring programme. It is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring.	X		
7.3	Create the “Where To Go Next” Connection in each village and town, and at each iconic location which will guide visitors to less well-known experiences and locations encouraging them to slow down, stay and /or extend their stay. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecting the inspiration of the Burren with famous artists, authors and poets John O'Donohue, W.B.Yeats and George Bernard Shaw who carved their names into the autograph tree in Coole Park, north of Gort. 	Short-Term	FI, CCC	This action is building upon a larger tourism goal to increase visitor spend and stay length. This is progressing alongside other initiatives including the Flipbook to advertise lesser-known destinations around the Burren and Cliffs of Moher. ASSESSMENT: The attractions promoted under this action are already existing in the area. The information is likely to disperse tourists to less well-known areas. It is not known what locations are promoted as insufficient information is available it will reviewed as part of the next monitoring phase.		X	
7.4	CATALYST 8: Facilitate workshop(s) to assist in further developing and promoting a series of Cultural Events that encourage Year-Round visitation through dedicated timely funding, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Music Festivals and Events (Teach Ceoil, Kilfenora Trad Music Festival, Russell Memorial Weekend, etc) Taste the Burren Food Trail and Events, Burren Slow Food Festival and Burren Food Fayre Festival of Finn Burren in Bloom Burren Rocks Seabirds Festival at the Cliffs of Moher Crinniu na mBád Burren Heritage Week Walks 	Short-Term	FI, CCC	Facilitating workshops in the Plan area is not expected to have any environmental effects. Visitor numbers are not currently available for all festivals. ASSESSMENT: This action related to the promotion of existing festivals/events and the communication/branding of these experiences. It will not require any physical works and is therefore not likely to have significant environmental impacts. This action is sifted out of the monitoring programme.	X		

Number	Action Description	Timeframe	Lead	Action Assessment	No Env. Impact	Review	Monitoring
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Father Ted Festival Lisdoonvarna Matchmaking Festival Burren Winterage Weekend 						
ENABLER 1: Visitor Management and Dispersal A key issue for both the Burren and Cliffs of Moher is the environmental pressures that are already being witnessed during peak periods. To help ensure the future sustainability of the region's natural and cultural assets and communities, it will be imperative that an appropriately resourced visitor management, traffic and transport strategy is developed and delivered.							
E1.1	<p>CATALYST 1: Develop and implement an Integrated Traffic and Transport Strategy for the Burren and Cliffs of Moher, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop alternative itineraries for bus operators from Dublin and Galway that include overnight stops in County Clare. Regulate buses stopping at sacred sites, including Poul nabrone, to require respectful interpretation of these sites and a visitor contribution to their conservation. Through the Cliffs of Moher engagement with the bus companies, give preference to buses staying overnight in County Clare. Implement the recommendations of the Doolin Masterplan to reduce the impact of bus traffic on the village and provide adequate enforcement in the village. Upgrade the Cliffs of Moher carpark and establish the operation of formal park and ride facilities in Doolin and Liscannor. Review of suitable bus size (many are too big and wide now) and frequency on the coast road (via Fanore) and revisit the idea of making the coastal drive a one-way system. Investigate the feasibility of using 'intelligent transportation systems', the de-zoning of minor roads (particularly green roads), and 	Short-Term	FI, CCC, NPWS, CoM	<p>Several elements of this action are being progressed together to have an overarching upgrade to the transport system in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: This action is still in the scoping stage and may be reduced by Fáilte Ireland over the course of the lifetime of the Plan. There is insufficient information to undertake environmental monitoring. This action will be reviewed as part of the next monitoring cycle.</p>		X	

Number	Action Description	Timeframe	Lead	Action Assessment	No Env. Impact	Review	Monitoring
	<p>the reduction of speed limits on select roads.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage dispersal of FIT traffic to quieter locations such as Kilfenora, the Burren Lowlands and South Clare through the renovation and updating of existing attractions and the creation of new products and experiences (e.g. Holy Island, Scatterry Island, Loop Head). Extend the 'Tourism for Conservation' Geopark programme to introduce a Visitor Code of Practice with the visitor management and active conservation programmes. Investigate the cost and potential revenue of applying a differential rate levy to fund new sustainable transport options such as Local Link Clare. Investigate the application of an Environmental Management Charge for group tour visitors to high volume sacred sites across Ireland to reinvest in maintenance and site management. Work with Galway County Council on a joint strategy for the Burren with a third of the Burren in County Galway. Review of the number of bus licenses issued, itinerary routes and the stop locations in the Burren. Ensure that the routes do not use minor roads. Enforcement of the Integrated Visitor Management, Traffic & Transport Strategy will be required on the ground. 						
E1.2	Establish the Burren as an internationally important location through the Geoparks programme with ongoing work in each	Short-Term	CCC / GEOPARK	This action will upskill guides in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher and increase awareness of the rarity and importance of the Burren landscape.	X		

Number	Action Description	Timeframe	Lead	Action Assessment	No Env. Impact	Review	Monitoring
	community and development of a 'Burren Guides' training programme.			ASSESSMENT: This action is related to the delivery of a training programme. It is not likely to have an environmental effect, there, it is screened out of the environmental monitoring process.			
E1.3	Development and implementation of the Cliffs of Moher Strategy.	Short-Term	CCC, COM	<p>The Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040 has already been drafted, and in June 2024 sought public consultation.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: The Strategy is currently progressing through the planning stages. It has not yet been implemented and is still under consultation. Currently there is insufficient progress made to the action to undergo environmental monitoring. This action will be reviewed as part of the next environmental monitoring cycle.</p>			
E1.4	Present the transport challenges and Masterplan solutions for Doolin.	Short-Term	CCC, FI	<p>The Doolin masterplan was published in 2018 and outlines challenges facing transport in the region, and the pressures tourism may cause on the road networks.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: The Doolin Masterplan outlines key transport challenges and offers some solutions. The aims of the Masterplan are echoed throughout the Plan and the Clare County Council Development Plan 2023-2029, however there has not been sufficient progression to undertake environmental monitoring at this time. This action will be reviewed as part of the next monitoring cycle.</p>		X	
E1.5	Give preference to tour operators that include an Overnight Stay in the region in packaging and distribution arrangements at the Cliffs of Moher.	Short-Term	COM	<p>This project will enhance visitor experience and extend stay duration. A strategy has not been identified yet so incentivise overnight coach stays over day trips to the Cliffs and Burren.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: This action is still in the planning stage and has not progressed at the time of writing. There is insufficient information to undertake environmental</p>		X	

Number	Action Description	Timeframe	Lead	Action Assessment	No Env. Impact	Review	Monitoring
				monitoring. This action will be reviewed as part of the next monitoring cycle.			
E1.6	CATALYST 5: Develop the Burren Discovery Trail to assist in dispersing independent travellers eastward to the Burren Lowlands and provide interpretive content to interpret the landscape and reveal the underlying stories. Use the Drive to generate interest in alternative geosites and attractions.	Short-Term	FI, CCC, GCC	This action has been completed, and the Burren Discovery Trail is fully developed and available for use online. ASSESSMENT: There are no physical works undertaken for this project. The Discovery trail will be used to promote offerings in the Burren, but interaction with the discovery trail cannot be monitored. Therefore, this action is screened out of the SEA process.	X		
E1.7	Investigate the feasibility of Public Toilets in high-use areas such as Fanore and Doolin and review the facilities, traffic management, interpretation, signage, etc. at all hero products.	Short-Term	CCC	No potential locations have been identified at the time of writing. This action has not progressed. ASSESSMENT: This action has not yet progressed, therefore, there is insufficient information to compete environmental monitoring. This action will be reviewed in the next monitoring cycle.		X	
E1.8	Position the Burren Geopark to drive the Research, Monitoring and Experience Development activities of the region.	Short-Term	CCC / GEOPARK	This is a supportive action that will provide guidance to Clare County Council and GSI in the management of the Burren area and surroundings, generally. ASSESSMENT: This action does not involve any physical works and is unlikely to have any environmental effects. This action has been screened out of the environmental monitoring process.	X		
E1.9	Develop a Yearly Action Plan for the Geopark.	Ongoing	CCC / GEOPARK Oversight Committee	A Yearly Action Plan specific to the Burren and Cliffs of Moher has not yet been complete at the time of writing. ASSESSMENT: This action has not yet been progressed. It is unlikely that this action will require any physical works or have an environmental effect. However, there is insufficient information to undertake		X	

Number	Action Description	Timeframe	Lead	Action Assessment	No Env. Impact	Review	Monitoring
				environmental monitoring. This action will be reviewed as part of the next monitoring cycle.			
E1.10	Undertake an analysis of the accommodation facilities and work to attract inward investment for new facilities. Strengthen incentives to improve and upgrade existing accommodation businesses.	Ongoing	CCC, FI	The analysis of current accommodation capacity is ongoing. Plans for additional facilities have not been proposed yet. ASSESSMENT: While this action has potential for physical works, it is still in the planning stage. There is currently insufficient information to undertake environmental monitoring. This action will be reviewed in the next environmental monitoring cycle.		X	
E1.11	Continue to raise awareness that the Geopark is primarily a landscape in private ownership – promote appropriate visitor behaviour relating to littering, parking and respect for farm infrastructure.	Ongoing	CCC/GEOPARK	The Geopark is partnered with 'Leave no Trace' and follows the Geopark Code of Practice for Sustainable Tourism. Both these initiatives are promoted on the homepage for the Burren. However, there is little information to inform visitors that the Geopark is mostly private land, and areas frequented by visitors are managed by the people living there. ASSESSMENT: This action promotes sustainable travel practices such as Leave No Trace. The Geopark also requires visitors to follow the Geopark Code of Practice for Sustainable Tourism. There is currently insufficient information available to complete environmental monitoring. This action will be reviewed as part of the next environmental monitoring cycle.		X	
ENABLER 2: Better Collaboration Between Groups At present, the Burren and Cliffs of Moher offering is quite fragmented outside of the umbrella of the Burren Geopark platform. From a visitor perspective, this causes a lack of cohesion in the overall delivery of the visitor experience which can make the difference between whether or not visitors choose to visit and stay in the region. To ensure a clear, cohesive message is being delivered to visitors, tourism groups will need to come together to provide a co-ordinated approach to tourism, one that is driven by clear communication and promotion.							
E2.1	Establish links between Clare Tourism, The Burren & Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark and the Local Tourism Organisations and Groups to promote the region as a	Short-Term	CCC / GEOPARK	This action relates to improving communication and management between the different organisations working in the County Clare, Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO global geopark and local tourists. It is likely to improve co-ordination	X		

Number	Action Description	Timeframe	Lead	Action Assessment	No Env. Impact	Review	Monitoring
	<p>premium destination for overnight stays. This Plan recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Burren Geopark takes the lead for the delivery of the VEDP for Clare County Council Clare County Council needs to establish an oversight committee, chaired by the Geopark to include the Cliffs of Moher, Planning, Transport, and other key sections of the Council, together with Fáilte Ireland, CLDC, OPW/ DCHA, NPWS, LCG's, BEN, CT, LEO, Coillte, LEO, CETB, Burrenbeo Trust, Burren Programme, UCG, UCD,(and others as agreed) to meet on a quarterly basis to review progress of the plan and work plan This Committee would create a central point for identifying and providing the guidelines for infrastructural development, funding opportunities, business regulations, supports, etc For Clare Tourism to include the Geopark in decision making and to ensure the right skills are in place for the marketing of the Burren This should include expanding the range of partners involved in Clare Tourism (similar to those partnering with Donegal Tourism) to deliver a more seamless experience from marketing to visitor engagement on the ground Collectively promote the region to tour/bus operators for overnight stays Elevate the promotion of the experience of the Burren as a premium special destination, with dedicated promotion of the unique experiences best suited to Free and Independent Travelers (FITs) Facilitate the development of local community tourism groups in Liscannor, 			<p>and management of the area, reduce duplication of resources and improve the visitor experience and tourism development product.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: This action related to the internal organisation and management of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher region, as such no environmental impacts are likely, and the action has been screened out of the environmental monitoring process.</p>			

Number	Action Description	Timeframe	Lead	Action Assessment	No Env. Impact	Review	Monitoring
	<p>Lahinch, Ennistymon and Kilfenora (Kinvara too if none in place) and provide ongoing support to BEN and existing groups to create an integrated network of all the villages in the region to support a collective “roadmap”, collective marketing and promotion for the region This can then feed into the Visit Clare promotional platforms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the branded signage as developed by the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark 						
E2.2	<p>Improve the pre-trip planning information provided about the Burren on key websites and enroute planning in key brochures and guide books to reflect the main messages and hero experiences including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New photography and drone footage required to bring the Burren story to life with more outdoor, active and inspiring footage Elevate the experience of the Burren as a premium special destination, collectively promoting the Burren through its FIT experiences Change the messaging to the theme of 'Connectedness' where meeting the locals and / or visiting the landscape with local guides is the true experience A guided walk of each town provided via a 'tear off' town / village walking map available in local shops to encourage customer engagement in the hero experience by locals Create a new section on the Wild Atlantic Way on wellness presenting remarkable experiences from yoga to healthy food showcasing the Burren 	Short-Term	FI, CCC / GEOPARK, BEN, CT	<p>This action involves increased online marketing and visitor information on existing offers available in the Burren.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: This is a promotional activity, and no environmental effects are likely to occur. This action has been screened out of the environmental monitoring process.</p>	X		

Number	Action Description	Timeframe	Lead	Action Assessment	No Env. Impact	Review	Monitoring
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the use of social media by local groups through aligning the efforts of each community under the guidance of Clare Tourism • Work with Shannon Group on developing a showcase of local produce and artisan crafts from the Burren at Shannon Airport along with messages about the Burren Experience 						
E2.3	Support the ongoing role of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark to continue to raise the international recognition of the environmental significance of the area.	Short-Term	CCC, FI	<p>This action relates to the marketing of the Plan area, specifically highlighting the unique environmental composition found in the Burren.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: This action does not involve any physical works and is unlikely to have any environmental effects. This action has been screened out of the environmental monitoring process.</p>	X		
E2.4	Support the aims of the Geopark in its ongoing work with the local communities who are integral to the experience.	Short-Term	CCC / GEOPARK, BEN	<p>This action is community based and seeks to bring together and train the next generation of caretakers for the land.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: This action is unlikely to have any environmental effects, there, it is screened out of the environmental monitoring process.</p>	X		
ENABLER 3: Inspire and Create Confidence in Sharing Stories To ensure the region takes a unified approach in sharing the Burren and Cliffs of Moher story, the development and implementation of an integrated marketing programme that is supported by capacity							
E3.1	Implement Business Support programmes through local and regional agencies to help deliver the Visitor Experience Development Plan. Assist businesses in understanding how they can enhance the overall delivery of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher story.	Short-Term	FI, CCC / GEOPARK, LEO	<p>Businesses in the region can opt in to supportive programmes including the Burren Ecotourism Network and the Geopark Ambassadors Training Programme.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: This action is about supporting economic development in the Geopark. No physical works are anticipated with this action, therefore, it is screened out of the environmental assessment process.</p>	X		

Number	Action Description	Timeframe	Lead	Action Assessment	No Env. Impact	Review	Monitoring
E3.2	Identify and support the next wave of Wild Atlantic Way Champions in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher region.	Short-Term	FI, CCC / GEOPARK	<p>The Champions Programmes, as developed by Fáilte Ireland, is designed to boost of the overarching Experience Brands. For the Burren and Cliffs of Moher, this brand is the Wild Atlantic Way. The action is complete and full operation in the Plan area.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: This action relates to the marketing imagine and visitor impression when visiting the Wild Atlantic Way. No environmental effects are expected; therefore, this action is screened out of the environmental monitoring process.</p>	X		
ENABLER 4: Effective Marketing and Promotion In order to grow seasonal and sustainable tourism to the Burren and Cliffs of Moher, increased marketing and promotion of the region will be required to achieve cut-through, particularly in high-value markets, and in supporting markets such as business and incentive travel.							
E4.1	Develop a 'Burren Marketing' training and upskill programme through the Geopark for all business owners, staff and local communities, to know their villages, towns, region and landscape and to be on "message".	Short-Term	FI, BEN	<p>This action is still being developed but will likely have a similar structure to the Champions Programme for business owners across Ireland.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: This action is related to a marketing training programmes for business owners in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark. No environmental effects are anticipated as a result of the action. This action is screened out of the environmental monitoring programme.</p>	X		
E4.2	Fáilte Ireland and Cliffs of Moher to actively promote alternative experiences in the region to reduce the pressure on the Cliffs and promote overnight stays.	Short-Term	FI, CoM	<p>Possible alternative experiences to promote are still being considered and have not yet been decided on. This action hopes to distribute the pressure of tourism in the region, while encouraging higher visitor spend by increasing the number of overnight stays.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: This action has potential for environmental affects, however there is currently insufficient information available about the action and experiences involved. This action will be reviewed during the next monitoring cycle.</p>		X	

Number	Action Description	Timeframe	Lead	Action Assessment	No Env. Impact	Review	Monitoring
E4.3	Create a niche Premier Eco Conference and Incentive programme building on the success of Burren College of Art programmes.	Mid/Long-Term	BEN, CCC / GEOPARK	<p>This action supports the educational and creative development of the Plan area and the Burren College of Art.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: This action related to the development of educational opportunities in the area. Environmental effects for this action are unlikely, therefore, it has been screened out of the environmental monitoring programme.</p>	X		
E4.4	Develop a Joint Ticketing initiative to cross-sell visitor experiences, increase dwell time in the Burren and increase season extension. Ensure that the initiative is promoted in-destination and is integrated into any trip planning tools.	Short-Term	CCC / GEOPARK, BEN	<p>Ticketing webpages for the Cliffs of Moher advertise visiting the Burren and staying overnight in Clare to increase dwell time. Packaged experiences/joint ticketing initiatives are still being developed and are not yet operational.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: Ticketing initiatives are still being developed. This action is currently at the scoping stage with insufficient information to complete environmental monitoring. This action will be reviewed during the next monitoring cycle.</p>		X	



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