

10 YEARS of the WILD ATLANTIC WAY

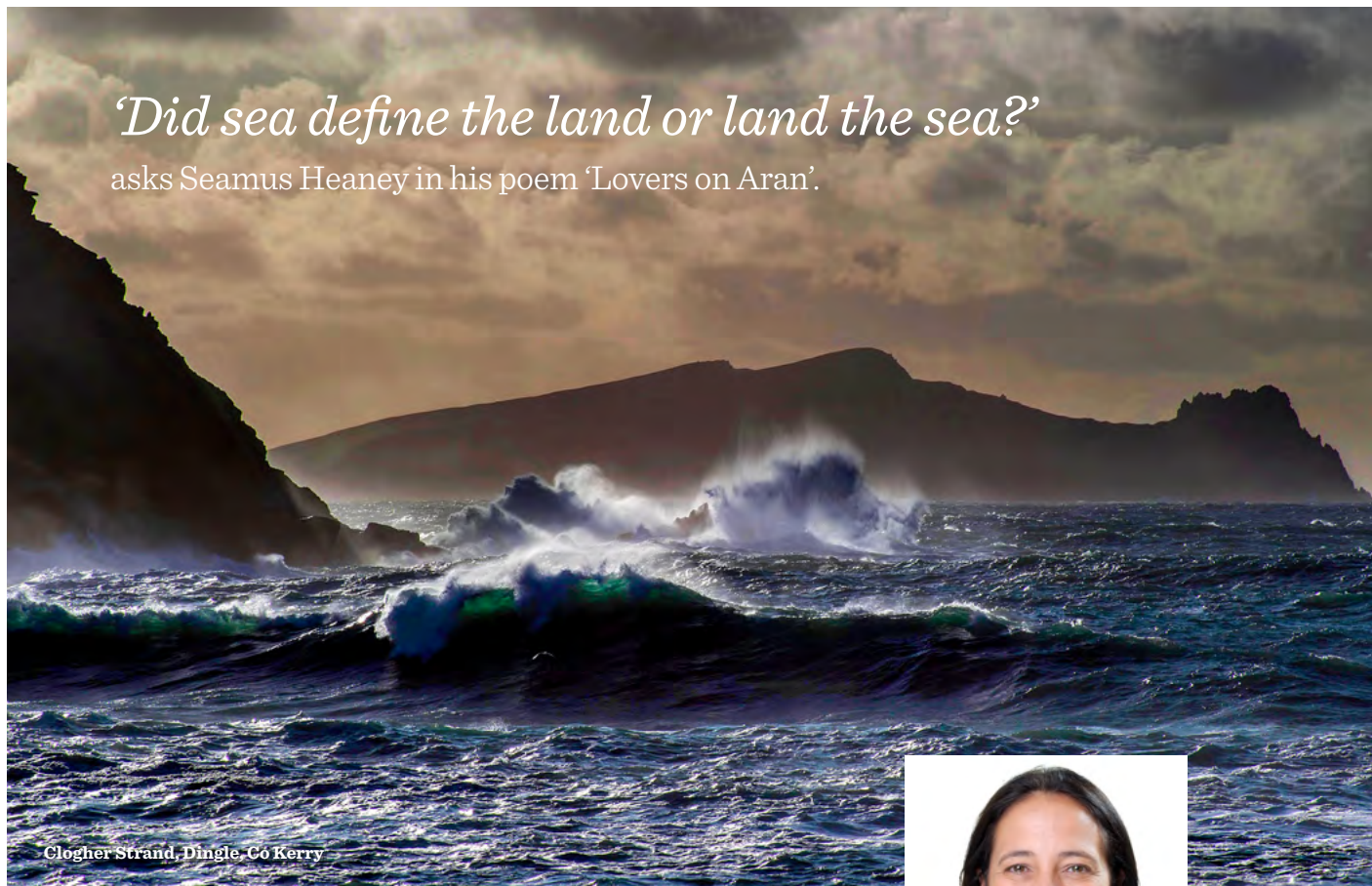
A DECADE OF
TRANSFORMATIONAL
TOURISM IMPACT ON THE
WEST COAST OF
IRELAND





‘Did sea define the land or land the sea?’

asks Seamus Heaney in his poem ‘Lovers on Aran’.



A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM,
CULTURE, ARTS, GAELTACHT, SPORT AND MEDIA

Catherine Martin T.D.



The Wild Atlantic Way is so much more than signposts and a brand. It's a lifeline, a feeling, a community that stretches from Donegal to Cork, which takes our position as an island on the wild edge of the world and makes it a must visit destination, a breath-taking experience that keeps visitors from near and far coming back again and again.

The last 10 years of the Wild Atlantic Way have driven significant economic impacts right along the west coast. As Minister for Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media I can see its positive influence on areas right across the full remit of my department.

The Gaeltacht areas and islands, which preserve our native language and indigenous culture, are a key part of the offering of the Wild Atlantic Way, and the economic benefits of tourism brought to the west coast by visitors coming to experience it has brought new opportunities for economic prosperity and supported the regeneration of communities right along the west coast.

I want to commend the team at Fáilte Ireland whose unwavering commitment to excellence, innovation, and collaboration has ensured the Wild Atlantic Way has blossomed into a globally recognised model for destination development. I also want to acknowledge Tourism Ireland who promote this route with creativity and passion to international audiences. I would also like to commend each Local Authority, State Agency, tourism business, community and individual who committed to the story of the Wild Atlantic Way and helped to shape its impact.

In the years ahead, we will continue to nurture this precious legacy and I look forward to seeing the Wild Atlantic Way becoming an even more successful destination into the future.

Catherine Martin T.D.

*Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht,
Sport and Media*

Sliabh Liag, Co Donegal

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF Fáilte Ireland

Paul Kelly



A decade ago, the Wild Atlantic Way transformed Ireland's tourism landscape, weaving together rugged coastlines, ancient heritage, and warm hospitality into a tapestry that has captivated hearts around the world.

Fáilte Ireland launched the Wild Atlantic Way in 2014 in response to a crippling global recession which left the west coast of Ireland facing sustained challenges with declining coastal communities and a tourism season of no more than six weeks in many places.

The brand was designed to create an experience of scale that would re-imagine our west coast. Our ambition was to unify the region through a continuous, defined touring route and package it in a way that would attract visitors and provide an economic engine for the west of Ireland.

Getting it from an idea to reality took just under 2 years and the collaboration we had from both public and private sectors, local communities, as well as Government, was just extraordinary.

The work of Fáilte Ireland colleagues, past and present, cannot be understated – from the first day, they showed and continue to show passion, innovation and resilience, as well as deep belief in the value of the project.

Local Authorities in every county on the west coast gave us not just their support but their engineers to create the route and put the necessary infrastructure in place.

Our colleagues in Tourism Ireland took the concept internationally and created awareness and drove demand. The tourism industry became early brand champions, sharing our ambition and bringing it to life.

Local communities embraced it from the very outset and made it their own and they continue to embody the essence of the Wild Atlantic Way. It was truly a Team Ireland effort. Now the Wild Atlantic Way has become more than just a route, it's an internationally renowned invitation to explore the heart and soul of the West of Ireland.

The Wild Atlantic Way is still a very young brand, with plenty still to deliver and this anniversary marks the first decade in what we know will be a lasting legacy.

As a development agency, we have continued to invest in the Wild Atlantic Way as a region from our visitor attractions to our towns and villages to our smaller visitor experiences all of which make up the colour and fabric of tourism on the West coast.

In the next 5 years we will invest over €70million in the sustainable development of our tourism product along the Wild Atlantic Way - with some major projects including Fort Dunree and Westport Estate in the northwest and new masterplans for our iconic attractions such as the Cliffs of Moher in the midwest.

Tourism trends continue to change and visitors look for an authentic experience and to truly engage with the culture and traditions of the people and of the area - this is the type of tourism that the Wild Atlantic Way is made for.

Paul Kelly

Paul Kelly

Chief Executive of Fáilte Ireland



Ireland

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
TOURISM IRELAND

Alice Mansergh



The landscape and culture go back millennia, yet it's 10 years since the Wild Atlantic Way was launched as a route, with credit due to our partners in Fáilte Ireland, local government and communities.

At Tourism Ireland, we've loved making the Wild Atlantic Way famous overseas! We captured behind-the-scenes interviews with the stars of Normal People, Banshees of Inisherin and Star Wars, as they filmed along the route, inspiring screen tourism.

Tourism Ireland has co-produced 22 food and travel focused TV shows highlighting the Wild Atlantic Way, reaching 450 million in viewership around the world, with hosts like Donal Skehan and John Torode.

Bringing journalists to experience the scenery, heritage and culture along the route has led to coverage in publications like The Guardian, The New York Times and National Geographic, adding up over the years to an 'equivalent advertising value' of over 1 billion euros. As we mark 10 years, we'll be showcasing what the Wild Atlantic Way has to offer across 14 markets around the world, through a mix of TV, digital and social channels.

We invite everyone to get involved in this special birthday, sharing their favourite photos of the route to wish 'Happy 10th Birthday to Ireland's #WildAtlanticWay'.

Alice Mansergh,
Chief Executive, Tourism Ireland

The impact of the Wild Atlantic Way

IN 2013

TOURISTS TOOK
6.2 MILLION TRIPS
TO THE WILD
ATLANTIC WAY

TOURISM ON THE WILD
ATLANTIC WAY
WAS WORTH
€1.9 BILLION IN
REVENUE

TOURISM
SUPPORTED 86,000
JOBS ALONG THE
WILD ATLANTIC WAY

IN 2023

TOURISTS TOOK
OVER 8 MILLION TRIPS TO
THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY,
AN INCREASE OF
29%

TOURISM ON THE WILD
ATLANTIC WAY WAS WORTH OVER
€3 billion
AN INCREASE IN
59%

OVER
121,000
JOBS ARE SUPPORTED
BY TOURISM ON THE WILD
ATLANTIC WAY

.....➤ **ALMOST 2 MILLION MORE TOURISTS TO THE
WILD ATLANTIC WAY IN 2023, THAN IN 2013**

€3 billion

THE ANNUAL VALUE OF TOURISM
ALONG THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY

2 million

MORE TOURISTS CAME
TO THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY
IN 2023 THAN IN 2013*

29%

MORE TOURISTS
TO THE REGION VS 2013

€120m

IN CAPITAL PROJECTS FUNDED ALONG
THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY

121,000

JOBS IN TOURISM SUPPORTED

51%

WILD ATLANTIC WAY'S SHARE OF
DOMESTIC TOURISM REVENUE

57%

OF REVENUE ON THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY
WAS GENERATED BY OVERSEAS TOURISTS

43%

OF REVENUE ALONG THE WILD ATLANTIC
WAY WAS GENERATED BY
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND TOURISTS

32%

SHARE OF TOTAL OVERSEAS
TOURISTS TO IRELAND

40%

SHARE OF DOMESTIC
TRIPS IN IRELAND

2,500

KILOMETRES LONG

188

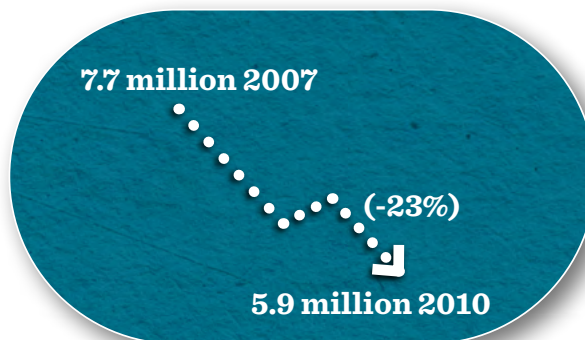
DISCOVERY POINTS

The Birth of the Wild Atlantic Way

The Wild Atlantic Way is a brand and route that seems like it has always been there, so synonymous is the name with the west coast of Ireland. However, the Wild Atlantic Way was the brainchild of Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority, on the back of the crippling recession that had gripped Ireland following the global financial crash.

As Ireland's economic circumstances changed for the worst with the onset of the crash, so too did the performance of the tourism sector. Overseas visits to Ireland peaked at 7.7 million in 2007, before falling to 5.9 million (-23%) by 2010.

IRELAND OVERSEAS VISITS



A stated aim of Government policy was improving the nation's economic performance through growing export earnings. Tourism clearly had – and still has – a role to play in this regard as it is:

- a generator of invisible export earnings and
- relatively employment intensive.
- an economic engine in many rural, less economically diverse parts of the country.

Fáilte Ireland saw the potential for tourism as an economic catalyst to reinvigorate communities along the west coast, creating opportunities for employment and generating much needed revenue for the national exchequer. Following the development of the concept of a contiguous touring route of scale and singularity, Fáilte Ireland, in partnership with the Local Authorities, the Local Development Companies and Údarás na Gaeltachta, embarked upon a comprehensive public consultation process to identify the route of the

Wild Atlantic Way and the location of the Discovery Points along it. The Route Identification Report can be seen by clicking [HERE](#). By the end of 2012, the route and the Discovery Points had been identified and in 2013 and early 2014 the directional signage for the route was designed, resulting in the installation of just over 4,000 directional signs which navigated visitors both north and south along the route.

Developing the destination itself required a shift in focus from the natural assets of the coast to the experience visitors would get from engaging with the places and people, which can help them to connect with our traditional culture and values. The development of the Wild Atlantic Way route and brand leveraged this and was Ireland's first major regional experience brand. The development of the project centred around the experience of the place as a key motivator for visitor, harnessing the spectacular natural beauty of the coast and creating new and interesting experiences along the way to encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more.



Errigal View, Co Donegal

Communities are at the very heart of the Wild Atlantic Way, and the route creates cohesiveness and continuity for visitors as they travel along it. To this end, partnering with industry and communities, Fáilte Ireland created '[50 Secrets of the Wild Atlantic Way... Go where the locals go](#)' and supporting Trade Manuals to bring the experience of the Wild Atlantic Way to life for buyers and consumers alike as part of the launch of the project.

Prior to engaging in regional experience brand development, the international tourism market did not know what to expect from Ireland, especially outside of Dublin and a small number of tourism hotspots. There was no differential for the different parts of Ireland, leading international visitors to think 'Ireland is all the same' and there would be no need for a repeat visit, and they did not know if (or how) one Irish region/destination differed from the other.

The lack of a 'signature' experience suggested that while potential overseas tourists were very well-disposed towards Ireland, they were inclined to put off

visiting to another year and choose somewhere more compelling for the current year.

The Wild Atlantic Way route itself is intended as the "magnet" to which visitors will be drawn to the west coast in the first instance with a layer of varied and authentic experiences beneath this offering visitors plenty of reasons to explore the wider region, stay longer and enjoy the Wild Atlantic Way all year round. Now that the Wild Atlantic Way brand is well established, the intention is to leverage it even further for the benefit of all the west coast region.

Internationally, the brand has proven itself to be particularly compelling in the Great Britain, German and French markets but has also begun to take hold in the US with revenue from North America now ahead of that of mainland Europe.

Almost two million more tourists came to the Wild Atlantic Way in 2023 versus 2013. In all international consumer testing, the brand showed itself to be a motivating reason to visit Ireland and domestically it has become a household name.



Foynes Flying Boat Museum, Co Limerick

Foynes Flying Boat & Maritime Museum, Co Limerick

"The Wild Atlantic Way has been incredible for both the museum and for the village of Foynes. The WAW has provided us with significant opportunities to grow our business. In 2020, we commenced a major €4.6m development to cater for growing visitor numbers due to the success of the WAW and to ensure we have the amenities in place to also capture the extra off-peak footfall the WAW has generated. New facilities include a 100-seater cinema, conference area, multi-purpose/gallery space, Irish Coffee Lounge, and refurbished aviation museum. We are now poised to double our visitor numbers by 2027."

A decade of transformational tourism development





Fleadh Ennis 2016, Co Clare

For the Visitor: It presents a compelling, differential proposition of scale.

The award-winning signage vastly improved orientation and it helped stimulate investment in the route road network. Both of which were much needed in the eyes of the Wild Atlantic Way tourist.

The consumer research showed that the proposition went down fantastically with the target market. Research participants were misty-eyed when relaying back how closely it matched their emotionally warm and visceral experiences while on the route.

For the Industry: It helped to drive regionality and, to a lesser extent, seasonality.

It was designed to drive repeatability on the basis that it was hard 'to do' in one trip.

It gave the businesses a shared identity to brand and market collaboratively.

For the Community: Their active involvement in how the on-the-ground offering was rolled out helped to drive buy-in.

It gave them a platform to show-case their own pride in their community/locality.

And speaking of local communities, it only works because those who come from, and live along, the Wild Atlantic Way can so readily identify with it.

For the Environment: It continues to responsibly protect and promote Ireland's unique natural culture and biodiversity.

It has set a blueprint for monitoring and managing visitor interactions with our natural environment.

It has encouraged environmental protection through partnerships with EU Life Projects, Leave No Trace and Clean Coast.

JOBS AND IMPACT

Pre-2014, there were 4,500 tourism businesses engaging with Fáilte Ireland along the Wild Atlantic Way.

In 2024, there are over 7,000 businesses, an increase of 60%.

Pre-2014, tourism supported 86,000 jobs along the Wild Atlantic Way.

In 2023, 121,000 jobs in tourism are supported

2 million more tourists to the Wild Atlantic Way from 2013-2023, accounting for 35,000 additional jobs in tourism in the region.

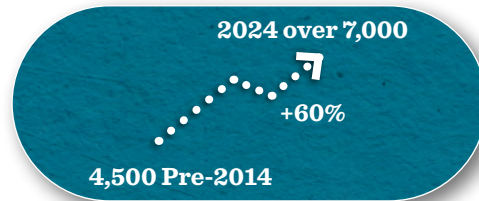
Over 400 new visitor experiences developed over 10 years from biking, hiking to kayaking.

The Wild Atlantic Way helping Ireland to be a shining Northern Light in European Tourism

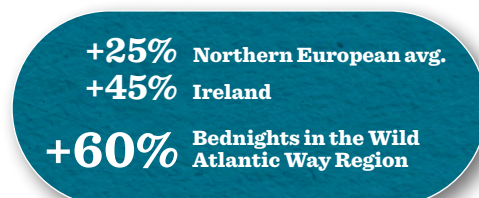
Based on the most recent internationally comparable data available, we see that inbound travel to Ireland grew by 45% between 2013 and 2019, well above the Northern European average of 25%, with the Wild Atlantic Way being a key driver of this success with overseas visitor bednights in the region growing by 60% across this period.

**Based on Fáilte Ireland data.*

TOURISM BUSINESSES ENGAGING WITH FÁILTE IRELAND



INBOUND TRAVEL



Atlantic Sheepdogs, Co Sligo

Atlantic Sheepdogs, Co Sligo

"There is no doubt in our minds that Atlantic Sheepdogs would not have been possible but for the launch of the Wild Atlantic Way"



Planning the Wild Atlantic Way

The 2,500km route that is now known as the Wild Atlantic Way was carefully selected to maximise its impact for attracting visitors and creating new and compelling reasons for people to visit the west coast of Ireland.

The route meanders through 9 counties (Donegal, Leitrim, Sligo, Mayo, Galway, Limerick, Clare, Kerry and Cork). The primary consideration was to have a single continuous route and the route identification process highlighted those stretches that had the greatest scenic qualities. Fáilte Ireland conducted extensive public consultation with communities along the length of the route to engage with communities and facilitate local buy in for the project.

Developing the destination

Sustainable Tourism

Development on the Wild Atlantic Way

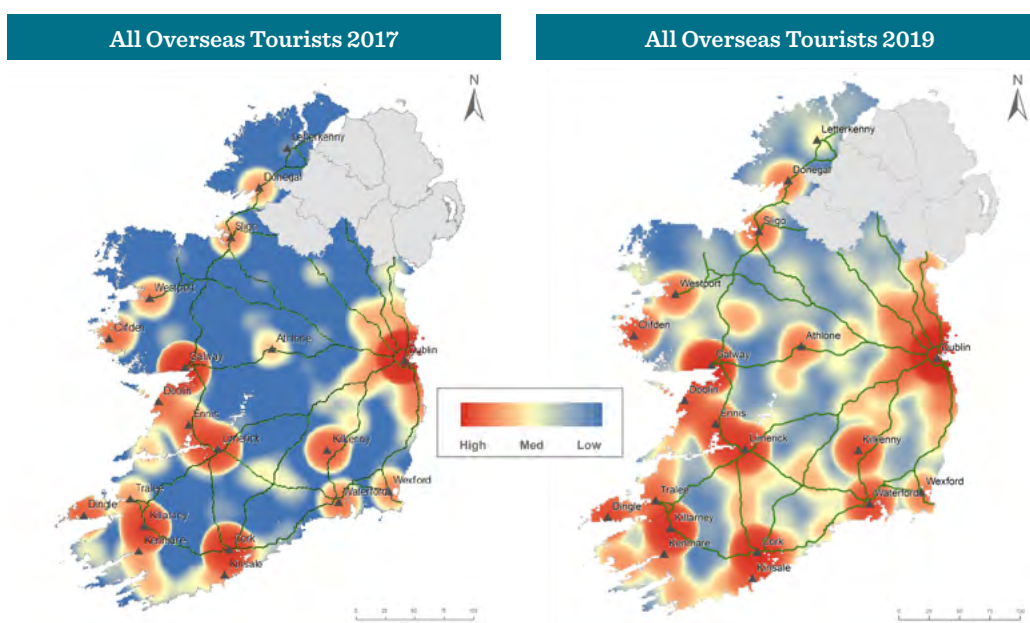
The landscape, people and communities that live along the west coast of Ireland, together with their culture and heritage, are key assets of the Wild Atlantic Way and have played a key role in driving its success. Increased awareness of the character of the Irish Atlantic culture will heighten visitors' desire to return and explore other parts of the Wild Atlantic Way. However, this unique and distinctive Atlantic culture of the region, and within it, the Irish-speaking Gaeltacht areas, is a living culture which is fragile and must be cared for and protected. Fáilte Ireland is committed to designing and managing tourism initiatives that will ensure that tourism will have a regenerative effect on this culture and on the region as a whole. Striking the appropriate balance between facilitating visitors to the Wild Atlantic Way and protecting the integrity, authenticity and vibrancy of the Atlantic culture is the essence of sustainable tourism, which is the core objective of the Wild Atlantic Way Regional Tourism Development Strategy. Local communities are the ultimate owners of the Wild Atlantic Way and Fáilte Ireland will work to enhance this sense of ownership and in working with its partners will ensure that tourism in-region results in direct benefits for local communities.



PAST

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

Before the development of the Wild Atlantic Way, the tourism spread along the west coast was very uneven, focusing almost exclusively on traditional tourism areas like Killarney, Dingle and Galway city.



PRESENT

Since 2014, Fáilte Ireland has launched 10 Destination and Experience Development Plans (DEDPs) along the Wild Atlantic Way and will develop a further 4 plans covering the whole Wild Atlantic Way region.

These plans develop the tourism offering in specific clusters and regions enabling every destination on the west coast to reach its full tourism potential. A DEDP is a five-year development plan that aims to create a sustainable tourism destination by progressing a range of key initiatives that will disperse tourists across the wider destination and strengthen the value of tourism to the local community by providing sustainable employment opportunities.

1. Inishowen Peninsula, Donegal
2. Sligo
3. Clew Bay, Mayo
4. Connemara Coast and Islands
5. The Burren & Cliffs of Moher

6. Limerick Gateway City
7. Dingle Peninsula
8. Killarney
9. Skellig Coast
10. West Cork & Kenmare

These local destination development plans are co-created from the ground up by local and national stakeholders; they see us building shared vision; and they see us all agreeing a shared, prioritised action list with clear ownership attached; and importantly they have an implementation group that is chaired by local industry partners. There is a clear linkage between these action plans and Fáilte Ireland and local authorities' investment decisions.

FUTURE

DEDPs in development:

11. South & West Donegal
12. North & East Mayo
13. Galway City
14. Cliff Coast - North Kerry & West Clare

The ambition for the future of the Wild Atlantic Way is to grow its appeal as a globally iconic, “must do” touring route, driving incremental bed-nights and longer stays into the region while protecting the cultural authenticity and wildness of the west coast. For the northern half of the Wild Atlantic Way (from Connemara, Co. Galway to Co. Donegal inclusive) there is a need to raise its profile internationally and grow incremental overseas visitor revenue. For the southern half of the Wild Atlantic Way (from Galway City, Co. Galway to Kinsale, Co. Cork inclusive) the focus will be

on sustainably increasing tourism revenue, extending the season and dispersing visitors more widely within the region, minimising any adverse impacts on local communities and maximising benefits for them.



In 2023, Fáilte Ireland, in partnership with Údarás na Gaeltachta and industry, launched a pilot programme to develop and showcase the bi-lingual (Gaeilge/English) tourism experiences available in Gaeltacht areas. These experiences, allow visitors to engage with the Irish language and heritage in a fun and accessible way from off road driving on Árainn to sea safaris in Corca Dhuibhne to whiskey tasting in Donegal. Such has been the success of the programme it is intended to expand it further in 2024 and beyond.



Lally Tours & City Sightseeing, Co Galway

Lally Tours - Mairtin Óg Lally

Looking back on the last 40 years of touring the West of Ireland, we can easily see a massive trajectory change kicking off exactly 10 years ago with the launch of the Wild Atlantic Way. We can see this in business success, employee expansion and retention, off season trade, a boom in the addition of activity providers and an overall much healthier spread of tourism out of the cities and into the more rural parts of the West of Ireland.

Smaoineamh iontach mhaith a bhí ann ón chéad lá, agus tá muid thar a bheith buíoch don obair atá déanta ag Fáilte Éireann ar an tionscnamh go dtí seo. Seo linn go dtí an chéad deich mbliana eile, le cúnamh Dé.

Capital Investment on the Wild Atlantic Way

Fáilte Ireland has invested **€120 million in over 50 projects** including (but not limited to):

- Céide Fields Visitor Centre, Co. Mayo
- Cliffs of Moher, Co. Clare
- Connemara National Park, Co. Galway
- Downpatrick Head, Co. Mayo
- Derrigimlagh, Co. Galway
- Fanad Lighthouse, Co. Donegal
- Galway City Urban Animation
- Garish Island, Co. Cork
- Ionad an Bhlascaoid – The Blasket Centre, Dún Chaoin, Dingle, Co. Kerry
- Ionad Cultúrtha an Phiarsaigh Conamara - Pearse's Cottage and Visitor Centre, Connemara
- Killarney House, Co. Kerry
- King Johns Castle, Co. Limerick
- Kylemore Abbey, Co. Galway
- Mizen Head, Co. Cork
- National Surf Centre, Strandhill, Co. Sligo
- The Transatlantic Cable Story, Valentia Island. Co. Kerry
- Westport Cultural Centre, Co. Mayo
- Wild Nephin Ballycroy National Park, Co. Mayo

Expected to be complete in next **5 years**:

- Dún Aonghasa, Inis Mór, Co. Galway
- Fort Dunree, Co. Donegal
- Atlantic Museum Galway
- National Mountain Biking Centre, Sligo
- Outdoor Watersports Facilities in 11 locations
- Queen Maeve Square, Sligo
- Westport House, Co. Mayo
- Destination Towns projects



Making the Wild Atlantic Way famous overseas



INTRODUCTION

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Wild Atlantic Way. The landscape and culture go back millennia but with Fáilte Ireland we are marking 10 years since the route came together. It's a wonderful opportunity to retell the story of what's on offer on one of the world's longest coastal routes and certainly one of the most beautiful.

LOOKING BACK OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS

Award-winning ad

Tourism Ireland launched the Wild Atlantic Way overseas in 2014, with an ad featuring Solomon Grey. It reached 40 million people worldwide and won a prestigious Clio advertising award in the United States.

Screen tourism

The Wild Atlantic Way has attracted world-renowned movies and TV shows over the years. Tourism Ireland has worked hard to amplify those opportunities.

In 2016, Skellig Michael provided the backdrop for the dramatic final moments of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, in which Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill) appeared. The crew returned to film *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* in 2017, when more Wild Atlantic Way locations doubled as Luke's island – including Malin Head, Loop Head and the rocky shoreline of County Cork. Tourism

Ireland's *Star Wars* campaign in 2016 alone created 104 million opportunities to see the Wild Atlantic Way. Director Rian Johnson said: *"It's a gorgeous place. I feel very, very lucky to be able to get it on film"*.

The beautiful scenery of Sligo wowed viewers of the TV adaptation of Sally Rooney's novel *Normal People* – the pandemic lockdown global hit of 2020. Tourism Ireland's behind-the-scenes film featuring actors Paul Mescal and Daisy Edgar-Jones, highlighting Streedagh Beach and Ben Bulbin, created 7 million opportunities to see.

The Oscar-nominated *Banshees of Inisherin* showcased the stunning landscapes of Achill Island and Inis Mór. Tourism Ireland sat down with Martin McDonagh, Colin Farrell, Brendan Gleeson, Kerry Condon and Barry Keoghan. The behind-the-scenes film delivered 59 million opportunities to see.



Tourism Ireland created the first 'space tourism campaign', which saw a billboard sent 33km skywards on a weather balloon (2017).



Donal Skehan's Irish Adventure

Publicity and broadcasting

Tourism Ireland has co-produced 22 TV shows featuring the Wild Atlantic Way which have aired all over the world. To date, these programmes have created 450 million opportunities to see. Highlights include Michael Londra's Ireland With Michael series on PBS in the United States; Donal Skehan's Irish Adventure which has broadcast in the US, Canada, Germany and Sweden; and a nature documentary called Ireland's Wild Islands which has broadcast in the US, Germany, France, Sweden and Australia.

Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland have invited journalists from around the world to visit the Wild Atlantic Way. These visits have generated huge positive exposure for the iconic route in international media outlets worth approximately €1 billion in EAV (equivalent advertising value). Articles about the route resulting from those visits have featured in high profile media like The Guardian, The New York Times, National Geographic Traveler, TimeOut, Le Figaro, Die Zeit and El País.

Air and sea access

Working with our air and sea carrier partners, Tourism Ireland has promoted direct services to the Wild Atlantic Way e.g., with Aer Lingus and United Airlines to Shannon Airport, Brittany Ferries to the Port of Cork and Ryanair to Ireland West Airport Knock and Cork Airport.

An advertisement for Aer Lingus featuring a scenic sunset over the ocean with waves crashing against rocks. The text 'Ireland' is at the top right. Below it, there are two checkboxes: 'STAY INDOORS' (unchecked) and 'GET OUT THERE' (checked). Further down, it says 'CORK FROM £52.99 EACH WAY AS PART OF A RETURN TRIP'. At the bottom, the Aer Lingus logo and website 'AERLINGUS.COM' are displayed, along with the tagline 'Smart flies Aer Lingus'.

Global platforms

Tourism supports 121,000 jobs along the Wild Atlantic Way. We know that no-one sells the route better than those businesses. We create global platforms for hundreds of tourism businesses on the Wild Atlantic Way to connect in thousands of commercial meetings with international tour operators who bring valuable tourists to Ireland.



Killary Adventure Company at ITB Berlin



Wild Atlantic Way roadshow in France



John Torode filming at Cliffs of Moher



Matt Ginnella filming for Golf Digest at Tralee Golf Club

TOURISM IRELAND'S 2024 WILD ATLANTIC WAY CAMPAIGN

Tourism Ireland will launch a new Wild Atlantic Way campaign in 14 markets, to coincide with the 10th anniversary of the iconic route on 11th April 2024. The campaign will capitalise on international media interest in the special birthday and will highlight ease of access to the region and direct flights from key markets to airports along the Wild Atlantic Way, including Cork, Kerry, Shannon and Knock. Overall, Tourism Ireland's aim is to celebrate the anniversary by promoting off-peak travel and longer stays, delivering regional growth.

The campaign includes:

- a global PR push, to inspire potential visitors by highlighting the success of the Wild Atlantic Way over the past 10 years. A series of press releases, compelling stories and video news releases will be shared with Tourism Ireland's database of 20,000+ international media contacts, highlighting the hero attractions, hidden gems, unique experiences and stunning sights of the route.
- a week-long takeover of Tourism Ireland's social channels – with around six million followers – which kicks off on 11th April 2024, when they will post and share inspirational Wild Atlantic Way content, celebrating the unmissable experiences of the iconic route.
- an invitation to people who have visited the Wild Atlantic Way over the past 10 years to share their favourite memory on social media using #FillYourHeartWithIreland and #LoveIreland and including a 'happy 10th birthday to Ireland's #WildAtlanticWay' message in their post.
- dedicated video, digital and social campaigns to inspire holidaymakers in our top four markets – Great Britain, the United States, Germany and France – to visit the Wild Atlantic Way.

Together with Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland will invite 100+ international media to visit the Wild Atlantic Way this year. Tourism Ireland will continue to work with our important tour operator and carrier partners to 'close the sale' for visits to the Wild Atlantic Way. In the autumn, 10 international content creators will be invited to take part in a Wild Atlantic Way relay, highlighting the many reasons why the region is a great off-peak destination. An ad campaign will also run in autumn/winter later this year.



Lough Inagh Lodge, Connemara, Co Galway

Lough Inagh Lodge - Dominic O'Morain

"Ten incredible years of energy, progression, growth, and development. Much gratitude to the present Wild Atlantic Way team. Looking forward to the next ten years."

A vision for the future of the Wild Atlantic Way – **the next ten years**



VISION

It's 2033 and the Wild Atlantic Way is internationally renowned for its spectacular seascapes, raw beauty and warm hospitality. It ranks as one of the top five touring routes in the world with its rugged coastline, unique Irish culture, traditions, and friendly people at the heart of its offering. Visitors are enjoying all parts of the Wild Atlantic Way and dispersal along the route and into towns and villages in the region has become more evenly spread.

Visitors to the Wild Atlantic Way talk of being inspired and enriched by memorable engagement with these vibrant and creative communities whose lives and traditions have been shaped by the Atlantic. They talk of the wildness and beauty of the west coast and the abundance of ways to enjoy

the great outdoors both on land and by sea. They value the freedom and energy it gives them to feel fresh salty air, explore sea cliffs and caves, walk and cycle wonderful coastal trails, uncover hidden beaches, sample the best of seafood and immerse themselves in living culture.

Strategic Objective 1:

Year-Round Appeal

Grow the year-round appeal of the Wild Atlantic Way domestically and internationally ensuring we attract and disperse high-value visitors into and throughout the region.

Strategic Objective 2:

International Profile

Raise the international profile of the northern half of the Wild Atlantic Way to increase visitation and revenue.

Strategic Objective 3:

Revenue, Dispersion & Extension

Increase tourism revenue, visitor dispersion and season extension across the southern half of the Wild Atlantic Way.

Strategic Objective 4:

Authenticity Of "Wildness"

Protect the cultural authenticity and "wildness" of the Wild Atlantic Way.

Strategic Objective 5:

Capacity & Capability

Enable and assist the industry to grow its capacity and capability so that it can thrive over the period of this strategy.

Strategic Objective 6:

Industry & Stakeholder

Foster strong coalitions of industry and stakeholders with a common purpose in creating flourishing destinations and thriving communities while also building a sustainable model of destination development across the Wild Atlantic Way.



Tourism Industry Testimonials

Patricia Roberts – Proprietor and Owner of No. 1 Pery Square Hotel & Spa, Limerick

“It has been great to see the evolution of the Wild Atlantic Way brand, which has recently brought a new dimension to Limerick with its designation as a Wild Atlantic Way Gateway City in 2021. The new brand highlights the value to the visitor of combining a city stay in Limerick and using it as a base to explore the wider iconic coastal touring route – the Wild Atlantic Way. This has really worked for Limerick and the city is now attracting new visitors and tours to the city. Visitors get the best of every world - the city vibe, facilities and brilliant experiences like King John’s Castle and The Hunt Museum and the easily accessible coastal experiences of the Wild Atlantic Way.”

Kilbaha Gallery

“Kilbaha Gallery opened their doors in 2014 - and now as they approach nearly a decade in business, the owners, Ailish Connolly and Liz Greehy, look back fondly on what has been a wonderful experience for them overall. Based on the extraordinarily wild and beautiful Loop Head Peninsula in West Clare, the gallery, launched in the same year as Fáilte Ireland’s famed Wild Atlantic Way route, which, as luck would have it, passed their door. With the Loop Head Peninsula hosting one of only 15 signature points on the WAW, (Loop Head Lighthouse) Kilbaha gallery certainly benefited from the extra focus and attention on such areas that came directly from the campaign. “One of the really appealing factors of the WAW during its roll out phase” Liz Greehy remembers, “...was the fact that, the overriding thrust was one of ‘maintaining the pace of community life’”

Pat Doherty - Founder, Doagh Famine Village, Donegal

“As we continue to evolve and adapt to the changing landscape of tourism, I am profoundly grateful for the unwavering support and vision of the Wild Atlantic Way. Together, we are not only preserving the past but also shaping the future of destination development along Ireland’s rugged western coastline. The success of the Wild Atlantic Way is not just measured in numbers but in the countless memories made and lives touched along this unforgettable journey.”

Sean Carolan, Rural Development (LEADER) Manager, South West Mayo Development Company

“South West Mayo Development Company has implemented the Leader programme in south and west Mayo since the inception of the Wild Atlantic Way in 2014. The Wild Atlantic Way has been a catalyst for tourism development in the region over the past decade and we have had the privilege of supporting many innovative and exciting tourism business ideas during that time. The success of the Wild Atlantic Way in terms of attracting incremental visitors and tourism revenue to the region has given many project promoters the confidence to pursue their ideas and gain LEADER support to help see them realised.”

June Curtin, Snámhai Sásta

“The Wild Atlantic way is a big part of Snámhai Sásta . We encourage people all the time to get outdoors in nature see our beautiful countryside and visit all the lovely beaches along the way to experience the benefits of a cold water dip, the mental benefits often far outweigh the physical benefits and I think there’s so much to offer on the Wild Atlantic Way , I see it all the time with people coming from the 4 corners of Ireland to join me for a swim....”

Jim and Maria Kennedy, Atlantic Sea Kayaking.

“Ten years ago, we took the plunge, along with many other Irish businesses, and boarded the Wild Atlantic Way Express, powered by Fáilte Ireland! Jim Kennedy of Atlantic Sea Kayaking has been proud to be one of the first ambassadors of such an ingenious, ambitious and far-reaching project, which has become so successful. The Wild Atlantic Way has opened up the magnificent West Cork coastline to an international audience, and Atlantic Sea Kayaking has benefited with much increased international visitor numbers.”

Caherconnell Stonefort & Sheepdog Trials

“The Wild Atlantic Way has made a significant difference to us here at Caherconnell in a number of ways. Most importantly it has provided inspiration to our guests to embrace the value we see in our rural life and the custodianship of our place. Wild Atlantic Way has also made us part of something bigger, a community of people all along the route welcoming travellers into their places and their way of life. The Wild Atlantic way created here a sense of possibility and a recognition for the value of place and custom which wasn't perhaps as strong before the Way became a journey worth taking.

Cape Clear Ferries, Karen Cotrell. The development of the Wild Atlantic Way has ensured the survival of the unique islands and communities of the island and guaranteed their sustainability for the future. Karen Cotrell from Cape Clear Ferries said the investment in the Wild Atlantic Way allowed them to invest in their business and working hand in hand with Comharchumann Chléire Teo and other service providers they have developed a maritime experience based around the Fastnett Rock and facilities on Cape Clear Island.”

Chris Kelly, Director Trad on the Prom, Galway

“Having been honoured in 2014 as one of the original ambassadors of the Wild Atlantic Way we in Trad on the Prom were delighted to see how the WAW, after just 10 years, has evolved into the wonderful success story it is today by annually attracting many thousands of visitors to Ireland's many wonderful hidden and well know gems

Trad on the Prom celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2024 and over the last 10 years, since the launch of the WAW in the Excel Centre in 2014, we have noted a large increase in the number of FITs who annually attend the show and this is undoubtedly due to the WAW firmly placing Galway as a must see and experience destination in the FIT market place.

The Wild Atlantic Way was also the inspiration for an original song composed by two of our cast members Yvonne Fahy and Marc Robert's. This song, performed every night at the show, proves to be one of the show's many highlights and reached the coveted number one position in the Apple iTunes Chart

We in Trad on the Prom would like to sincerely thank all the team in Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland for all their hard work resulting in the great success of the WAW which has benefited so many businesses including ourselves.

Míle Buíochas daoibh go leir.”

Maurice Whelan Ireland Walk Hike Bike

“The Wild Atlantic Way brand has given us the perfect tagline that encapsulate the energy and ruggedness of Ireland's West Coast”

