

Regenerative Tourism & Just Transition in the Peatlands

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Mission

Enhancing Ireland
through tourism –
Enhancing Ireland
for tourists



Vision – By 2030...



The tourism sector is economically resilient.

Visitors are regionally and seasonally dispersed.

We have delivered on our Climate Action targets.

The industry provides excellent visitor experience satisfaction

The industry provides excellent careers to staff.

Tourism provides significant contributions to local communities.

Coordinated, collaborative and sustainable destination development is carried out by national and local state bodies.

Strategic Framework



V

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Environment

Strategic Objectives

1. Support the industry to step change the environmental sustainability of tourism premises to achieve government targets by 2030 (carbon emissions and energy efficiency)
2. Ireland is a leading sustainable tourism destination, that protects, restores and champions our natural environment for the benefit of all

Community

Strategic Objectives

1. Develop a sustainable visitor economy that drives tourism revenue into communities across the country, enabling them to flourish and thrive
2. Through active collaboration with communities, leverage the potential of the tourism economy to support relevant and authentic development of destinations, making them great places to live and visit

Industry

Strategic Objectives

1. Support businesses to grow sustainably, driving competitiveness and resilience to enable sustainable development
2. Support employees in industry to continue to build expertise & knowledge delivering improved organisational efficiency and visitor experience while ensuring the long-term needs of the sector are met

Visitor

Strategic Objectives

1. Motivate our target audiences to choose Ireland as the destination that will best meet their needs
2. Support the development and delivery of exceptional and inclusive visitor experiences and accommodation which meets the needs and expectations of visitors

Product Development - Activities



Walking –
development and
enhancement of
routes and trails
throughout
Ireland.



Cycling –
Development of
cycling trails,
greenways, and
mountain biking
trails



Water Based
Activities –
Blueway
development



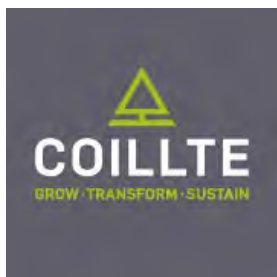
Strategic
Partnerships –
working with
strategic partners
to leverage state
assets for
outdoor
recreation



Planning and
Environment

Strategic Partnerships & Stakeholders

Work in partnership with several agencies on the delivery of projects:



Bord na Móna



**An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail**
Department of Rural and
Community Development



An Roinn Iompair
Department of Transport



National Surf Centre, Strandhill



Co. Sligo
Fáilte Ireland Funding: €1.4m

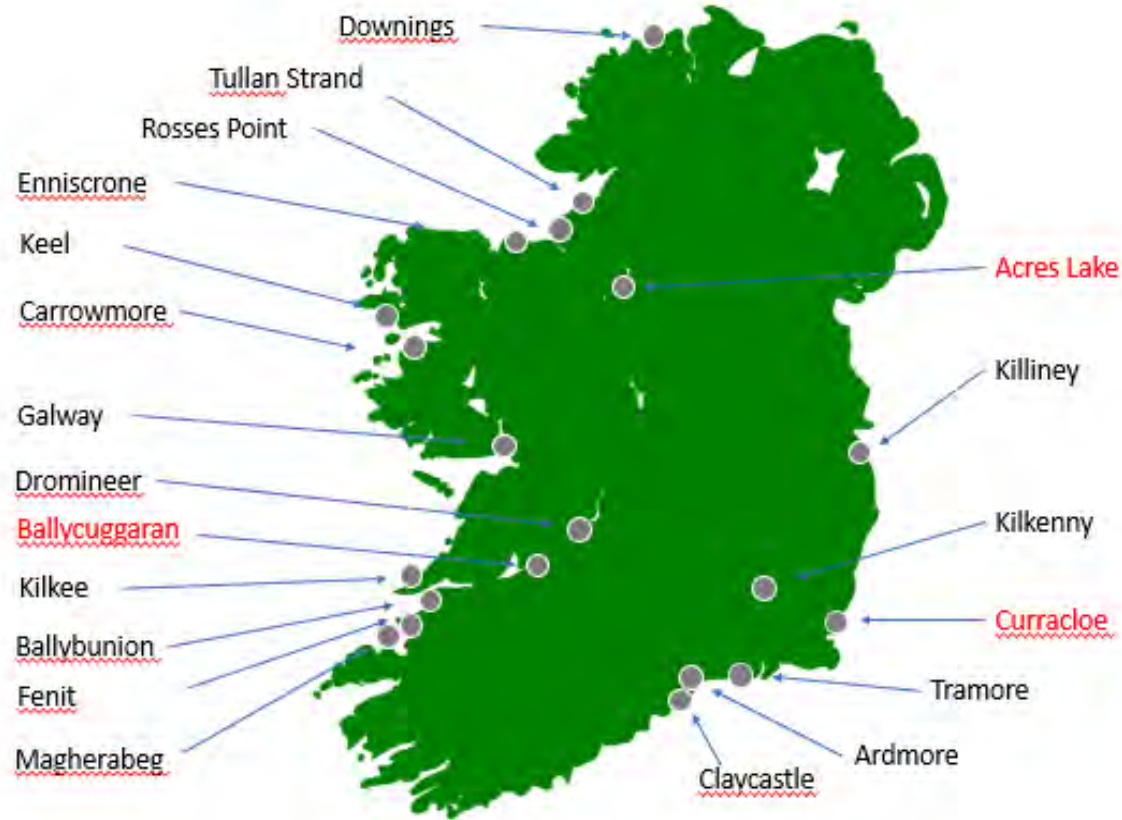


Connemara National Park



Co. Galway
Fáilte Ireland Funding: €5.6m

Water Sports Facilities



National Investment : €28 million / 4 Regional Experience Brands
Investment per site: €1.2 million

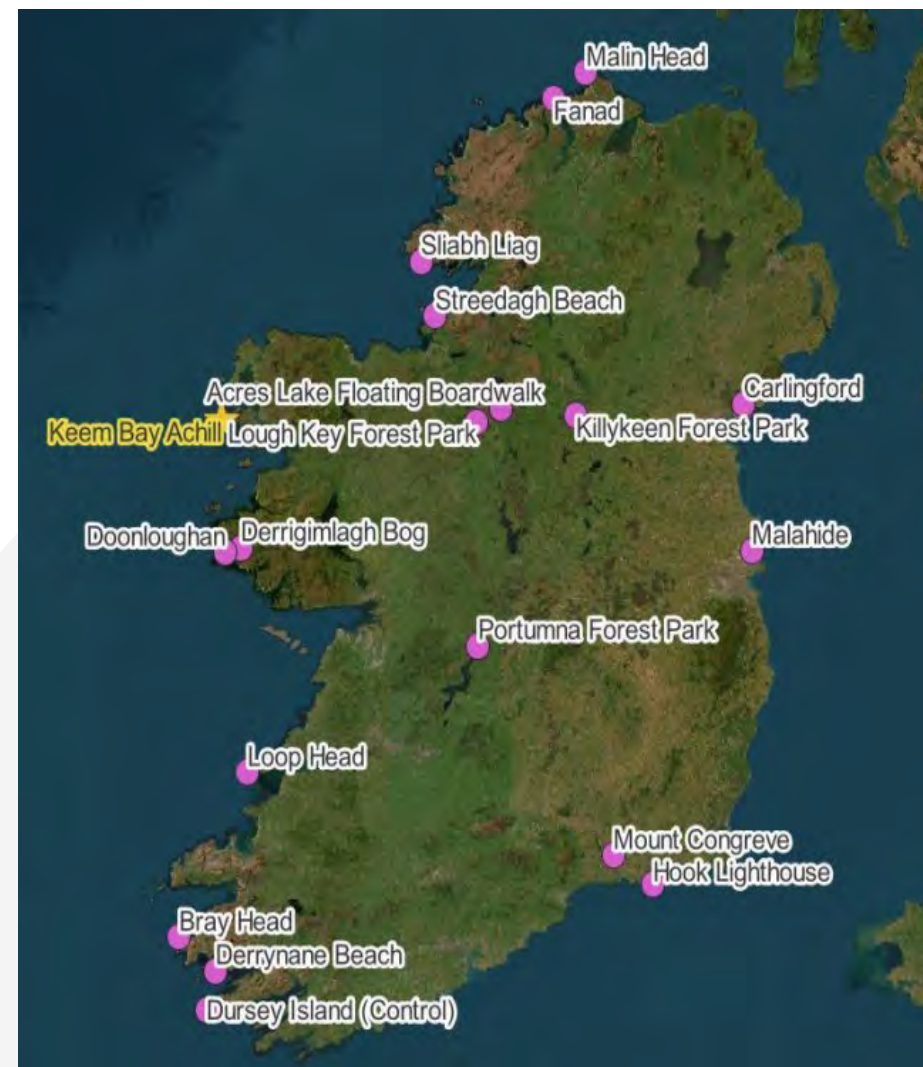
Beyond the Trees Avondale



National Environmental Monitoring Programme

Building on the Wild Atlantic Way (WAW) environmental monitoring programme. In 2021 we expanded nationally to include strategic monitoring sites across 4 brands

- Varying Site types – Coastal/Inland/Urban
- Identifies **stresses & future risks** to the environment
- Assists in appropriate site management (Interventions / Recommendations)
- Notes **Good & Bad** Practices
- Stakeholder engagement/**Knowledge Share**
- 2024: Strategic in survey locations to maximise benefits: Include new National Parks (Páirc Náisiúnta na Mara) **Inch Beach**, Future Coastal Walks (**Downpatrick Head**), Future Investments e.g. JTF/PFG (**Clonmacnoise / Tramore**) Blueway (**Portumna**)
- To date monitored **59 no sites** across 4 brand areas (with **>30,000 visitors** monitored).

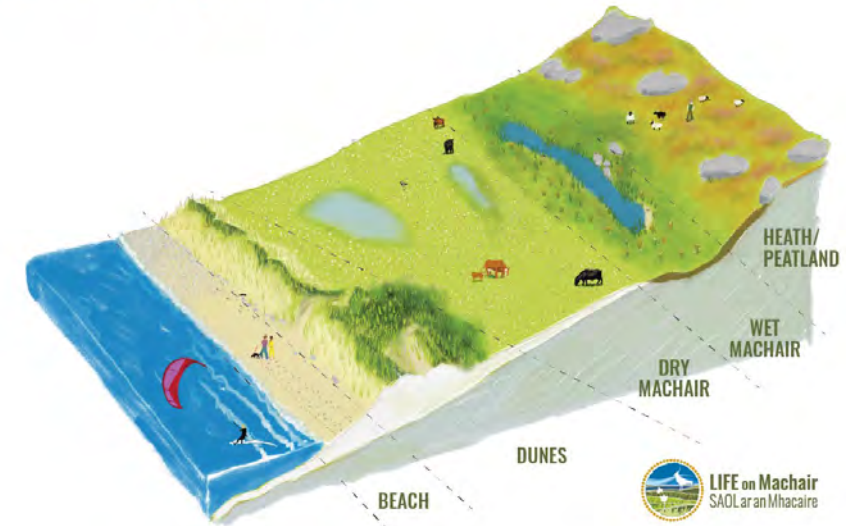


LIFE on Machair (LOM)



- LOM is a five-year environmental project worth €7.4 million
- Protect & restore machair systems in Ireland
- Machair – unique & rare coastal system found only in North-West of Ireland & Scotland, important for birds, pollinators & flowering plants
- Under pressure from amenity use: wild camping, vehicles, fires, waste, dogs.
- FI are a partner on LOM and are tasked with the following:
 - Visitor Management Assessment for 9 project sites
 - Guidelines for Sustainable Recreation on Sensitive Coastal Sites
 - Deliver Community & LA Workshops

Machair system



Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking in Ireland



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Arna chomhchistiú ag
an Aontas Eorpach
Co-funded by the
European Union



Tionól Reigiúnach Oirthir agus Lár-Tíre
Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly



Agenda



01

**What is the EU
Just Transition
Fund?**

02

Journey Back in Time

03

**What is a *Just
Transition*?**

04

Our Vision

05

Our Journey

06

Implementation

What is the EU Just Transition Fund?



awarded to Fáilte Ireland to deliver a **Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme**

01

EU Just Transition

is a fund created under the 2021-2027 programming round. It operates under Regulation (EU) 2021/1056 within **the framework of the EU Cohesion policy**

02

The Fund's

single specific objective is to support the regions and communities in Europe that **are most negatively affected by the transition to climate neutrality**, ensuring that no one is left behind.

03

In Ireland's case,

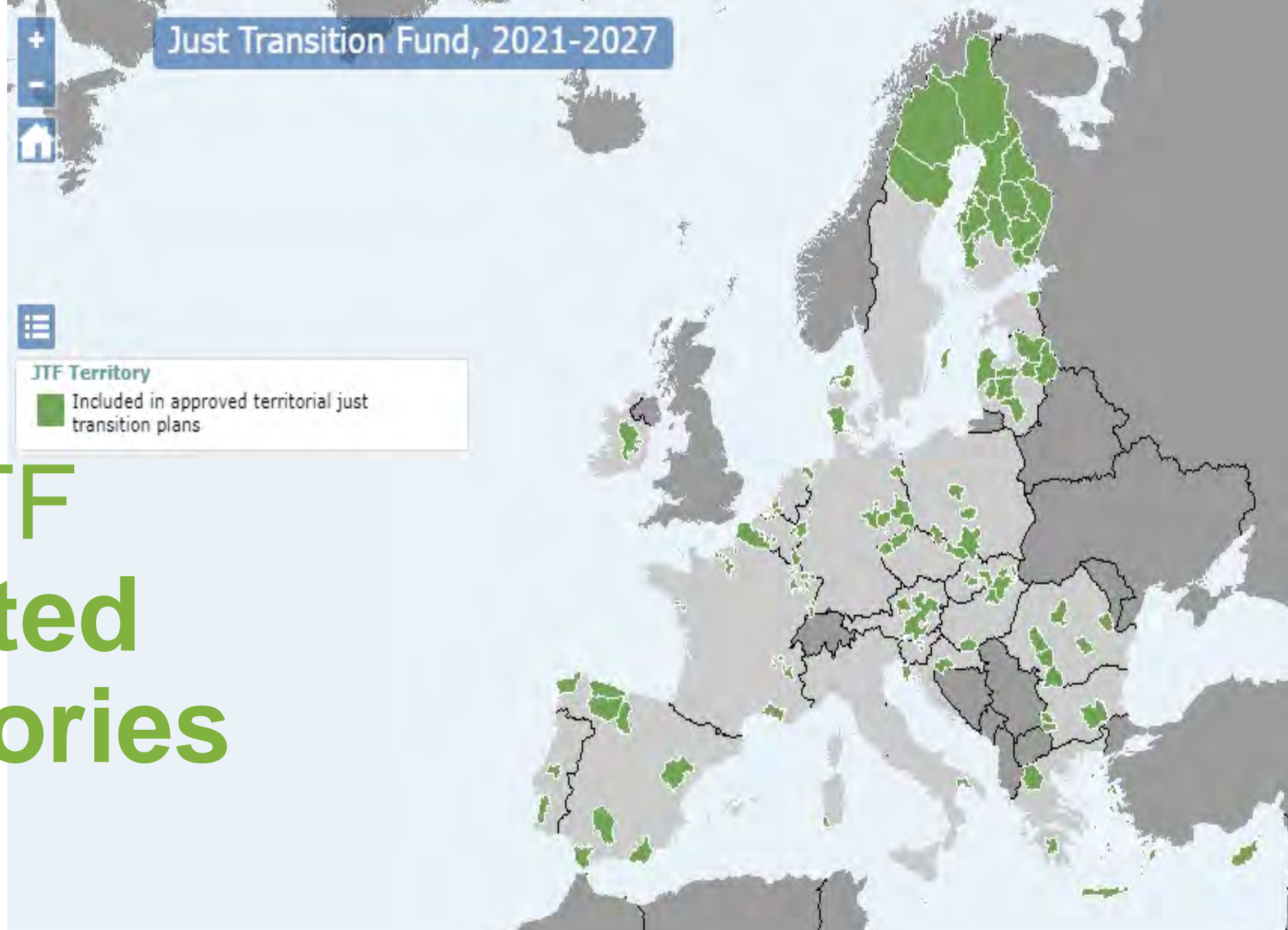
the territory supported by the Fund will focus on the regions where there have been **direct impacts from the move away from peat** production and electricity generation from peat.

04

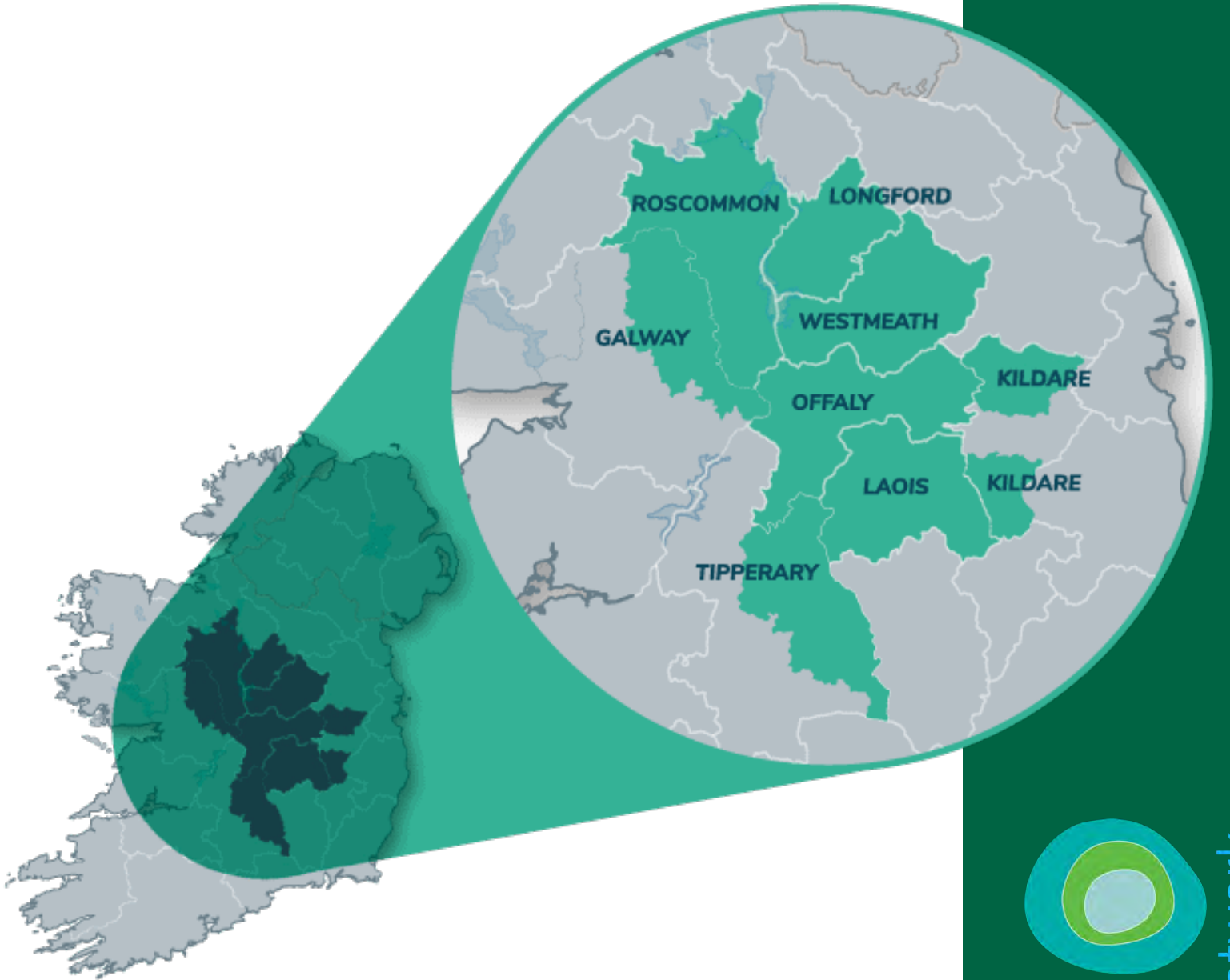
Ireland will receive

Up to **€4.5million** from the EU Just Transition Fund over the period to 2027. With the Government of Ireland's match funding using Exchequer resources, **up to €169 million** will be available.

EU JTF Affected Territories



EU JTF Affected Territories in Ireland



EU Just Transition Fund 2023-2027

3 Key Priorities

01

Generating

Employment for former peat/fossil fuel communities by investing in the diversification of the local economy

02

Supporting

The regeneration and repurposing of post-industrial peatlands and related lands

03

Providing

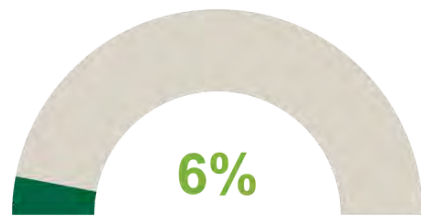
Former peat communities with smart and sustainable mobility options to enable them to benefit directly from the green transition



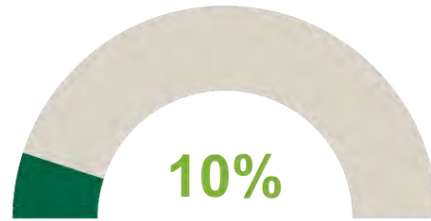
European
Green Transition



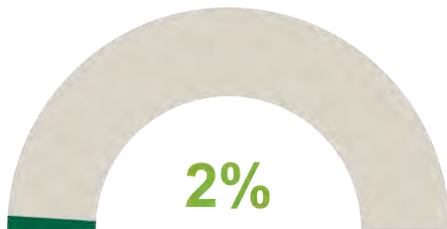
In 2017, Ireland's Midlands had



of Ireland's population



unemployment vs 7%
national average



of overseas visitors to
Ireland



An economy
heavily reliant on
peat industry

A Journey Back Through Time











Visit the Shannon Works!

See this Mighty Project in the making

Arrangements have been made with the Great Southern Railway to issue Return Tickets at Single Fares from all stations on its system to Limerick on week-days, available for return within three days including day of issue, from now on until the 29th of September inclusive.

Conducted Tours daily from the I. O. C. premises
Sarsfield Street, Limerick:—

1st Tour leaves at 10.30 a.m., returning 1.30 p.m.

2nd " " 2.30 p.m., " 6.30 p.m.

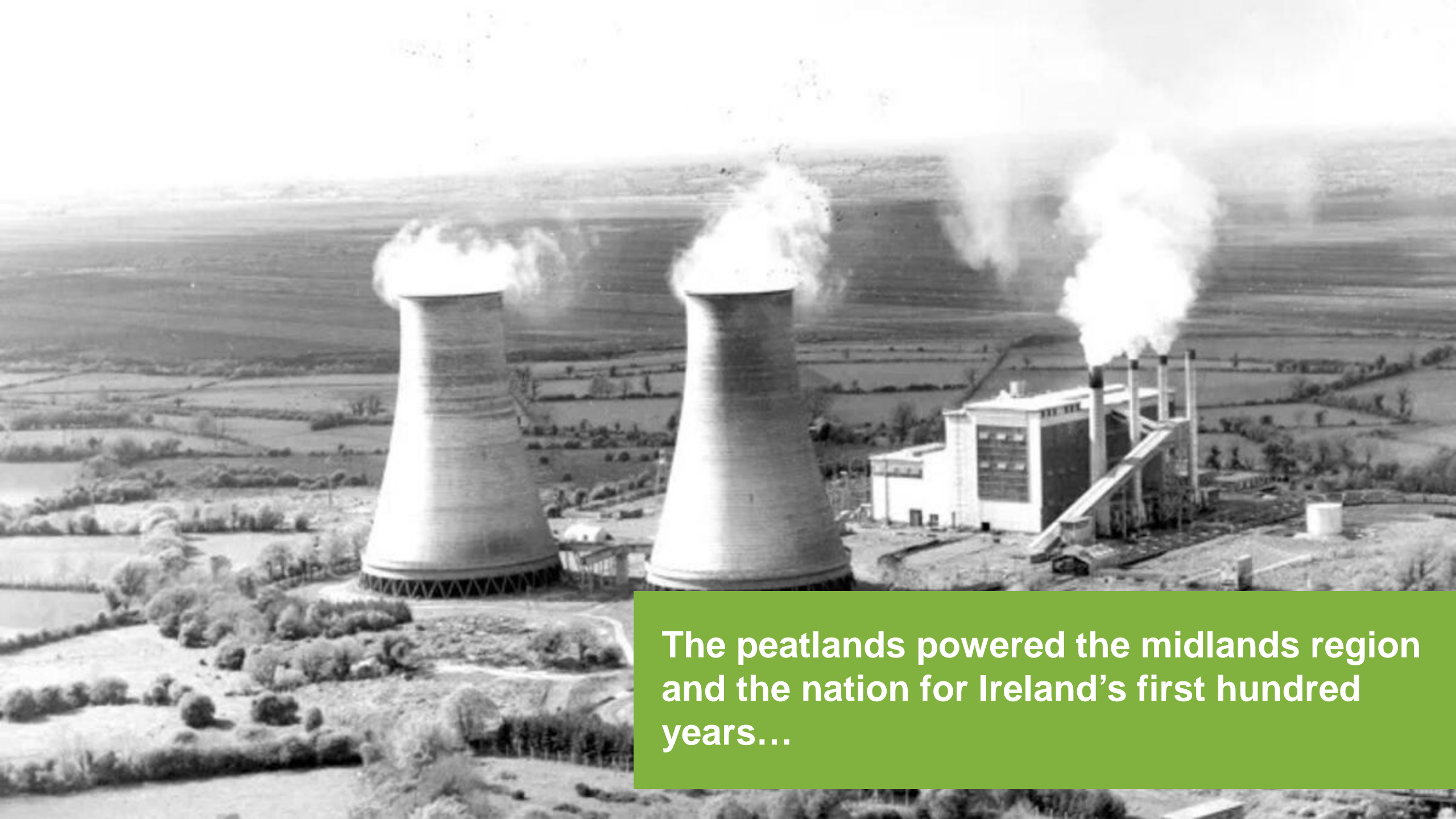
BUS FARE 4/- (Children Half-price)

Guide's services free.









The peatlands powered the midlands region and the nation for Ireland's first hundred years...

Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking

‘Just Transition’ refers to the *‘transition’* or change that a community experiences when climate action policies *impact the community’s economic and social activities*.

Tourism can contribute to a Just Transition, from an economy that has exploited Ireland’s peatlands to one that supports and improves the lives of local people by *sustaining and creating direct and indirect jobs*, the *biodiversity of their environment* and *the experiences of the visitors they welcome*.



Guiding Principles

- Gives back more than tourism takes
- Revitalises local economies through tourism
- Keeps culture and traditions alive
- Preserves and promotes biodiversity
- Shares memorable, authentic, local experiences with visitors



Our Vision

To start harnessing the appeal of the varied **natural landscapes, strong communities and the rich cultural heritage** that are our natural assets in Ireland's midlands and use them to create **appealing offerings that draw in visitors and boost local economies** directly and indirectly affected by the changes climate change has brought.



2009



2019



Objectives



01

To enhance the potential

of the region as a place to live, work and visit, regenerate regional towns and villages as attractive places to live with strong tourism & recreation infrastructure that can transform and the economies of the Territory beyond tourism.

02

To create new

enterprises and jobs by establishing the Midlands as an authentic regenerative tourism destination, based on the sustainable use of the peatlands and wetlands resource.

03

To support the transition

of the midlands to a carbon neutral destination through funding of sustainable tourism projects that are designed to have regenerative impacts on local communities and peatlands.

Our Journey



Why Tourism & Fáilte Ireland

Objective

- Investment in tourism and tourism assets has **proven to be an 'enabler and multiplier'** .
- **The Wild Atlantic Way** - leverages Ireland's unique geographical positioning along the Atlantic Ocean by allowing visitors engage with and understand how the sea shaped our coastal communities, our lifestyle and our traditions.
- Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority, has **the ability and expertise** to develop, coordinate and work collaboratively to advance economic, environmental, and sustainable development goals



10 Year Impact

- **2 million more tourists** visited the Wild Atlantic Way in 2023 than in 2013
- The Wild Atlantic Way drives **€3 billion in revenue** per year, **an increase of 58% in 10 years**
- **35,000 additional tourism jobs** supported on the Wild Atlantic Way in 10 years

REVIEW OF THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PEATLAND TOURISM IN THE MIDLANDS

Summary Report

August 2021



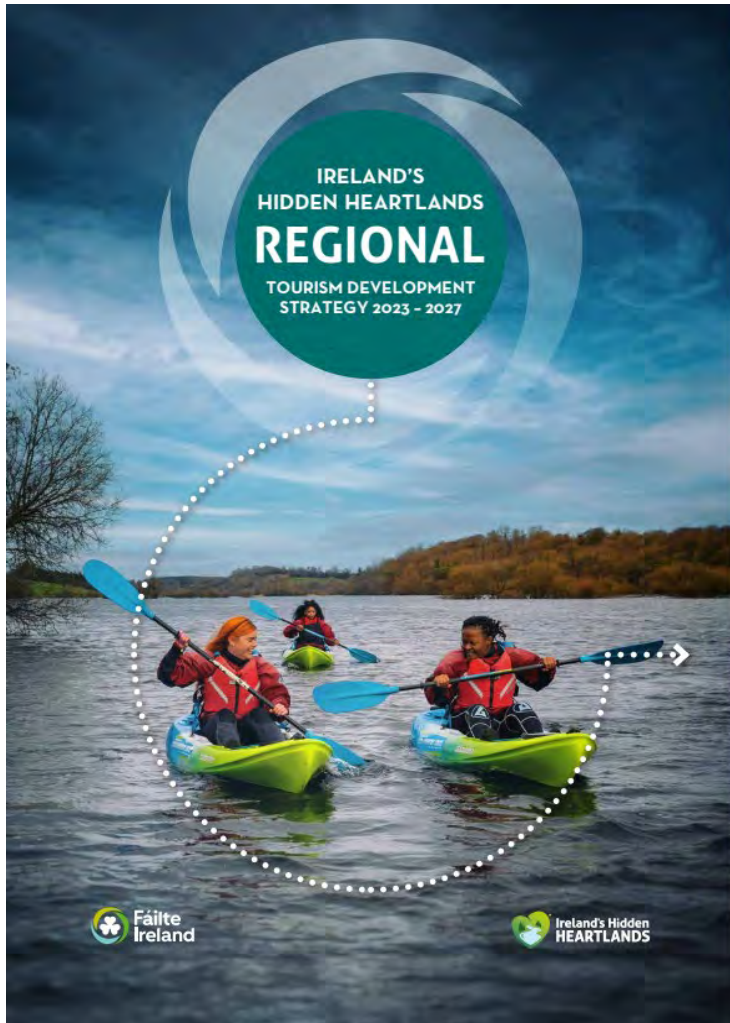
REVIEW OF THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A MIDLANDS TRAIL NETWORK

Phase 2 Summary Report

May 2022



Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Regional Tourism Strategy



Adopting a regenerative tourism approach is one of the five strategic objectives contained in the Regional Tourism Development Strategy.

The Tourism Opportunity & Implementation

- Following the cessation of industrial peat extraction and the repositioning of Bord na Mona as a green energy and climate solutions company provided a **once-in-a-generation** opportunity to **transform access to open green, brown and blue spaces in the Midlands** and to **enhance the slow tourism** and recreation offer in the Midlands
- The Midlands peatlands could form the basis of **a holistic and regenerative tourism proposition**. The opportunity centred on the development of **three key strands**, each of which have a connection with peatlands: -
 - a network of off-road trails
 - A 'slow tourism' positioning of the region
 - an innovative accommodation offering



Regenerative Tourism & Placemaking Investment Scheme

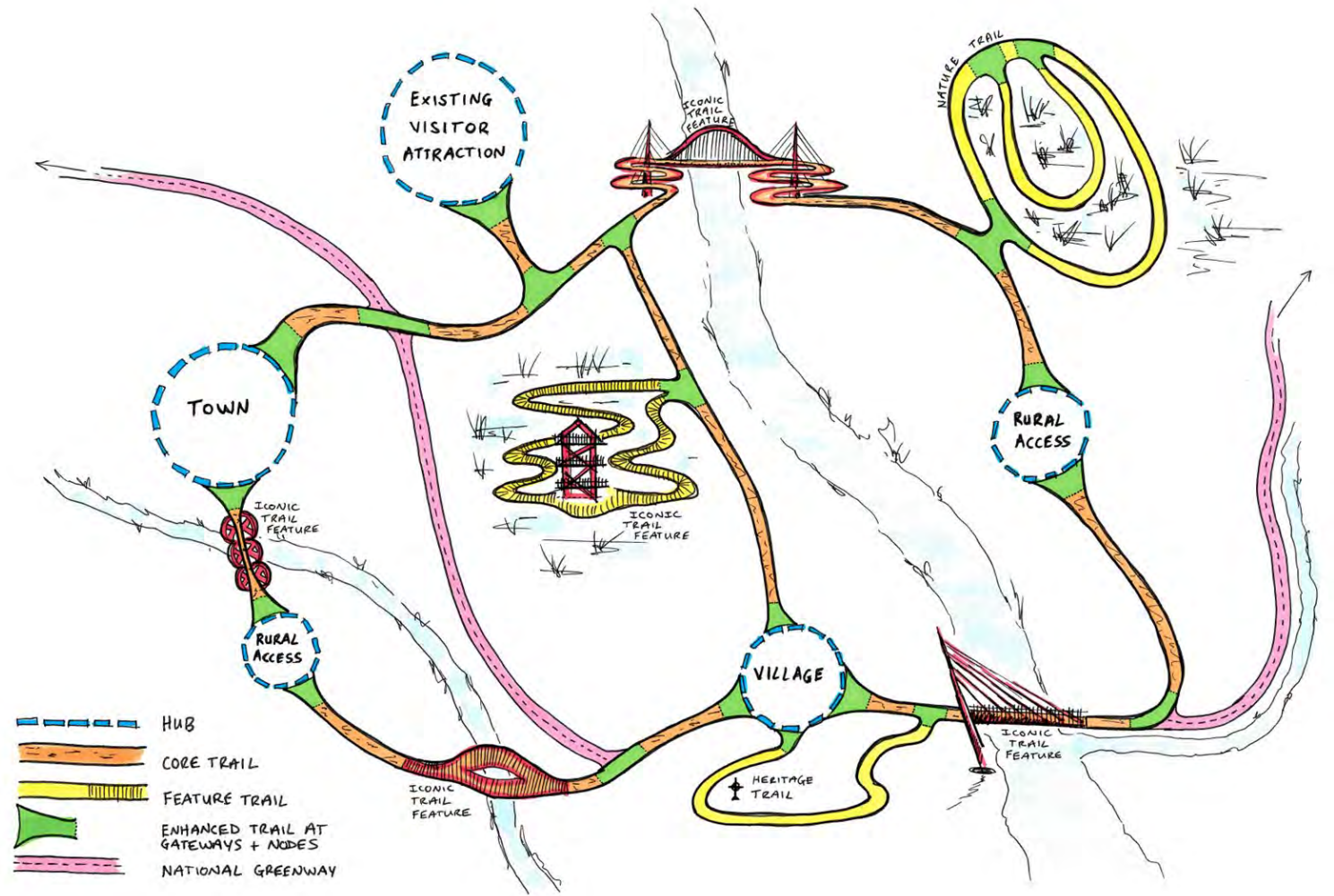


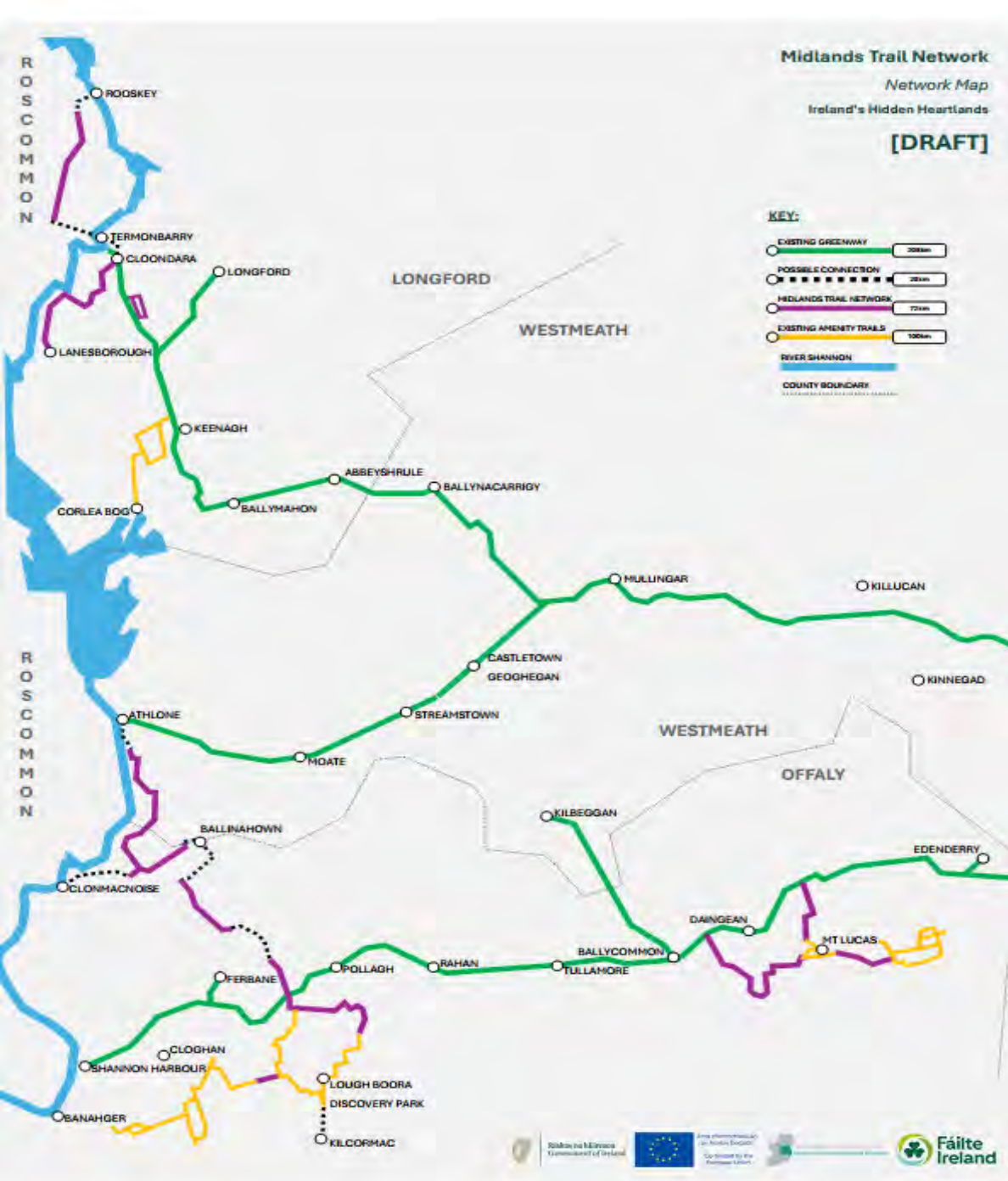
EU Just Transition Fund Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme						
EUJTF Action 2.3 <i>Network of Trails</i> Strand 1	EUJTF Action 1.1 <i>Economic Diversification – Strand 2,3 & 4</i>					
A. Trail Network Development Scheme (With Bord na Mona on former industrial peatlands)	B. <i>Investment Grant-Aid Scheme for Private & Community SMEs</i>	C. Strategic Partnership Scheme (5 State Agencies)	D. Strategic Partnership Scheme (8 Local Authorities)	E. Tourism Activators Scheme (With Local Authorities)	F. Tourism Learning Networks (All Industry)	
€30m	€38m					

Connected Trails Network

Connection between towns/villages and/or visitor experiences

Contiguous trail to be economically viable - enable significant dwell time in the destination





Scheme Design - Regenerative Tourism Lens

- **Scheme Criteria**
- *Evaluation*
- *Support*
- *Activators*



Project Types

Project categories that are being considered for funding:

- Development or Enhancement of **Sustainable Visitor Experiences**
- Development of **Sustainable/Low Carbon Tourist Accommodation**
- **Digital** Transformation
- **Accessibility** enhancements to provide a more inclusive visitor experience.



Project and Location	Project Description	Lead Organisation	Funding Amount
Kildare: Emily Square Urban Renewal	Redevelopment and regeneration of Emily Square at the heart of Athy Town	Kildare County Council	€2,735,425
Offaly: Shannonbridge Marina	Expansion of the capacity of the marina at Shannonbridge.	Waterways Ireland	€150,000
Offaly: Clonmacnoise	Redevelopment of the visitor centre at Clonmacnoise, including refurbishment and extension of buildings to enhance the experience for visitors	Office of Public Works	€7,800,000
Roscommon: Lough Key Forest Park	Detailed design and planning for increased capacity and range of activities to realise ambitious strategy and masterplan objectives for Lough Key Forest Park	Coillte in partnership with Roscommon County Council	€1,185,712

Location	Grantee Name	Project Description / Category	Funding Amount	Galway/Offaly	Shannon Bank Park Trustees Community Group	Category 1	€616,700.00
Longford	Ballymahon Cycles	Category 1 Expansion of bicycle stock and variety of bicycle types to provide a more inclusive and enjoyable experience for all visitors.	€64,878.00			Rejuvenation of Banagher Open Water Pool to offer an improved visitor experience, ensuring it is safe and accessible for all users.	
				Offaly	Croghan Hill Glamping	Category 2 Delivery of 4 self-catering, eco-friendly furnished glamping pods.	€80,776
Roscommon	Baysports	Category 1 Enhanced visitor experience and accessibility through expansion of kayaks, and introduction of e-bikes and e-pedal boats.	€192,160.00				

Measuring Success



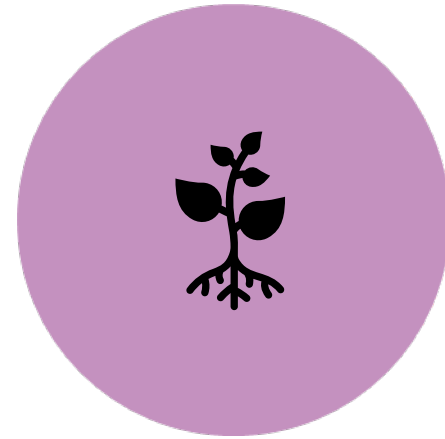
180 Projects



400 Bedspaces



200 Jobs



30ha rehabilitated





This scheme is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the EU Just Transition Fund.



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Arna chomhchistiú ag
an Aontas Eorpach

Co-funded by the
European Union



Tionól Reigiúnach Oirthir agus Lár-Tíre
Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly



Resources



<https://www.failteireland.ie/JustTransition.aspx>

<https://www.failteireland.ie/Development-menu-item/regional-development-strategies/IHH-Regional-Development-Strategy.aspx>

<https://www.thetourismspace.com/>

<https://www.mtu.ie/courses/tlfrtrdm/>

Thank You

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