

Proposal Outline

Topic	Tourism & Recreation in Marine & Coastal Areas: Harnessing Ireland's Natural Heritage and Cultural 'Blue' Assets
Research Theme	Tourism and Leisure
Background and Rationale	<p><i>Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth</i> set ambitious targets for Ireland's ocean economy. The targets for Marine and Coastal Tourism and Leisure are demanding but considered achievable given recent performance and the national tourism development policy proposals in <i>People, Place and Policy Growing Tourism to 2025</i>. There are significant synergies between the Wild Atlantic Way Operational programme and <i>Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth</i> with regard to the development priorities in marine and coastal areas, which include investment in coastal infrastructure, amenities, towns and villages, management and sustainability actions, community engagement and supports, and addressing barriers to business development and growth.</p> <p>It also noted the opportunities to build social enterprises in marine sectors, which is often a successful model for land-based assets (e.g. food, arts and culture, tourism) and also a model used internationally. <i>Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth</i> recognises the importance of these assets to rural and coastal economies and a number of successful initiatives are underway (e.g. Great Lighthouses of Ireland, Loop Head Coastal Walk, Blueway – Co. Mayo). These initiatives can provide interesting lessons in terms of both the opportunity and the constraints in the long-term viability of these programmes.</p>
Scope of Research (Scientific/ Technical Challenge)	<p>This research would build on work commissioned by the Marine Institute in 2006 that provided an audit of these 'blue' assets and associated potential products. This fellowship could also review the Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Data and Evidence projects to ensure gaps in data (e.g. spatial analysis of tourism and recreation activities in marine and coastal areas) are also considered in terms of Ireland's National Marine Spatial Plan. The work would build on research conducted by Socio-Economic Marine Research Unit (SEMRU) in terms of valuing both the domestic and international marine/coastal tourism sector (currently underway). It is also an acknowledged gap by the Development Task Force, with a need for international benchmarking identified.</p> <p>Following exploratory discussions with Fáilte Ireland (via the Marine Research Funders' Forum established under the National Marine Research & Innovation Strategy 2017-2021), this was confirmed as a gap area with little or no HEI-based research underway (outside on small pieces of commissioned studies). Fáilte Ireland's current research is focussed on consumer/market research and also producing statistics and participation rates in activities (including water-based activities).</p>

<p>Expected Impact</p>	<p>The fellow will engage with relevant national and international networks, and explore opportunities for collaboration and securing further research funding under Horizon Europe.</p> <p>This fellowship will help to build national expertise in this research area.</p> <p>The fellow will produce policy briefs for stakeholders, and publish their research findings as widely as possible through peer-reviewed papers, conference presentations, articles, etc.</p>
<p>Specific Collaboration</p>	<p>Fáilte Ireland</p> <p>The fellow will provide policy briefs for relevant Government Departments including DDTAS, DBEI and DCCAIE.</p>
<p>Location of Fellow</p>	<p>Higher Education Institute or Public Research Body (Republic of Ireland)</p>
<p>Duration and Funding Available</p>	<p>3-5 years</p> <p>€100,000 per annum maximum (e.g. €400,000 for 4 years duration)</p>
<p>References</p>	<p>Policy Brief on Sustainable Tourism Policy Learning Platform on environment and resource efficiency Interreg Europe (2018)</p> <p>Small-scale coastal fisheries in European Seas are not what they were: Ecological, social and economic changes J. Lloret et al Marine Policy Volume 98, Pg 176-186 (2018)</p> <p>Demand for Water-Based Leisure Activity: the Benefits of Good Water Quality J. Curtis & S. Hynes EPA Report No 232 (2017)</p> <p>Coastal and marine tourism: A challenging factor in Marine Spatial Planning M. Papageorgiou Ocean & Coastal Management Volume 129, Pg 44-48 (2016)</p> <p>People, Place And Policy Growing Tourism to 2025 Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (2015)</p> <p>Our Ocean Wealth Development Task Force Report (2015)</p>

[Our Ocean Wealth Enablers Task Force Report on Marine Spatial Planning \(2015\)](#)

[Preparedness of key coastal and marine sectors in Ireland to adapt to climate change](#)

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