Capitalisation and Sustainability Plan

June 2020
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SECTION 1

ATLANTIC AREA GEOPARKS
ATLANTIC AREA GEOPARKS

The Atlantic Area extends along Europe’s western seaboard from Shetland to Andalucia in an area which includes western Scotland, the whole of the island of Ireland, all of Wales, southwest England, western regions of France, northern and western regions of Spain and all of Portugal. The area also includes the Atlantic archipelagos of Madeira, Azores and the Canary Islands.

The astonishingly varied landscapes within the Atlantic area are the product of an immensely long geological history involving a wide range of earth processes, many of which continue to shape these areas to the present day.

The Atlantic Area Geoparks creates a new, awe-inspiring trail of magnificent destinations along the epic expanse of the Atlantic frontier. It winds an intriguing transnational path from Ireland and the UK, to France, Portugal and Spain over to the Atlantic Islands of Lanzarote and down to the Azores. It links 12 dramatic landscapes that host vibrant communities, rich local cultures and unforgettable visitor experiences.

From the 3000 million year old Archaean gneisses of North-West Scotland (central to the character of the North West Highlands Geopark) to the lavas of the Tiagua in Lanzarote Geopark which were erupted as recently as 1824, the rocks of this extensive region offer a window into the planet’s past.

The European Atlantic Geotourism Route guides visitors through diverse territories, countries, habitats, languages and cultures. These stunning destinations are linked together by one powerful mission –

“To provide the highest quality visitor experiences; helping to power vibrant local economies and cultural activities and, in so doing, protecting breath taking and unique natural landscapes.”
Rare and outstanding sustainable tourism offerings live in harmony with local farmers, craft workers, entrepreneurs, artists and artisan food producers, each adding value to and strengthening the other. Each destination tells a distinctive, dramatic and enthralling chapter of the story of life on the Atlantic frontier. The tale of how, from time’s dawn to present day – natural forces, landscape, people, culture and ways of life continue to interweave to give physical shape, meaning and mystery to these memorable regions.

Figure 2 Copper Coast Tankardstown, Ireland

1.1.1 WHY ARE GEOPARKS IMPORTANT?

The value of geodiversity is increasingly appreciated across the globe. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) recognises that geodiversity is a part of natural diversity. The IUCN acknowledges the scientific cultural, aesthetic, landscape, economic and intrinsic values of geo-heritage and the relevance of geodiversity in underpinning biological, cultural and landscape diversity.

UNESCO Global Geoparks are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development. The ultimate goal is to use the designation as a vehicle to engage communities in protecting their heritage in ways which contribute to economic development of their territory.
Geodiversity is an integral part of the natural environment that we should not take for granted. It is a common misperception that the many facets of geodiversity are sufficiently robust not to require conservation or active management. The loss, or mismanagement, of geodiversity as a result of unsustainable or misguided development, changing land use patterns, or climate change, not only devalues our geo-heritage, but also threatens biodiversity and can result in social and economic costs for the communities who live there. The sustainable management of geodiversity and promotion of its importance, in contrast, can have very positive economic, social, cultural, educational and public health benefits.

UNESCO Global Geoparks support tourism which is sympathetic to the environment, that celebrates earth heritage and sustains local communities.

Having a landscape of outstanding-world famous geological heritage isn’t enough to become a UNESCO Global Geopark. Areas also need a management programme with a plan for sustainable development for the people who live there. Many Geoparks have programmes and initiatives around sustainable tourism and /or Geotourism.
UNESCO Global Geoparks actively involve local people in planning their management and tourism programmes. Local communities are an integral part of a Geopark, they are the link between the culture and the land and can provide unique and fascinating experiences and memories to visitors to their region.

UNESCO Global Geoparks are required to invest in quality infrastructure and interpretation for their key sites of geological importance called geosites. They invest in providing quality visitor information and training for local guides and tourism operators.

1.1.2 WHAT IS GEOTOURISM?

Geotourism supports and respects the locality, its people, its landscape and its culture. It is tourism that strives for a balance between being mindful of the landscape and its finite resources, while endeavouring to develop a prosperous local economy built on quality, well managed, visitor products and experiences that benefit the local community and traveller alike.

1.1.2.1 What does geotourism mean for visitors?

More choice of and access to local products, places, activities and experiences.
When communities are involved in managing their place and their culture visitors get an authentic and unique experience. They gain a greater understanding of the destinations they visit, insights into the lives of local people and how the landscape has impacted and influenced them.

Well planned and well managed geotourism experiences, where a management organisation works hand in hand with the community, provide improved access and interpretation to sites, monuments, walking routes and to local culture. The visitor in return receives an experience rich in quality, comfort and safety.
1.1.2.2 What does geotourism mean for communities?

More cooperation, collaboration and networking within the community. With Geoparks facilitating the development of geotourism experiences within their destinations and encouraging businesses to work together, networking and collaboration flourish. In some Geoparks local independent operators have reported a reduction of social isolation as one of the benefits of involvement as well as the more tangible benefits of an improved environment, higher tourism revenue and more resources.

![Figure 7 Detreho da Malhada viewpoint Arouca, Portugal](image1)

Geotourism is most effective and sustainable when based on strong support and involvement by the local community. Properly managed geotourism creates opportunities for rural development, effectively reducing the rate of unemployment and migration in rural areas by creating innovative strategies for local development. For instance, by creating new job opportunities in tourist enterprises, hotels, guest houses, restaurants and outdoor activities related to increased tourist flow and economic activity in the area.

![Figure 8 Caldera Colorada, Lanzarote](image2)
SECTION 2

PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND PARTNERSHIP
2 THE PROJECT

2.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Atlantic Geoparks project was funded by the Atlantic Area Programme of the European Regional Development Fund.

The aim of the project was:

*The development and promotion of the tourism potential of natural areas as well as the protection, development and promotion of public, cultural and heritage assets of the European Atlantic Area.*

The project was innovative in advancing transnational geotourism along the western margin of Europe, using UNESCO Global Geoparks and aspiring Geoparks as best practice models for regional and local sustainable development.

The project aimed to develop a European Atlantic Geotourism Route (EAGR) to strengthen the integration of tourism and natural heritage, reconciling tourism development with conservation of geology, biodiversity and cultural heritage in several territories in the EU including Spain, Portugal, France, Ireland and the UK. The geotourism route will subsequently be submitted as a candidate for a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe to increase its visibility on at international level.

The Atlantic Geoparks Project was a 30 month programme (2017 – 2019) with University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro as Lead Partner with overall responsibility for project delivery.

2.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The key project objective agreed with the European Commission identifies that “The Atlantic Geoparks project will create an ‘Atlantic-European Geotourism Route’ linking innovative tourism projects along the route, uniting all territories involved and developing a common identity and image for the parks.”

The ERDF-funded activities therefore aimed to foster increased cooperation between the geoparks and improve their visibility, accessibility and functionality, while also promoting sustainable development across the Atlantic Area.

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1 EU Commission news room [http://www.diariovasco.com/](http://www.diariovasco.com/) 15/02/1
The project aimed to develop several products for all those participating, including digital guides in different languages, coherent geological itineraries, a website for virtual geo-exploration and a promotional video on geotourism.

The main objective of the project was therefore to promote and disseminate the geological and cultural heritage of the Atlantic Geoparks as a basis for economic development and sustainable tourism strategy.

The Atlantic Geoparks project aimed to have a significant influence on increasing the number of tourists and visitors to the Geoparks, thereby boosting economic activity in each region by creating new businesses and increasing the number of jobs in the service sector.

The project also aimed to influence regional policies by sensitizing public authorities about the need to legislate and manage the geological areas under both, economic and environmentally sustainable criteria, supported by European policies and the recommendations of UNESCO.

The project has facilitated Atlantic Geoparks to develop a common identity and an internationally recognized image. Moreover, the creation of a European Atlantic Geotourism Route facilitated aspirations for growth and enabled proactive work to incorporate new geological areas.

Currently no Geoparks are recognized by UNESCO on the French Atlantic coast. The project aimed to help one French natural area to obtain this distinction, as well as one new Geopark in Spain.

In summary, the project offered a new opportunity for geotourism development of Atlantic Geoparks as a means of achieving sustainable development while conserving geodiversity across the Atlantic Area.

The project aimed to create a genuine Atlantic tourist experience, with the European Atlantic Geotourism Route being the starting point of long-lasting cooperation across international borders.

2.3 PROJECT PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The Atlantic Geoparks partnership is composed of 3 partners from Portugal, 2 from the United Kingdom, 3 from Spain, 3 from Ireland and 1 from France. The partnership includes 9 Geoparks, 2 aspiring Geoparks and a university all supported by the Global Geoparks Network.

The project partners are:

- University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro (Portugal)
- Arouca Geopark (Portugal)
- Azores Geopark (Portugal)
- Forest Fawr Geopark (UK)
- Marble Arch Geopark (Ireland / Northern Ireland)
- Basque Coast Geopark (Spain)
- Lanzarote Geopark (Spain)
- Sustainable Municipalities Community of Cantabria Aspiring Geopark (Spain)
- PNR Armorique Aspiring Geopark (France)
- North Pennines AONB Geopark (UK)
- Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark (Ireland)
- Copper Coast Geopark (Ireland)

Project stakeholders also include the communities and local business of each of the partner regions as their engagement is essential for the development of geotourism.

2.4 PARTICIPATING GEOPARKS

2.4.1 AROUCA GEOPARK (PORTUGAL)

The Arouca Geopark is approximately 328 km², aligned with the administrative boundaries of the municipality of Arouca. The landscapes of the Geopark, are marked by high mountains carved by clear rivers creating open ways through embedded valleys. Although small in area, the richness of its geological heritage make Arouca Geopark important at international level. For example, Birthing stones (Pedras Parideiras), giant trilobites, trilobites trace fossils, waterfalls, bread and onion rocks and, additionally, old wolfram mines, are just some of the exceptional aspects of the geology of this region that have attracted many thousands of visitors to this territory, offering visitors the opportunity to explore a landscape with a history which stretches back more than 500 million years.

Figure 9 Mizarela Waterfall
The 41 listed geosites within the geopark have high educational, tourist and/or scientific interest. The majority of these sites are classified by the Natura 2000 network.

The Route of Geosites is the best way to tell geodiversity stories in the Arouca Geopark. This Route is organized in three itineraries that define the geographical areas they cross:

1. Freita: the enchanted mountain, an itinerary which goes through the south area of the territory, including 11 geosites such as including Detrelo da Malhada viewpoint, Mizarela Waterfall or Birthing stones;
2. Through the Mines and unknown spots of Paiva, going through the southeast area via 8 geosites, going back to the ancient times of the mining exploration in the region.
3. Paiva: the amazing valley, links 12 geosites in the northeast area, offering the nature and the wild state of the Paiva’s valley, as well as the mysteries hidden in the rocks of the Palaeozoic Era.

The Route offers signage and visitor infrastructure through interpretative centres, observation platforms and/or interpretative panels. It also benefits from a paper guide which transforms the Route into something more than just a tour, offering explanation beyond the mandatory stopping points in the geosites, to include other aspects of the landscape, natural heritage and cultural heritage of the Arouca Geopark, so that visitor journeys can be as free and comprehensive as possible.

![Figure 10 White water rafting in Arouca Geopark](https://example.com/figure10.png)

The Arouca Geopark provides a range of visitor experiences, including:

- Annual interpretation programme of the Route of Geosites. Visits are accompanied by an Arouca Geopark interpreter-guide and include bus transportation, insurance, entrances to interpretative units and Geofood snack.
• Hiking trails. Through hills and valleys, crossing villages and forests, along rivers and streams, there are fifteen hiking trails, which are the best way to know the territory by its own foot.
• Geobike rental service. There are 15 bicycles (11 for adults and 4 for children, between 6 and 11 years old) that are available for rental, all year round, at the Arouca Interactive Tourism Store and at Birthing Stones House.
• Audioguide service. This system of visit, with two circuits, allows visitors to learn about the natural and cultural heritage of the Castanheira village and the Freita Mountain. This includes oral histories from the local population for a unique experience. Audioguides can be requested, in Portuguese and in English, at the Birthing Stones House.
• The Paiva River is considered "the best and most complete wild water course in Portugal". It consists of the use of pneumatic boats (rafts) going down the rough waters of the Paiva River, crossing rapids and obstacles with varying degrees of difficulty. It is practiced essentially between October and May.
• Other Adventure Sports including kayaking, canyoning and rock climbing.

2.4.2 AZORES GEOPARK (PORTUGAL)

The Azores Autonomous Region has an area of 2324 sq. km. and is made up of 9 islands. Despite the small size of the Azorean territory, the islands have a wide range of landscapes, forms and structures derived from the types of eruption experienced, its’ dynamics and the subsequent action of weathering. The evidence of this diversity is expressed in great morphologies and structures, such as calderas, lava fields, volcanic ridges, lakes, prismatic joints, etc.

The Azores geodiversity represents elements closely linked to the dynamics of planet Earth, in particular, the volcanism and geo-tectonics of the region.

Figure 11 Landforms of the Azores (www.azoresgeopark.com)

The geopark integrates the nine islands of the Azores encompassing 121 geosites, including four marine geosites.

The islands have a rich biodiversity, architectural, ethnographic and cultural heritage.
Tourism activities within the geopark include:

- **Route of the Volcanic Caves**: “Discover the underground world of the islands” where visitors can discover volcanic cavities, including caves, ravines and cracks. The landscape is filled with dry calderas, craters lakes, fumaroles and thermal water springs.
- **Route of Belvederes** – a driving route highlighting the many belvederes and viewpoints of the archipelago.
- **Walking/ hiking trails** along the traditional footpaths of the islanders which were used to take cattle to, or from, the pasturelands and the movement of agricultural produce.
- **Big Game fishing**
- **Bike tours**
- **Bird watching**
- **Canoeing/kayaking**
- **Canyoning**
- **Golf**
- **Horseback riding**
- **Paragliding**
- **Scuba Diving**
- **Whale watching**
- **Yachting**
- **Health and wellbeing activities** using the thermal water and volcanic mud.

The special character of the Azores Geopark is captured within this promotional video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GWGQOTA0-Kk&feature=emb_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GWGQOTA0-Kk&feature=emb_logo)

Several local products can be considered as true “geoproducts”, as in the case of the wines that use names such as “Terras de Lava” (“Lava Lands”), “Basalto” (“Basalt”), “Magma” or “Pedras Brancas” (“White Stones”), many of which produced in Pico island. The relationship of people and Azorean geoproducts is also seen in “Cozido das Furnas”, a typical Portuguese gastronomic recipe cooked slowly by the steam of the fumarolic field of Furnas Lake, in a pot buried in the thermal andosol.

Within the geopark various themed routes have been implemented, including the Volcanoes Route, Whaling Activity Route, Cheese Route and Wine Route. These have been organized by the Azores geopark partners, involving public entities and local companies in the areas of catering, crafts, heritage (natural, cultural and architectonical) and animation. The routes offer well signposted itineraries, allowing to the visitor a pre-established route and cultural offer related to the proposed theme.
2.4.3 BASQUE COAST GEOPARK (SPAIN)

The Basque Coast Geopark covers an area of 90 square kilometres belonging to the Gipuzkoan towns of Deba, Zumaia and Mutriku and has an estimated population of 19,700 inhabitants. The Basque Coast Geopark can be divided into two areas:

- The coastal area, which is characterized by the spectacular cliffs that make up the Flysch and
- The inland, karst area, which is home to the largest number of caves in the whole region of Gipuzkoa.

They are two clearly distinct areas, both in terms of their geology as well as their cultural and landscape characteristics.

The Basque Coast Geopark is a showcase to one of the most wonderful history books ever written. The pages were formed under the sea and today, layer by layer, form a continuous book of more than 13 kilometres of cliffs, where geologists can study the records of more than 60 million consecutive years of the Earth's history. The mass extinction of the dinosaurs at the end of the Cretaceous, or the great global warming at the beginning of the Eocene, are some of the critical events recorded in the written history in these rocks.

After decades of scientific research the flysch on the Geopark Coast has been recognised by the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) and UNESCO as one of the planet’s great geological outcrops. The spectacular process of erosion gives rise to a shoreline with a succession of cliffs, significant rock fall, shallow intertidal flats and beautiful sandy beaches.

Inland, the Geopark is formed by Lower Cretaceous limestone mountains that hide closed valleys where the traditions and landscape have remained remarkably intact throughout time. These mountains have been subjected to heavy dissolution by water and erosion, giving rise to an important collection of karst, including a significant number of caves. These caves were occupied during the Palaeolithic period, and provide the Geopark with archaeological heritage of great interest including cave paintings such as at the caves at Ekain, which has been declared a World Heritage Site.

Figure 13 Ekain cave paintings

Key tourism activities within the geopark include:

- Guided tour program throughout the year (walking tours, boat tours and combined tours along the coast and inland, cultural-gastronomy tours)
- Geo routes
- Walking and Hiking
- Surfing, windsurfing, canoeing and scuba diving.

Key tourism business include: geo-tourism guides; water activity companies such as surfing and kayaking; gastronomy businesses such as bars and restaurants; and accommodation providers (mostly small, rural and which promote ecotourism). A large percentage of accommodation providers are members of the Spanish Ecotourism Club.

Since 2017 several tourism companies (hotels and tourism services) have joined the Geopark Partners brand. This brand will be extended to other types of companies, restaurants, shops, etc. in the future.
2.4.4 BURREN AND CLIFFS OF MOHER GEOPARK (IRELAND)

Making up over 530 square kilometres the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark encompasses the natural beauty of the 200-metre-high Cliffs of Moher, with its eight kilometres of rugged coastline, and the Burren.

Figure 14 Cliffs of Moher

The Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience includes –

- over 800m of cliff edge paths and viewing areas,
- the gothic style 19th century O’Briens Tower near the highest point of the cliffs and
- the eco-friendly underground visitor centre building containing visitor services and facilities, gift shop, restaurant & coffee shop and the award winning Atlantic Edge Exhibition.

The Cliffs of Moher are a special protected area (SPA) for seabirds under EU and Irish legislation and during the nesting season are home to over 30,000 pairs of seabirds including a number of protected species. Internationally significant numbers of both Guillemots and Razorbill can be found here along with Puffins, Kittiwakes, Fulmars, Peregrine Falcons and Choughs. There is beauty in the vast array of flora, including Arctic and Alpine flowers that grow surprisingly alongside Mediterranean species.

The Burren, in contrast, is a remarkable place where geology, ecology, archaeology, agriculture, history, food and traditional Irish music are deeply rooted in the landscape and culture of the region. The landscape is made up of hills, valleys, plateaus, cliffs, beaches, turloughs, lakes, streams, depressions, and caves – all of which provide us with a truly remarkable window into the geological history of North Clare and the West of Ireland.

The Burren is one of the largest and most accessible Karst regions in the world. It is the only place on the planet that Arctic, Mediterranean and Alpine plants grow side-by-side. It also has geological and historical wonders and a rich community of people full of passion and pride for this wonderful place.
There is a staggering amount of history in the Burren region with over 2,700 recorded monuments, some dating back over 6,000 years. This has led to the Burren being described as “one vast memorial to bygone cultures”.

![Figure 15 The Burren](image)

Key geotourism visitor centres in the area include Cliffs of Moher, Poulnabrone Dolmen, Caherconnel Fort, Aillwee Cave, Doolin Cave, Burren National Park, the Burren Centre, the Burren Nature Sanctuary and Lisdoonvarna Spa Wells.

Activities include:

- Walking/hiking
- Cycling
- Gastronomy tours, food fayres and farmers markets
- Caving
- Kayaking and surfing
- Fishing
- Rock climbing
- Boat tours
- Bird watching

### 2.4.5 COPPER COAST GEOPARK (IRELAND)

The Copper Coast Geopark is a designated area located along the southern coast of Ireland in County Waterford, extending for some 17 km from Kilfarrasy in the east to Stradbally in the west. The Geopark comprises of a small (<90km2) coastal area with seven villages.
The Copper Coast is a spectacular record of the earth's past linked cultural and intangible heritage and community activism. Its rocks and geosites tell the story of undersea volcanos, arid deserts and dramatic ice-ages, while its human history is inextricably linked with its landscape from ancient to early modern times. The Copper Coast is named for the vast mines that once ran during the 19th century and left an archaeological and cultural heritage. It is now home to scenic ruins including an engine house and other mining works.

The area has several popular beaches and hidden coves, along with over a dozen other beaches in a short stretch. This gives rise to obvious cliff facing geology and rock formations, preserved bogland, off road walks.

Key geosites include:

- Dunabrattin Head/Boatstrand harbour - Most of the headland itself is comprised of rocks of the Tramore Limestone Formation, which is mostly composed of calcareous mudstones and siltstones, rather than pure limestone. The rocks here have yielded a collection of fossils, particularly trilobites.

- Beaches and associated rock formations including Ordovician volcanic and sedimentary rocks. Sites include Garrarus Strand, Kilfrassy Strand, Stradbally Cove, Tran a mBo and Bunmahon Head, Knockmahon and Stage Cove.

![Figure 16 Garrarus Strand](image)

- Tankardstown which is of particular interest for the diversity of minerals it has. There are at least 36 different minerals recorded from Waterford Copper Coast mines, such as arsenopyrite, azurite, barite, bornite, botallackite, brochantite, chalcopryite, chrysocolla, cobalt arsenides, connellite, copper, cuprite, dolomite, epidote, erythrite, galena, langite, malachite, pyrite, siderite, sphalerite, tennantite and tetrahedrite, many of which are found at Tankardstown.
• Ballydwan Bay characterised by high, vertical cliffs composed of conglomerate and sandstone rocks of Devonian age. These are red in colour and have abundant pebbles of white vein quartz within them.

• Kilmurrin Cove with its sea cave.

• Fenor Bog with characteristic wetland plants.

• Gaulstown Dolmen a prehistoric portal tomb from 3500 to 4000 BC.

• Dunhill Castle which dates to the 13th Century.

Key tourism activities include guided tours, surfing, cycling, walking and road bowling.

2.4.6 FOREST FAWR GEOPARK (UK)

Fforest Fawr UNESCO Global Geopark is set within the Brecon Beacons National Park in south Wales. It comprises the western half of the National Park, stretching from Llandovery in the north to the edge of Merthyr Tydfil in the south, from Llandeilo in the west to Brecon in the east.

The wild mountains and hidden valleys of the Geopark are the result of nearly 500 million years of Earth history. This fascinating area contains evidence of ancient seas, mountain building and sea level and climate change scattered across a landscape that was shaped by the last Ice Age.

The Geopark is formed from a gently folded and faulted layer-cake of sedimentary rocks from the middle Ordovician through the Silurian and Devonian periods to near the end of the Carboniferous. These have been carved by water and ice into a landscape dominated by north-facing sandstone and limestone cuestas and wooded valleys, some concealing waterfalls intimately connected with the area’s geological history. The area is characterised by waterfalls, amazing caves and the highest mountains in southern Britain.
Figure 17 Fforest Fawr Geopark – Corn Du (Photographer Lewis Phillips)

Figure 18 map of Fforest Fawr UNESCO Global Geopark
The diverse rocks of the Geopark and the complex development of its landscape have resulted in a wealth of different wildlife habitats. These range from the exposed plateaux of the Old Red Sandstone hills, to the sheltered limestone and mudstone gorges of the south, often clad in woodland. Each combination of bedrock, soil and local climate gives rise to habitats with their own unique character. Meadows and pastures are another aspect of the landscape of Fforest Fawr, their special qualities arising from a complex interplay of man and nature.

Water has played an important part in the evolution of the landscape. The Geopark’s major rivers are especially important, the Usk and most of its tributaries for example being given special protection. Water has produced numerous cave systems beneath the Geopark which have been explored by cavers for recreation as well as their geological and biological interest.

Cultural connections with the geology begin with Bronze Age standing stones and burial cairns, Iron Age hillforts and continue through mediaeval castles to the Industrial Revolution when exploitation of the Geopark’s mineral riches fed the industrialisation on our southern fringe.

Much of the appeal of the Geopark to visitors lies in the landscape. Access to key areas is afforded by rail and tramroads, a legacy of the C19th industrial period. The six busiest parts of the Geopark are:

i) The upper Swansea Valley where the new Geopark Discovery Point is being established at Craig-y-nos Country Park

ii) Mynydd Illtud (home to the National Park Visitor Centre)

iii) Town of Brecon with its canal, riverfronts, outdoor shops, cathedral, museum and theatre

iv) The Taf valleys with their reservoirs surrounded by coniferous forests

v) Central Beacons (largely managed by Geopark partner, the National Trust),

vi) Waterfall Country (largely owned/managed by Geopark partner, Natural Resources Wales),

Visitors and residents have a great opportunity to explore and enjoy activities including:

- Hiking including walks on self-guided trails. The Geopark has published numerous self-guided trails and continues to add to the selection with the Atlantic Interreg-funded ‘Penwyllt’ title due for publication shortly. Each one focusses on the geological underpinnings of the local landscape but also makes wider connections with aspects of natural and cultural heritage.

- Cycling and Mountain Biking.

- Caving.

- Watersports.

- Rock climbing.

- Gorge scrambling.

- Bird watching.

- Photography.

- Horse riding and pony trekking.

Indoor activities include the Penderyn Whisky Distillery to enjoy the exhibitions and taste the products.
2.4.7 LANZAROTE GEOPARK (SPAIN)

Lanzarote, with a coastline of 247 km, is popularly known as “the volcanic island”, is the most northern and eastern of the Canary Islands. Lanzarote is located approximately 140 km away from the northwest coast of Africa and 1000 km from the Iberian Peninsula. The Chinijo Islands are located to the north of Lanzarote and consist of a group of islands made up of La Graciosa, Montaña Clara, Roque del Infierno and to the west, Alegranza and the Roque del Este.

The surface area of the Geopark is almost 2500 km2, consisting of a considerable submerged area that contributes to an increase in the geographical diversity associated with the Geopark and an 886.85 km2 landmass which includes the island of Lanzarote and the Chinijo Islands. At 700 km2, this is the biggest marine reserve in the European Union.

Lanzarote and the Chinijo Islands form a geopark of oceanic volcanic islands with not only an internationally relevant geological heritage, but where it is possible to observe the interaction, between the volcanic, erosive and sedimentary processes, on land and water.

Within the geopark there are almost 70 unique and outstanding places of geological interest (geosites) and of those 13 are internationally relevant. In most, the interest is related to their volcanic nature, followed by those of morphological interest. However, the wide range of constructive and destructive processes on the islands results in geological diversity, hence geosites whose main interest is stratigraphic, paleontological, sedimentary, tectonic and petrological.

In October 1993, a part of the Lanzarote and Chinijo Islands UNESCO Global Geopark had already been declared Reserve of the Biosphere by UNESCO; including 13 protected areas. According to the Canarian Network of Natural Protected Areas 350 km2, approximately 14% of the geopark, is protected, which reflects the immense natural richness of the island, and how its people have known how to preserve and enhance those values. Since 1974, the Timanfaya National Park, where the historical eruption of 1730-1736 occurred, has been an internationally relevant geosite.
The Art, Culture and Tourism Centres of the Cabildo of Lanzarote are the main economic engine of the island. They were created to enhance and protect the beauty of nature in Lanzarote, excellently combining art and nature. The CACT are located in geological places of interest, and several of them are included in the list of geosites.

On this island region, the volcanic processes and shapes are fully focused on tourism. Visitors can understand and enjoy the volcanic landscape promoting the preservation of natural resources as illustrated in the video link below:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=yZZmS9twiOo&feature=emb_logo

Key sites of interest for tourism include:

- Timanfaya National Park (also known as the fire mountains) with its unique volcanic backdrop
- Cueva de los Verdes where visitors can explore 1.5 km of natural caves
- Cactus gardens
- Famara Cliffs with its viewpoints and coastal walks
- Beaches with associated water sports activities including surfing, kite surfing, swimming and scuba diving
- Hiking, for example along the coastal path from Puerto del Carmen to Playa Quemada with its views of Fuerteventura.
2.4.8 MARBLE ARCH GLOBAL GEOPARK (IRELAND / NORTHERN IRELAND)

The Marble Arch Caves UNESCO Global Geopark contains some of the finest landscapes in the north of Ireland. Ranging from rugged uplands, lakes and forests through to gently rolling drumlins, the landscapes of the Geopark represent a complex Earth history dating back as far as 650 million years ago. With evidence of mountain building and destruction; searing hot deserts and warm tropical oceans; and of icy wastelands and water-worn caverns, the rocks and landscapes of the Geopark are nothing short of amazing.

Straddling the border between counties Fermanagh and Cavan, this truly international Geopark takes in parts of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland allowing visitors to appreciate the best of what this unspoilt border region has to offer.

Jointly managed by both Fermanagh & Omagh District Council and Cavan County Council, the Geopark includes a wide variety of sites of interest in a swathe of countryside extending from the northern shores of Lower Lough Erne in County Fermanagh to the southern shores of Lough Oughter in County Cavan. Key sites of interest include:

- Cuilcagh Mountain Park - Cuilcagh Mountain Park takes in 2,500 hectares on the northern slopes of Cuilcagh Mountain, at the heart of the Marble Arch Caves UNESCO Global Geopark. Cuilcagh Mountain Park was founded in 1998 with assistance from the European Union’s LIFE Peatlands Project and the Heritage Lottery Fund, to restore damaged peatland, to conserve pristine blanket bog and to increase awareness of bogland habitats and wildlife.
• Carrigan Forest - Carrigan Forest showcases a landscape rich in limestone features. The tranquil shoreline of Lough Formal, which is fed by a resurgence (spring) provides a great location for taking in the views of the hills Formal More and Formal Beg which flank the western shore of the lake.

• Castle Archdale Forest – a 520 hectare mixed broadleaved and coniferous forest on the shores of Lower Lough Erne offering walking trails, angling and cycling opportunities.

• Drumblane Abbey – a monastic site dating from 555AD.

• Lough Navar Forest with views over Lower Lough Erne.

• Marble Arch Caves - The Marble Arch Caves is one of the finest show caves in Europe. Visitors are guided through a fascinating natural underworld of rivers, waterfalls, winding passages and lofty chambers.

• Moneygashel Cashel which dates from the early Christian period and is an example of a secure circular enclosure for houses and animals.

• Shannon Pot – the source of Ireland’s longest river (River Shannon)

With a rich abundance of natural resources teamed with some of the very best facilities, the Marble Arch Caves UNESCO Global Geopark is the perfect location for an activity holiday and outdoor recreational activities are an extremely important part of the Geopark. The vast expanses of open
water and the rugged landscapes lend themselves effortlessly to an array of diverse water and land-based activities including:

• Canoeing and cruising
• Caving
• Angling
• Walking/hiking
• Cycling

2.4.9 NORTH PENNINES AONB GEOPARK (UK)

The North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and UNESCO Global Geopark is a stunning landscape of open heather moors, dramatic dales, tumbling upland rivers, wonderful woods, close knit communities, glorious waterfalls, fantastic birds, colourful hay meadows, stone-built villages, intriguing imprints of a mining and industrial past and distinctive plants. The area has many distinctive geology and landscape features, significant archaeology and supports important biodiversity in a range of key habitats.

The North Pennines...

• has 40% of the UK’s upland hay meadows
• contains 30% of England’s upland heathland and 27% of its blanket bog
• is home to 80% of England’s black grouse
• is a place to see short-eared owl, ring ouzel, snipe and redshank
• has important habitats – 36% of the AONB is designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest
• has red squirrels, otters and rare arctic alpine plants
• is the upland England’s hotspot for breeding wading birds
• enjoys peace, tranquility and fabulous night skies
• boasts England’s biggest waterfall – High Force in Upper Teesdale.

The mineral wealth and variety of the area makes it internationally significant. The mining heritage of the area provides many interesting places to visit and attracts people interested in cultural heritage, family history, mine exploration and geology. The beautiful rural landscape characterised by flat-topped hills, valleys, rivers, waterfalls, moorland, low-intensity farmland, rare wildlife (e.g. rare arctic-alpine and hay meadow flora), scattered small settlements etc. is the result of bedrock geology, glacial processes and human activity, which attracts visitors interested in outdoor activities and simply enjoying a quiet landscape.
The special character of the North Pennine landscape has its foundation in the underlying rocks and the geological processes which have shaped it over hundreds of millions of years of Earth history. Tropical seas, deltas, rainforests, molten rock, deserts and ice sheets have all played a part in creating the bare bones of the landscape\(^3\).

Approximately 12,000 people live within the boundary of the North Pennines AONB and UNESCO Global Geopark. The legacy of buildings, structures, hushes and spoil heaps from the area’s lead mining heyday have made a huge impact on the character of the area. A history of religious nonconformity is evident in the chapels that dot the landscape and even the Rights of Way network connects a heritage of chapel and mine.

50% of the Geopark is designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, for biological and/or geological features, showing its national and international importance. The area is an IUCN Category V protected landscape. It also contains 183 Scheduled Monuments and 968 listed buildings, many of these relating to the mining heritage of the area.

The activities which visitors can engage in include:

- **Walking** - There are over 2,000 miles of Public Rights of Way in the AONB and open access land covers 131,000 ha (61%) of the North Pennines.
- **Cycling** - The area has excellent cycling opportunities, including: road; touring; cross-country/forest mountain biking; and traffic-free family trails. Highlights include the following National Cycle Network routes: C2C; Pennines Cycleway; and the Walney to Wear.

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\(^3\) [https://www.northpennines.org.uk/whats-special/geology-and-landscape/](https://www.northpennines.org.uk/whats-special/geology-and-landscape/)
• **Horse riding** - Of the area’s 1958 km of Public Rights of Way, almost a quarter are bridleways, including a section of the Pennine Bridleway.

• **Paddlesports and sailing** - Rivers such as the Tees provide canoeing opportunities, whilst sailing takes place at some of the Teesdale reservoirs but most notably at Derwent.

• There are a variety of attractions in the area. Notable amongst them are:
  - High Force waterfall – England’s largest waterfall and the most visited site in the AONB
  - Bowlees Visitor Centre – gateway centre to Upper Teesdale and the North Pennines
  - South Tynedale Railway – England’s highest narrow-gauge railway
  - Derwent Reservoir – the second largest reservoir in Northumberland
  - Killhope Museum – excellent place to get to grips with the area’s lead mining history.

**2.4.10 PNR ARMORIQUE ASPIRING GEOPARK (FRANCE)**

The Armorique Geopark is located in the Brittany Region of France and encompasses an area of 1,587 km². The Geopark is typified by its rough and wild appearance and its rural and maritime character. From the high coastal cliffs, to the peaks of the Arrée Mountains, the landscapes today reflect the geological history of the Armorican Massif through successions of geological events and variations of sea level.

Between land and sea, three typical landscape ambiances characterize these Atlantic Celtic lands, which are the cement of the Armorique cultural identity:

- The Crozon Peninsula with its coastal landscape including approximately 400 marine caves, cliffs and fine sand beaches,
- The Arrée Mountains which are characterised by rocky outcrops, short grass moorland and peat bog landscapes’
- Brest Bay (the largest bay in Europe at 180 km²) and the Aulne Estuary (the longest coastal river in the Western region of Brittany) which link the sea and the mountains and offer a home to migratory birds such as the Arctic Loon.
The 44 geosites that make up the geopark illustrate more than 500 million years of geological history. The link between the physical landscapes and the cultural landscapes is that of a lively and dynamic tradition, strongly linked to the geology and the geomorphology of the territory. Whether civil, religious or military, the architectural heritage is remarkable and reflects the geodiversity of the land in each building.

2.4.11 SUSTAINABLE MUNICIPALITIES COMMUNITY OF CANTABRIA ASPIRING GEOPARK (SPAIN)

The proposed geopark in Cantabria region, called Valleys of Cantabria (Asón, Miera and Soba) is a territory of approximately 800 km², including 20 municipalities and more than 61,000 inhabitants. The area includes more than 50 geosites, natural elements and cultural points of interest, including coastal and aeolian, karst and glaciers landscapes, as well as other stratigraphic, tectonic, and paleontological features.

The coastal area of the geopark concentrates a high diversity of environments representative of littoral zones of medium latitudes. Barchan and longitudinal dunes in an orthogonal framework climbing the mountainside constitute the relevant dune system of Sonabia. There are also numerous peat bogs with ages ranging from 10,000 years B.P. and 2,000-5,000 years B.P. The fossil forest of Trengandín beach indicates that between 2,890-4,070 years B.P. the sea level was at least 2 m below the current one.
The Asón area is internationally recognized for its varied and rich underground heritage with more than 4,000 caves explored. Some of these caves have been used as shelters during the last 45,000 years (remains paintings of Covalanas cave, World Heritage of UNESCO, have been dated back 20,000 years). The maximum glacial development of this area occurred between 44,000 and 29,000 years B.P. Glacial remains appear at levels around 600 a.s.l., the lowest of the Iberian Peninsula.

The declaration of a geopark constitutes a great opportunity to promote the geotourism and development of the territory.

The geographical location of the Geopark provides a wide variety of landscapes between the sea and the mountain. Existing interpretation centres play a role fundamental in the discovery of the territory and its inhabitants. A network of 12 tourist information offices, 23 viewpoints or observatories of glacial, river, or karst and more than 160 hiking trails, most of which are guided, are available.

Three tourist areas are identified in the territory of the Geopark: Trasmiera, Asón-Agüera and Valles Pasiegos. The tourist infrastructure of the three areas reaches 105 hotel establishments and more 5,000 places.

The tourism offering is varied and diverse: there are beaches managed under quality criteria (Q Tourism quality and ISO 14001), some of the most important fishing ports in Cantabria, a wealth of
archaeological/geological sites (272 include prehistoric remains) and rock art in its caves; more than 120 elements of historical-cultural heritage, megalithic remains, industrial and ethnographic heritage.

Visitors can also enjoy sporting and active tourism activities including: caving, ravines, roads, ornithology, sea excursions, or discover its cultural heritage, festivals and traditions.
SECTION 3
PROJECT RELEVANCE AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT
3 PROJECT RELEVANCE AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The value of natural landscapes in supporting the economy of communities is understood by governments in each of the project regions. National and regional policy documents therefore include objectives which seek to ensure the long-term protection and sustainable use of these landscapes and the communities which live within them.

In order to understand where the project objectives fit with national and regional policy, the project has been reviewed in the context of policy objectives relevant to each project partner, as listed below:

3.1 STRATEGY AND POLICY DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy and policy documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>France</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Town and Country Planning for Sustainable Development plan</td>
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<td>Biodiversity national plan</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ireland</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ireland 2040 – Our Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterford City and County Council Tourism Statement of Strategy and work plan 2017-2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waterford City and County Council: People and Place - Waterford Heritage Plan 2017-2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Copper Coast Opportunity Study 2019-2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>County Cavan Tourism Development Plan 2017 - 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Portugal</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Arouca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGA – Arouca Geopark Association Strategic Guidelines 2014-2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Tourism Strategy 2027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Azores</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Azores Autonomous Region Tourism Plan</td>
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<td>The Azores Strategic Marketing Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Central Group Strategic Plan for Tourist Animation</td>
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</table>
## 3.2 RELEVANT POLICY OBJECTIVES

While each region has established its own priorities for action in respect to landscape conservation and tourism development, review of these documents highlights that there are significant areas of commonality.

Across the European Atlantic Geotourism Route the key strategic priorities and need for project activity relate to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature Conservation and Protection</th>
<th>Tourism development and economic regeneration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The need to maintain, conserve and restore the natural and built heritage of communities in order to promote sustainable tourism.</td>
<td>Ensuring the sustainable use of the landscape is essential to directly and indirectly sustain local communities, create employment and deliver social benefits in rural communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The need to increase monitoring of heritage assets to enable an evaluation of impacts and ensure long term conservation.</td>
<td>The need to build on the existing co-operation between the public and private sectors to ensure a holistic and co-ordinated approach to tourism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The need to establish clear criteria for management, protection and conservation of geological heritage which can subsequently be used to guide tourism activities within the area.</td>
<td>Enhanced geotourism product development and associated branding are priorities for developing effective tourism markets and expanding the tourist season. This should include the promotion of relevant holiday types, iconic products and distinctive destination brands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of ranger services are an important aspect of visitor management and geodiversity conservation.</td>
<td>Effective on-line information sources are key to the development of tourism activity and ensuring that visitors understand the stories which are hidden within the landscape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects should encourage a sense of community and place and which emphasise local distinctiveness, culture and history, all of which have been shaped by the landscape.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education and awareness</th>
<th>Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The need to increase understanding and awareness of natural heritage, built heritage, cultural heritage and special landscapes to increase public excitement about all aspects of heritage and their appeal as tourism offerings.</td>
<td>Research is essential to promote the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, fight against desertification, stop and reverse the land degradation and curb the loss of biological diversity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The need to enhance information and signage to enable visitors to understand the landscapes and geological features they are visiting.</td>
<td>Opportunities exist and should be explored to develop enhanced links with education bodies with an earth sciences interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and training for the conservation and sustainable use of geodiversity and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Education and awareness |

Research
- Skills development within the local community (community organisations, businesses and voluntary groups) are a priority to enable local people to take a proactive role in heritage management.

Each of the relevant key regional strategies, in respect to each of the participating areas, are outlined in Annex 1.
SECTION 4

PROJECT IMPACTS AND OUTPUTS
4 PROJECT IMPACTS AND OUTPUTS

The project aimed to implement a range of activities which would raise the profile of geoparks, increase visitor understanding and appreciation of their unique cultural and natural heritage and facilitate enhanced management of geopark areas. These activities spanned:

- Networking between project partners on geopark management
- Marketing of geopark areas to the wider community, business stakeholders, statutory stakeholders and visitors
- Development of promotional materials and innovative ICT tools to increase the accessibility of geological, natural and cultural heritage information
- Training and capacity building activities for communities, businesses and volunteers
- Development of scientific and technical papers on geoparks and the factors which impact their vitality and long-term sustainability
- Development of supports for aspiring geoparks to enhance their ability to achieve UNESCO Geopark accreditation and thereby expand the route to under-represented areas along the Atlantic coast.

Specific actions and target indicators were agreed with Atlantic Area as a condition of grant, as outlined below.

4.1 PROJECT OUTPUTS

The project proposed to deliver a range of outputs in relation to seven work packages during the course of its implementation. These work packages related to project co-ordination activities, project communication, capitalisation of project activities, geosite management, transnational marketing, the development of ICT tools for public engagement and training and capacity building.

The target output indicators and associated actual outputs realised at the time of writing this report (July 2020) are documented in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Target Value</th>
<th>Actual Achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work Package 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Co-ordination</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership agreement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal project meetings and events</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>face-to-face meetings, 3 virtual meetings, 1 technical meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Package 2</td>
<td>Project reports (Progress reports, interim and final evaluation report)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Package 3</td>
<td>Project newsletters and other information documents (Project blog, social networking, press releases, press conferences, brochures, promotional materials, project newsletter)</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Package 3</td>
<td>Networking activity with other projects</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Package 3</td>
<td>Capitalisation and sustainability plan</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Package 3</td>
<td>Local events</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Package 3</td>
<td>Final conference</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Package 3</td>
<td>Promotion of the route and attendance at other events</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Package 4</td>
<td>Study visits</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Package 4</td>
<td>Management toolkit (a digital and multilingual toolkit of Geopark management that will help established and aspiring geoparks to achieve better performance) &amp; Geoparks management seminar</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Package 4</td>
<td>Support and assistance to aspiring geoparks</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Package 4</td>
<td>Geodiversity Conservation Charter (a multilingual charter which will be available digitally)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Package 4</td>
<td>Geotourism monitoring system (development of a system for monitoring the sustainable management performance of the geoparks and other natural areas)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Package 5</td>
<td>EAGR Strategy and communication plan</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work Package 5</td>
<td>EAGR Website</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work package 6</td>
<td>Digital interpretation workshop for partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT tools for discovery, understanding and enjoyment</td>
<td>Mobile application for interpretation via interactive ICT tool</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work package 7</td>
<td>Community engagement and business interaction (activities to involve communities, volunteers and visitors)</td>
<td>24 actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and capacity building</td>
<td>720 participants engaged</td>
<td>&gt;4405</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training actions and materials</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(training manuals addressed to various relevant audiences with methodologies and goals that could be internationally applicable)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technical and scientific publications produced (including geoparks, climate change, eco-tourism and health)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overarching outputs</td>
<td>Number of participants in actions for the dissemination and capitalisation of results</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of policy, strategy and operational instruments produced</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of actions for the dissemination and capitalisation of results</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of case studies and pilot actions implemented</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2 OUTPUTS DELIVERED AGAINST IDENTIFIED TARGETS

4.2.1 WORK PACKAGE 1: PROJECT MANAGEMENT

4.2.1.1 Partnership agreement
A partnership agreement was established to guide project implementation and signed by all of the project partners in November 2017.

4.2.1.2 Internal project meetings and events
The project partnership has undertaken project organisation meetings and study visits to enable project mobilisation and implementation. These were:

- Project commencement meeting – June 2017 in Vila Real (Portugal)
- Technical meeting – September 2017 in Ponta Delgada (Azores)
- 1st study visit and 2nd co-ordination meeting - November 2017 in Ennistymon (Burren and Cliffs of Moher, Ireland)
- 2nd study visit and 3rd co-ordination meeting – June 2018 at Parc Naturel Regional D’Armorique (France)
- 3rd and 4th Study visits and fourth co-ordination meeting – November 2018 at Parador of Limpias (Cantabria Spain) and Zumaia (Basque Coast, Spain)
- 5th Study Visit and co-ordination meeting - June 2019 at Marble Arch Caves UNESCO Global Geopark (Ireland/Northern Ireland)
- 6th Study Visit – March 2020 at Fforest Fawr Brecon Beacons (Wales)

In addition three virtual coordination meetings and one technical meeting (in the Azores) have been undertaken during the project lifespan.

Figure 27 Inaugural project meeting Vila Real 2017
4.2.1.3 Project reports

At the time of writing a Mid-term Report was scheduled from completion by the 31 July 2020 and a final Report to be furnish upon project completion in November 2020.
4.2.2 WORK PACKAGE 2: COMMUNICATION

A range of communications activities have been progressed during project implementation, including:

4.2.2.1 Social Media Presence

Development of a social media presence via Instagram, twitter, facebook and linkedin using @atlanticgeotourismroute to promote the concept of geotourism and each geopark as a tourism destination. Impacts of these social media outlets are:

- 270 facebook posts with a reach of 68,399 since May 2018 (https://www.facebook.com/AtlanticGeotourismRoute/)

- 64 Instagram posts since August 2018. Th account has 355 followers and achieved 1,569 likes. (https://www.instagram.com/atlanticgeotourismroute/)

- 6 Blog posts on LinkedIn with 1,000 views (https://www.linkedin.com/company/atlantic-geoparks/)

- 70,396 impressions on Twitter since June 2018 with 117 followers and 244 tweets (https://twitter.com/AtlanticRoute).

4.2.2.2 Project newsletters and other information documents

The Partners have issued four project newsletters to date, outlining:

1. What the Atlantic Geoparks project is, the main outputs it sought to deliver and who the project partners are.
2. Training activities and project open days undertaken during project delivery and opportunities for people to get involved with the project.

4.2.2.3 Blog

The project partners developed a blog via LinkedIn to promote the project and its activities. Seven blog articles have been developed and released, with the following themes:

1. What makes a Geopark? – special places shaped by nature, given life by people, good management and educational activities.
5. Geoparks and education – benefits of education approach, relevance to education curriculum.
7. Geoparks and engaging with science – promoting geoparks through engaging with science, benefits of a geologist and pride of place in promoting geotourism.

4.2.2.4 Training guides for communities

The project has developed and delivered a range of training for local communities and businesses. These experiences have been developed into training materials for dissemination to other geoparks/interested stakeholders, including:

1. Copper Coast Geopark developed a Geopark and Geotourism Training Guide intended to support environmental educators and trainers working within geoparks on the practical steps of developing and delivering training opportunities linked to geological heritage. The guide encompasses eight case studies, as follows:
   1. Training Course – Arouca Geopark’s Route of geosites - educational aspects;
   2. Earth Sense – Copper Coast Geopark Early Years learning project;
   3. Running a guide training course – Basque Coast UNESCO Global Geopark;
   4. Geotourism, art and education – A secondary school project in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark;
   5. Re-engaging businesses and communities with a geopark – A case study from the Marble Arch Caves UNESCO Global Geopark;
   6. Running a Training program for Unemployed People – A case study from Mancomunidad de Municipios Sostenibles;
   7. An introductory training weekend for Geopark volunteers – A case study from the North Pennines AONB and UNESCO Global Geopark;
   8. Training course on interpretation of geological heritage, Geoparks in Art Culture and Tourism centres of Lanzarote and Chinijo Islands UNESCO Global Geopark;

2. Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global geopark - Farm Walk Training Guide enabling local farmers to develop and lead walks in their land in a sustainable way.

4.2.3 WORK PACKAGE 3: CAPITALISATION

4.2.3.1 Networking activity with other projects

The project partners agreed an internal target of establishing links and networks with 5 external projects/partners per project partner, or a total of 55 external links. During the course of the project, partners established 53 links to other projects/initiatives, as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Project Link/Link to other agencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Arouca UNESCO Global Geopark        | • Link with Tourism of Portugal, under the project «Arouca Geopark 4.0»  
• Links with LEADER Co-operation Project 3G – Geoconservation, Geoeducation and Geotourism.  
• Link with the Route of Mining and Geological Interest Sites of Portugal  
• Zhangjajie - Arouca twinning agreement which enables exchange of experience with China UGGP partner.  
• Links with the Portuguese Forum of UNESCO Global Geoparks                                                                                           |
| Azores UNESCO Global Geopark        | • Links with ERDF project SCAPETOUR: Seascapes promotion to diversify tourism products.  
• Attendance on the advisory board for PALEOPARQUE/ Santa Maria Island Paleopark.  
• Links to the Ris3_Net Project for the Smart Growth of the Macaronesian Regions funded under INTERREG V.  
• Strategic Integration of the Local Development Associations of the Azores.  
• Liaison with LIFE VIDALIA funded by the Life programme which aims to conserve two endemic flora species.                                                                 |
| Basque Coast Geopark                | • Liaison with the University of Basque Country and Aranzadi Science Association on landscape interpretation from geological features.  
• Membership of the Ecotourism Spanish Club  
• Development of a proposal for LEADER on “UGG sustainable development in rural areas.”  
• Lecture on transnational promotion and cooperation of the Atlantic Geoparks for sustainable development in UTAD University in Portugal. |
| Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark   | • Liaison with Fáilte Ireland in reconciling the needs to balance tourism and conservation.  
• Liaison with the Burren Ecotourism Network.  
• Links with Geological Survey of Ireland and the Geoheritage Programme.  
• Liaison with the Office of Public Works (OPW) which has national responsibility for National Monuments.  
• Liaison with Ruritage – A European project seeking to revive rural communities using local heritage. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geopark</th>
<th>Projects/Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Copper Coast UNESCO Global Geopark          | • Celtic Routes project a co-funded European Territorial Co-operation Ireland/Wales project.  
  • CHERISH project (Climate, Heritage and Environment of Reefs, Islands and Headlands) funded by the European Union’s Ireland Wales Programme.  
  • Munster Vales a collaborative project run between local authorities in the South East Region to promote the area as a sustainable tourism destination.  
  • Waterford Institute of Technology (Calmast) partnership agreement for workshops to the public and school children on the Atlantic Geotourism route.  
  • Geological Survey of Ireland to promote and develop geo-heritage activities.  
  • Partnership working with Waterford City and County Council in promoting sustainable tourism. |
| Fforest Fawr Geopark                        | • Engagement with the Brecon Beacons Sustainable Destination Partnership  
  • Liaison with Brecon Beacons Tourism linking with activity and tourism providers.  
  • Fforest Fawr Geopark Management Group on management and development of the Geopark  
  • Participation in the Committee of UK UNESCO Global Geoparks  
  • Brecon Beacon National Park Ambassadors programme. |
| Lanzarote & Chinijo Islands Geopark         | • Delivery of training to the Arts, Culture and Tourism Centres (CACT) staff.  
  • Delivery of training to Uniguides  
  • Delivery of training to Guides Lanzarote – APIT  
  • AENA – exhibition “Geoparks in Pictures”  
  • GEA – Links with Erasmus+ programme on Geo-tourism and sustainable development in rural and remote areas |
| Marble Arch Caves UNESCO Global Geopark     | • Interreg VA funded CANN project (Collaborative Action for Natura Network)  
  • Interreg VA funded Catchment Care Project (Community Actions for Resilient Eco-systems)  
  • Interreg Atlantic Area project Ageo  
  • Agreement of a memorandum of understanding with Coillte Forest Services & UCD Dublin on the management and future development of Cavan Burren Park.  
  • Fermanagh Lakeland Tourism encompassing Cavan Tourism, Failte Ireland, Tourism Ireland and Tourism Northern Ireland on promotion of the Geopark. |
| **North Pennines AONB and UNESCO Global Geopark** | • Networking via the National Association of AONBs  
• Tees-Swale (Naturally Connected) project supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.  
• Fellfoot Forward Landscape Partnership Scheme.  
• Partnership working with Durham University Earth Sciences Department on geopark management and training sessions for businesses and community members. |
|---|---|
| **PNR Armorique Aspiring Geopark** | • Participation in the Géoles meeting with a focus on geological interpretation and education.  
• Co-operation with CIM Alto Minho in Northern Portugal enabling best practice exchange.  
• Reception of National Trust Managers on Crozon Peninsula.  
• Meeting with the Breton Flax and Hemp Association.  
• Meeting with Tro Breiz Association (Brittany’s Tour) on increasing pedestrian activity and visibility of routes.  
• Meeting with the Interpretation Centre for Architecture and Heritage) CIAP |
| **Sustainable Municipalities Community of Cantabria Aspiring Geopark** | • Liaison with the Government of Cantabria on project implementation.  
• Collaboration with the Institute of Environmental Hydraulics of the University of Cantabria and the ALICE-Interreg Atlantic Area project and improving the ability of Atlantic landscapes in lessening the impacts of climate change.  
• Local and territorial organisations on activities related to tourism, caving, cultural heritage, volunteering, land stewardship and environmental education.  
• The MMS is a member of the Red4C project: Citizen Science and Climate Change. It is a project led by Red Cambera. The main objective is to create a national work network made up of entities and organizations dedicated to the field of citizen science and climate change. |

### 4.2.3.2 Supporting the expansion of the route:

- Project partners visited the Crozon Peninsula in Armorique Nature Park to share experience and best practices in geopark management in June 2018, thereby supporting Armorique Geopark candidacy.
- Project partners gathered in the territory of Mancomunidad de Municipios Sostenibles de Cantabria in November 2018 for the 4th co-ordination meeting and study visit. Project partners
proposed actions related management structure, geo-conservation, sustainable tourism, interpretation and environmental education to support the candidacy work in progress.

### 4.2.3.3 Capitalisation and sustainability plan

The capitalisation and sustainability plan is encapsulated within this document.

### 4.2.3.4 Local events

Project partners held a range of public events throughout project implementation to raise the profile of the project, highlight the benefit of project activities and disseminate route information. These included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GEOPARK</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>PROJECT</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>No of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arouca UNESCO Global Geopark</strong></td>
<td>2017-2019</td>
<td>Annual programme of Geosites Interpretation</td>
<td>Organised guided visits to key geosites along an organised route including transport and guiding.</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30th of October 2019</td>
<td>EAGR Senior Academy Lecture</td>
<td>A lecture to publicize the European Atlantic Geotourism Route among students of the Senior Academy of Arouca.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Azores UNESCO Global Geopark</strong></td>
<td>25th May</td>
<td>Aniversário da Gruta das Torres / Anniversary of the “Gruta das Torres” Visitor Center</td>
<td>Azores Geopark celebrated the anniversary of “Gruta das Torres” Visitor Center and displayed information about the project and the EAGR.</td>
<td>700+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark</strong></td>
<td>Jun-18 &amp; Jun-19</td>
<td>Artist in Residence programme</td>
<td>BCOMG promoted the concept of geotourism and the EAGR to visitors by engaging and training local artists. The artists visited tourism centres in the region as ‘Artists in Residence’ to interact with visitors while they painted the landscape explaining the features of the landscape and importance of caring for them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oct-19</td>
<td>Artist in Residence Exhibition</td>
<td>BCOMG hosted an exhibition of the artists work under the title “Geopark captured on Canvas” to further promote the route and the concept of Geotourism to a local and national audience.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>“Fabulous Fun Day” at the Copper Coast</td>
<td>Family activity day highlighting the Geopark</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geopark</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
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<td>-------------------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Copper Coast UNESCO Global Geopark</strong></td>
<td>25 to 30/05/2019</td>
<td>Copper Coast Festival</td>
<td>A project open day took place in Stradbally disseminating project information &amp; sponsoring a local heritage walk.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Heritage Week</strong></td>
<td>17-25/08/2019</td>
<td>National Heritage Week</td>
<td>CCUGG hosted events over Heritage Week such as the CHERISH project open day, Geological Mapping workshop, and a rock detectives geopark open day.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Forest Fawr Geopark</strong></td>
<td>18/04/2018</td>
<td>Brecon Beacons National Park</td>
<td>Attended by around 70 tourism partners, including Visit Wales. FFG gave a presentation and engaged with partners regarding the EAGR and geotourism.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GeoFest Family Activity Day</strong></td>
<td>30/05/2018</td>
<td>Open day for families and local community that celebrates the Geopark and EGN week.</td>
<td>400-500 people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GeoFest Family Activity Day</strong></td>
<td>29/05/2019</td>
<td>Open day for families and local community that celebrates the Geopark and EGN week.</td>
<td>200-250 people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GeoFest Family Activity Day</strong></td>
<td>Oct-19</td>
<td>Geopark Discovery Point Opening</td>
<td>FFG created a Discovery Point at Craig-y-nos Country Park. At the opening the EAGR and Atlantic Geoparks project were communicated to Geopark stakeholders and visitors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lanzarote and Chinijo Islands UNESCO Global Geopark</strong></td>
<td>18 to 26/08/2018</td>
<td>Walking tours</td>
<td>Walking excursion through the lavas that covered the western part of Lanzarote, ascending to Caldera Blanca volcano with explanations about the eruption and geodiversity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marble Arch Caves UNESCO Global Geopark</strong></td>
<td>18 to 26/08/2018</td>
<td>Heritage Week</td>
<td>MACUGG hosted events over Heritage Week such as Geopark Rock Detectives, Discover Castle Saunderson, Traditional Irish Craft Workshop, Irish Language tour of Cavan Burren Park, Holy Wells &amp; Early Christian Churches of the Geopark.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North Pennines AONB</strong></td>
<td>23-25/10/2018</td>
<td>Celebrate Science</td>
<td>Hands-on activities and Geopark information were presented Geopark staff and volunteers spoke to over 1000 people.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Palace of Science</strong></td>
<td>12/03/2019</td>
<td>Palace of Science</td>
<td>Geopark staff ran hands on activities and raised awareness of Geoparks at 250 people.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/5-10/6/2019</td>
<td>European Geoparks Week</td>
<td>Several events engaged visitors in geology, the work of the Geopark and the EAGR, including family events, guided walks and creating a geological map from pebbles.</td>
<td>450</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26th April 2018</td>
<td>Geopark Forum n°1</td>
<td>Organization of the 1st Geopark Forum at Crozon Peninsula.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct-18</td>
<td>IV Open Days of the Spanish Geoparks. Lanzarote (Spain).</td>
<td>Open Days of the Spanish Geoparks bringing together agencies that promote the values of destinations for their geological heritage.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2018 - December 2019</td>
<td>Awareness campaign</td>
<td>During the celebration of the 1st Geopark Open Day in the municipality of Ramales de la Victoria, an informative campaign was launched presenting the project to citizens and local organizations.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2018</td>
<td>Field trip with University of Cantabria's Senior program.</td>
<td>Field trip to the Ason area with the UC Senior program.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2019</td>
<td>VII Regional Olympiad of Geology.</td>
<td>VII Regional Olympiad of Geology. School of Mines of the University of Cantabria (Torrelavega). (22feb19).</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar-19</td>
<td>IX CIOT – International Congress of Territorial Planning 2019 (Santander)</td>
<td>Presentation of the communication &quot;UNESCO Global Geopark proposal in Cantabria as a tool for territorial development&quot;.</td>
<td>318</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun-19</td>
<td>Provoca Cantabria 2019 Program</td>
<td>Presentation to organizations that develop activities of the PROVOCA 2019 program in the field of the Geopark.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep-19</td>
<td>Info Day results &quot;Scientific research through geological drilling in the municipality of Liendo&quot;</td>
<td>Informative day to present the project Geopark and the results of the drilling carried out in the municipality of Liendo.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The project aimed to involve 1975 participants in the dissemination of project information. This target has been greatly exceeded through the actions listed above.

4.2.3.5 Final conference

A final conference for the project has been scheduled for November 2020. Due to the corona virus pandemic, it is proposed that the conference will be delivered in a virtual format to enable delegates to participate from across Europe and further afield.

4.2.3.6 Promotion of the route and attendance at other events

During the course of the project, project partners attended external events to promote the concept of geoparks and the European Atlantic Geotourism Route. These included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geopark</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Participant number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arouca UNESCO Global Geopark</td>
<td>International Tourism Fair - ITB (2019)</td>
<td>200,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lisbon Tourism Fair – BTL (2018 - 2019)</td>
<td>100,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annual Meeting of the Route of Mining and Geological Interest Sites of Portugal (2019)</td>
<td>100+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15th European Geoparks Conference (2019)</td>
<td>1,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harvest Fair (2017 – 2018 – 2019)</td>
<td>300,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chestnut Festival Oct 2019</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arouca. History of a Monastery -Historical Recreation</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>«Sons da Praça» (Sound of the Square) The sounds return to Brandão de Vasconcelos Square, with the Banda Musical de Arouca and a guest singer or band.</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azores UNESCO Global Geopark</td>
<td>Encontro Mundo Rural / “Rural World Fair” (June 2018)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JORNADAS PARLAMENTARES</td>
<td>Parliamentarians Atlantic Journeys (June 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SEMANA DO MAR /SEA WEEK – Expomar Fair (August 2018)</td>
<td>4,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SEMANA DO MAR/SEA WEEK – Expomar Fair (August 2019)</td>
<td>10,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geopark</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basque Coast Geopark</td>
<td>Conference on Geoparks as local development tools in Cantabria (Spain) (November 2018)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spanish Geoparks Open day in Lanzarote Geopark (Spain) (October 2019)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BasqueFest Fair Bilbao (April 2019)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>San Sebastián Region Tourism body (March 2019)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FITUR International Tourism Fair (Madrid) (Jan 2019)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Itsasoaren Soinuak” festival (August 2018)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IV National Ecotourism Congress (Nov 2019)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark</td>
<td>Burren Slow Food Festival (May 2018)</td>
<td>1,500 visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Burren Food Fayre (October 2018)</td>
<td>400+ people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copper Coast UNESCO Global Geopark</td>
<td>Irish Geoparks Forum (Feb 2019)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revitalising Rural Ireland and Empowering Communities through Social Enterprise (May 2019)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comeragh Wilds Festival</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bunmahon Fabulous fun day (June 2019)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Fawr Geopark</td>
<td>Tourism Conference (March 2019) 2019</td>
<td>80 tourism partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lanzarote &amp; Chinijo Islands</td>
<td>XXXI Handicraft Fair of Los Dolores (September 2019)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enero 2020 FITUR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>European Handicraft Fair (April 2020)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Day of Canary Islands Fair (May 2020)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marble Arch Caves UNESCO Global Geopark</td>
<td>Ballinamore Vintage Show (June 18)</td>
<td>500+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taste of Cavan (August 18) offered children’s activities and games, along with EAGR, project and Geopark information on the day</td>
<td>20,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holiday World Show (Jan 2019)</td>
<td>20,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irish Orienteering Championships &amp; Cavan Walking Festival (May 2019)</td>
<td>1,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Pennines AONB</td>
<td>North Pennines Tourism Forum (February 2019)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>British Cave Research Association Field Meeting (June 2019)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNR Armorique Aspiring Geopark</td>
<td>8th international conference on UNESCO global geoparks Adame1lo Brenta Nature Park (September 2019)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44th European Geoparks Network Meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sierra Norte de Sevilla UNESCO Global Geopark, Spain (September 2019)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9th international conference on UNESCO global geoparks Jeju UNESCO global Geopark (September 2020)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geopark Forum n°2 (Autumn 2020)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>---------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainable Municipalities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Community of Cantabria</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspiring Geopark</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>XV National Quaternary Meeting (Bilbao) (July 2019)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>44th European Geoparks Network Meeting</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Norte de Sevilla UNESCO Global Geopark, Spain (September 2019)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IAG Regional Conference on Geomorphology Geomorphology of Climatically and Tectonically sensitive areas (September, 2019)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Estimated reach of activities undertaken (participants)</strong></td>
<td>&gt; 735,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.4 WORK PACKAGE 4: GEOSITE MANAGEMENT

4.2.4.1 Study visits

As outlined in section 4.2.1.2 seven study visits have been undertaken during the life of the project to enhance understanding of the project partners on:

- Key sites of interest and capacity of those sites to accommodate tourist numbers
- The need for site-based management to protect the heritage assets on which the tourism economic benefits are based
- How visitors use the area and what communication media are most effective
- The need to engage multiple stakeholders in transport provision and co-ordination
- The options and benefits of building skills within tourism businesses, landowners, communities and key stakeholders.
- Effective management structures for geopark management.
- Geoconservation priorities and mechanisms for effective action
- Interpretation and environmental education – auditing current activity and identifying key actions to improve provision.
- Engaging with the tourism industry and establishing mechanisms to encourage tourist movements to and within the geopark.
4.2.4.2 Management toolkit

The project partners developed a Geopark toolkit to assist aspiring Geoparks to attain full UNESCO Global Geopark status and to provide guidance to those who have already done so but wish to further develop their territory.

It provides guidance on:

- how a Geopark might be governed,
- Key management and operational considerations,
- how communities and businesses are communicated with and engaged in the geopark; and
- how it is promoted to visitors, all with principles of sustainability in mind.

The toolkit also considers:

- conservation of geological features
- environmental education, training and research
- sustainable “geoproducts” and “geoservices”
- and examines how a Geopark can enhance the protection of an area’s natural and cultural heritage.

Finally, it reflects on Geoparks in the context of national and international networks and examines the scope for collaborative working.

The toolkit has been published on the internet at the following link: https://www.geoparktoolkit.org/.
4.2.4.3 Geoparks management seminar

A Geoparks Management Webinar is scheduled for the 14-17th July 2020 entitled “Geoparks, Sustainable Regional Development and Healthy Lifestyles: Management Seminar on cooperation of the Atlantic Geoparks for sustainable development”. Participants will be enabled to experience an innovative practice in which they can confront theoretical knowledge with concrete realities and good practices, regarding the management of the territories and the implementation of diverse initiatives, particularly those with local communities’ engagement.

4.2.4.4 Support and assistance to aspiring geoparks

Support has been offered to Armorique Aspiring Geopark and Cantabria Aspiring Geopark, including provision of advice on application development, inclusion in project site visits, support on strategy development and provision of support letters to supplement application documents. Applications and all relevant supporting documentation was submitted to UNESCO via the French and Spanish National Fora in November 2019 and April 2020 Respectively.

4.2.4.5 Geodiversity Conservation Charter (a multi-lingual charter which will be available digitally)

A Geodiversity Conservation Charter has been agreed by each of the project partners outlining their shared vision that the geodiversity of the Atlantic area Geoparks is recognised as an integral and vital part of our environment, economy, heritage and future sustainable development, to be managed appropriately and safeguarded for this and future generations. The partners commit to maintain,
promote and enhance geodiversity as an integral part of our natural heritage, recognising its contribution to:

- the remarkable geoheritage of Europe’s Atlantic fringe
- historical and cultural development, intellectual growth and creative expression
- sustainable economic development and essential benefits for society
- informing nature-based solutions for adaptation to changes in climate and sea-level
- supporting biodiversity
- public health, quality of life, national well-being and reconnecting people with nature.

The charter highlights that in order to achieve its vision, future action should address four main areas of activity:

1. **Raise awareness** of the importance of geodiversity and its wider links with landscape, culture and sense of place, and encourage a sense of pride through education (at all levels including schools, universities and life-long learning), promotion and interpretation.

2. **Integrate geodiversity** in relevant policies to ensure sustainable management of the natural heritage, land and water at a landscape/ecosystem scale for the wider benefit of the Atlantic area’s people, environment and economy.

3. **Conserve and enhance** our geoheritage and its special character within existing designated sites and areas, by further designation of local sites, and in the wider rural, urban and marine environments.

4. **Undertake research** to improve our understanding of the role of geodiversity in providing benefits to ecosystems and people, and to address key knowledge gaps such as the functional links between geodiversity and biodiversity in terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments.

The charter outlines the contributions and possible action steps for all sections of the community including: individuals and communities; landowners and managers; industry and business; local authorities and statutory/public agencies; and education, research and museum institutions.

### 4.2.4.6 Geotourism monitoring system

The project partners have adopted a unified and consistent approach to monitoring and evaluation of geoparks within the project area, namely:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ETIS Core Indicators</th>
<th>Supplementary indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1.1.</td>
<td>Percentage of tourism enterprises/establishments in the destination using a voluntary certification/labelling for environmental /quality/sustainability and/or Corporate Social Responsibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Page | 61
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GGN_IV Geotourism Indicator Reference</th>
<th>Section 1: Promotion and information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1                                    | What kind of promotional material of the area is available?  
1.1 Printed material (e.g. leaflets, magazines)  
1.2 Popular literature for public (e.g. books, guide books)  
1.3 CD or video material  
1.4 Other promotional material or merchandise |
| 2                                    | In how many languages is the marketing material produced?  
2.1 English  
2.2 Spanish  
2.3 Russian  
2.4 French  
2.5 Chinese  
2.6 Arabic  
2.8 Multiple languages in one publication |
| 3                                    | Are the information centres or exhibition about the area presented at information centres, information points, etc.? |
| 4                                    | How is information and interpretation about the area presented at information centres, information points, etc.? |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GGN_IV Geotourism Indicator Reference</th>
<th>Section II: Access, transport and facilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5                                    | Public access and facilities  
5.1 Is it possible to reach the Geopark area by public transport?  
5.2 Do you provide your own tourist transport?  
5.3 Is public transport integrated with walking, cycling trails?  
5.4 Do you have car park facilities connected to the trails which your organisation has developed?  
5.5 Are there toilets available in the parking areas? |
| 6                                    | Are visitors informed about public transport in the area and encouraged to use it before their arrival?  
6.1 Promotional material about the area (leaflets, brochures, internet) contains information about public transport  
6.2 The website(s) of the geopark and/or local tourism organisations are linked to web-based timetables and transport information held by others  
6.3 Special offers for tourists using public transport, bicycle, or other forms of sustainable transport. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GGN_IV Geotourism Indicator Reference</th>
<th>Section III: Guided tours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>What kind of guided tours have been developed by your management body and/or partners?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section IV: Nature trails infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1 Tours for groups with special interest in geology and geomorphology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 Tours take place regularly during the season</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 Tours for a broad audience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4 Tours for disabled visitors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What else do you use to inform visitors about your area?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1 Easy to read interpretation panels at entrance areas and/or tourist locations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2 There is at least one promoted trail dealing with geological subjects, developed by your team, alongside any developed by partners.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you use the internet and what kind of online service do you provide?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.1 Own website with general information about the area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2 Links to other websites of tourist board, communities, local government which provide a broad range of information on the Geopark’s area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3 Geopark’s management body may be reached by email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.4 Regular electronic newsletter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5 Facility to order publications online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.6 Up-to-date calendar of activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.7 Guidance for visitors on potential excursions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What kind of infrastructure is available for activities such as horse riding, canoeing and cycling?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.1 Network of footpaths, which include the main touristic and scientific points of interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.2 Uniform/standard signposting of paths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.3 Regular checks of infrastructure and immediate repair guaranteed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.4 Special maps and information sheets for hikers, cyclists etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.5 At least one path concerning a special subject (mining, archaeology, architecture – not previously counted in your score under another heading)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.6 Guided cycling / walking tours, etc. provided or actively supported by a partner organisation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many nature trails fit the following characteristics?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family and recreational trails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and sensorial trails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure trails</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.5 WORK PACKAGE 5: TRANSNATIONAL MARKETING

4.2.5.1 EAGR Strategy and communication plan

4.2.5.1.1 Aims and objectives

A Communication Strategy was developed which aimed to:

- Promote the project, its objectives and results at a local, regional and European level by embracing a wide variety of activities covering different types of communication channels to reach its target audience. These included:
  - ICT tools and web-based information sources (e.g. project website)
  - Social media such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, project blog etc.
  - Direct email and e-newsletters
  - Traditional media such as press releases and published articles.
  - Printed promotional materials such as brochures, signage, exhibition displays etc.
- Develop a strong online strategy as a way to reach all types of audience and thereby ensure the widest visibility and impact of the project during its implementation and post project completion.
- Use social media networking and on-line presence to integrate a wide variety of landscapes and communities in the Atlantic Area, promoting shared geological and human stories, while celebrating local diversity.
- Communicate the new model for regional tourism cooperation in the Atlantic Area to all stakeholders.
- Communicate and disseminate the plan for the Route via targeted, integrated and structured marketing tools.
- Ensure project communications adheres to funding guidelines and promotes the positive impact that Atlantic Area Programme funding has had on the development and implementation of project activities.

4.2.5.1.2 Key messages

Key messages identified for relay to project audiences included:

I. What does Geotourism mean for visitors?
   - An authentic and unique experience which offers a greater understanding of the destinations visited, insights into local lives and awareness of how the landscape has impacted and influenced it
   - More choice of and access to local products, places, activities and experiences.

II. What does Geotourism mean for communities?
   - More cooperation, collaboration and networking within the community
   - Increased opportunities for businesses to work together and flourish
   - Reduction of social isolation of local independent operators
   - Improved environment, higher tourism revenue and more resources.
4.2.5.1.3 Audiences

Key audiences for the project were identified as:

- Internal and domestic visitors with a particular focus on those which fall into the “Great Escapers” and “Culturally Curious”. Great escapers being defined as those 30+ years old, including those with young families, who are interested in rural holidays which offer an opportunity for getting back to nature in remote and exciting places. Culturally curious, in comparison, are independent active sightseers (single adults and couples aged 40+) who are looking to visit new places and have experiences related to new landscapes, history and culture.
- Local communities who may be impacted upon by geopark activities through increased awareness of their unique landscapes, increased visitor numbers and economic and social regeneration opportunities which are created.
- National, regional and international bodies and agencies which may enable enhanced networking, marketing, protection and economic advancement of geopark areas.

4.2.5.1.4 Atlantic Geotourism Route Brand

The Communication Strategy identifies a brand story for the promotion of the European Atlantic Geotourism Route. The brand story outlines:

**The European Atlantic Geotourism Route**

A new, awe-inspiring trail of magnificent destinations awaits you right along the epic expanse of the Atlantic frontier. It winds an intriguing transnational path from Ireland and the UK, to France, Portugal and Spain over to the Atlantic Islands of Lanzarote and down to the Azores. It links 12 dramatic landscapes that host vibrant communities, rich local cultures and unforgettable visitor experiences.

The European Atlantic Geotourism Route has been created to support the development of Geotourism in the European Atlantic Area. With funding provided by the EU Interreg Atlantic Area programme and support from the Global Geopark Network, nine European Geoparks along with two aspiring Geoparks and the University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro, Portugal are working together on this transnational economic, cultural and sustainable tourism development project.

**Discover and protect**

The European Atlantic Geotourism Route guides you through diverse territories, countries, habitats, languages and cultures. These stunning destinations are linked together by one powerful mission – to provide the highest quality visitor experiences; helping to power vibrant local economies and cultural activities and, in so doing, protecting these breath-taking and unique natural landscapes.

**An ancient and contemporary story**

Each destination tells a distinctive, dramatic and enthralling chapter of the story of life on the Atlantic frontier. The tale of how, from time’s dawn to present day – natural forces, landscape, people, culture and ways of life continue to interweave to give physical shape, meaning and mystery to these memorable regions. To illuminate and animate these geologically rich and bio-diverse destinations for the curious, careful and discerning visitor.

**It’s waiting for you**

Today, in these wonder-filled places, rare and outstanding sustainable tourism offerings live in harmony with local farmers, craft workers, entrepreneurs, artists and artisan food producers, each strengthening the
other. And now this European Atlantic Geotourism Route is yours to explore, to experience – and to never, ever forget.

### 4.2.5.1.5 Branding

A brand identity as developed for the tourism route which included logos (below), route leaflet, exhibition banners, route promotional video and on-line promotional presence via a project website, blog and social media presence.

![European Atlantic Geotourism Route logos](image)

### 4.2.5.1.6 Communication action plan

A communication plan was developed outlining proposed communication actions to enable engagement with the key stakeholders and national/regional agencies identified. This plan outlined key actions, communication channels/media to be used, allocated responsibility for actions to project partners and outlined the proposed timeframe for delivery.

### 4.2.5.2 EAGR Website

An initial project website was developed to offer information on the project, its partners, key activities being undertaken and links to social media outlets.

[https://geotourismroute.eu/](https://geotourismroute.eu/)
This was followed with the development of a public facing website was developed to increase awareness and participation with the Atlantic Geotourism Route.

Figure 33 Screen shot of the Atlantic Geoparks Project Website

4.2.5.3 EAGR Route Video

The promotional video for the EAGR route is displayed on the European Atlantic Geotourism Route website www.geotourismroute.eu
4.2.5.4 Building a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe

The Cultural Routes programme was launched by the Council of Europe in 1987 with the Declaration of Santiago de Compostela.

The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe are an invitation to travel and to discover the rich and diverse heritage of Europe by bringing people and places together in networks of shared history and heritage. They put into practice the values of the Council of Europe: human rights, cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and mutual exchanges across borders.

Over 30 Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe provide a wealth of leisure and educational activities for all citizens across Europe and beyond and are key resources for responsible tourism and sustainable development. They cover a range of different themes, from architecture and landscape to religious influences, from gastronomy and intangible heritage to the major figures of European art, music and literature.

The certification “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” is a guarantee of excellence. The networks implement innovative activities and projects pertaining to five main priority fields of action: cooperation in research and development; enhancement of memory, history and European heritage; cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans; contemporary cultural and artistic practice; cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development.

The project partners committed to securing certification for the Atlantic Geotourism Route with the understanding that each destination tells a chapter of the story of life on the Atlantic frontier. The Atlantic Area Geoparks network share a common geological history; each territory bringing its piece to the puzzle which tells the geological history of the European Atlantic coast over more than 500 million years. The geoparks also have a common heritage in terms of archaeology (Celtic culture), culture and natural heritage (vegetation) etc.

The expected timetable for Cultural Route certification is as follows:

- December 2019: launch of the public tender resulting in appointment of AloéHOK
- Spring and summer 2020: Application drafting
- 31 July: Proposed submission of the application to the Council of Europe
- October 2020 – April 2021: Application review by the Council of Europe including independent expert review.
- May 2021: Notification letter sent by the EPA Secretariat confirming the results of the application.

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4 (https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/by-theme)
4.2.6 WORK PACKAGE 6: ICT TOOLS

4.2.6.1 Digital interpretation workshop for partners

A workshop for all partners was held at Fforest Fawr Geopark in March 2020 and led by the North Pennines AONB Partnership. The aim of this workshop was to inform and consult partners about the process of developing the digital interpretation app and required information elements.

This included discussion of the target audience for digital interpretation, the structure of the app, how content will be managed and updated and the types of content that might be used.

4.2.6.2 Mobile application for interpretation via interactive ICT tool

The project aimed to create digital tools and information sources to enrich the visitor experience. These were to include:

- Geo-audio – GPS triggered guides to explore, enjoy and understand geo-itineraries along the route
- Geo-cAPPture – ICT tool which interprets geosites throughout the route and enables a system of virtual collecting
- Geo-site virtual exploration – interpretative tool for detailed virtual exploration of key geosites across the route
- Geo-itineraries – a series of geo-itineraries with a common platform and individual expression, encouraging exploration of each Geopark and of the route as a whole

The development of ICT tools has been encapsulated in the European Atlantic Geotourism Route App. External consultants GVAM (Guías Virtuales Accessibles para Museos) were appointed to build the digital app for the project. It was agreed that the app was to be aimed at the general visitor who has little prior knowledge of geology and is most likely visiting the host geopark for leisure and culture activities rather than a specific interest in geology. It was identified that these visitors are most likely motivated by being outdoors in the natural landscape, wanting to increase health and wellbeing and wanting to participate in an activity that is both entertaining and educational. The audience for the app was defined in three segments:

1. Family groups – adults with children 8-14 years old
2. Young travellers – couples and friendship groups (18-25 years old)
3. Mature active adults – couples and friendship groups (aged 50+)
The app developed to meet these potential markets offers the following functionality for users:

- Introductory splash screen displaying project and Atlantic Area logos
- Home screen displaying a photograph of one of the participating geoparks, logos and the opportunity to “Explore”
- List of geotourism areas with the option to choose the one of interest
- Choice of language
- List of tours available for the respective geopark
- Content information for the tour selected which offer:
  - narratives about points of interest,
  - images,
  - video content,
  - 360° multimedia content,
  - maps of points of interest,
  - AR Camera offering different icons viewable from the camera and
  - game options to offer a fun element and challenge the user via quiz functionality which allows the user to collect 3D objects and associated points.
The flow of functionality features is shown in the process chart below:

Launch of the app is planned for September 2020 with smart phone versions planned for publishing in October 2020.
4.2.7 WORK PACKAGE 7: TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

4.2.7.1 Community engagement and business interaction

Project targets for this output required 24 actions to be delivered across the partnership with 720 participants engaged.

- Arouca UNESCO Global Geopark offered a free seminar in November 2019 to the community as part of the 2nd edition of XXXIX CAP – Geosciences Teacher Refresher Course on the geosites route.
- Azores UNESCO Global Geopark celebrated Children’s Day with activity “Geo-tour through the Atlantic” related to the European Atlantic Geotourism Route in 2018. In 2019 the Geopark promoted a workshop on “Geotourism in the Atlantic Area” in São Miguel island for 25 participants including taught sessions and field trips to geosites, natural and cultural points of interest.
- Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark
  - Delivered a number of business information session to a local tourism business network
  - Targeted, engaged and trained a group of local artists on how Geoparks are developing and promoting geotourism
  - Delivered geotourism awareness training to local primary and second level schools
  - Trained the staff at the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience on Geoparks through their ‘Ask me about the Geopark’ programme
- Copper Coast Geopark delivered Geopark Ambassador training program for tourism businesses working with the Geopark.
- Fforest Fawr delivered a tourism conference for local tourism businesses.
- Lanzarote and Chinijo Islands Geopark delivered a training course about geoparks for workers in tourism centres across the Geopark.
- Marble Arch Caves UNESCO Global Geopark:
  - Delivered Community Familiarisation trips in 2018 for 30 participants and in 2019 30 participants from the business community were also hosted entitled “Know Your Geopark”
  - Marble Arch Caves UNESCO Global Geopark undertook the “Big Dig” as part of National Heritage Week to allow school children to experience the archaeological culture of the Geopark with hands on experience.
- North Pennines AONB UNESCO Global Geopark
  - Delivered six 4-hour training workshops for businesses between January and March 2019 at various locations around the Geopark with 60 individuals (most attending multiple workshops) representing 28 different businesses.
  - Ran hands-on geology activities and geopark promotion at various venues outside the geopark – so far 9 days at 6 different venues/events with a total of over 2000 engaged.
Delivered assemblies and workshops in 20 primary schools in and around the Geopark involving 1120 children.

- PNR Armorique delivered community/business engagement activity in April 2018 (30 participants) and November 2018 (60 participants) to present the project and inform participants about its activities. In addition, a training session was held in 2019 on the geology of the Plougastel-Daoulas district with the staff and volunteers of the Heritage Museum (Geopark Visitor Center).

### 4.2.7.2 Training actions and materials

The project proposed to produce a training guide. The guide is aimed at trainers working directly and indirectly with, or within, geoparks, environmental educators, aspiring geoparks and those running geotourism related activities and unsure about the kind of educational activities delivered by Geoparks.

Examples of Training Activity undertaken:

- **Arouca Geopark** delivered a 25 hour training course for Geosciences teachers in September – November 2019 in partnership with the Portuguese Association of Geologists (Training Centre) reaching 110 participants. This training course integrated the Seminar “From geological resources to heritage and educational resources” open to the general public, allowing the dissemination of the EAGR to a wider public.

- **The Azores Geopark** developed a new education programmes on geoconservation, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction.

  - Organised as part of the regional phase of the “Olimpíadas da Geologia/Geology Portuguese Olympiads 2019”, in the Azores Autonomous Region, involving 19 students from 5 schools and from 4 islands of the archipelago. The Geopark financed and supported the participation of the Azorean student who was selected to the National phase.

  - The Geopark cooperated with the EGN “GeoHazards” Working Group, with 2 public activities in October 2019

  - Trained teachers through short courses on geosites and geodiversity. In school classes undertook 334 activities in Geopark educational programmes with 6,992 students and teachers.

  - Contributions were also made to “SIARAM”, an Azores Government official web portal with educational and tourism contents.

- **Basque Coast Geopark** delivered a skills enhancement training course intended for guides that were already working or people interested in working as a guide in the Geopark.

- **Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark** gave post-primary students the opportunity to work with a local artist and sculptor on a piece of art exploring the concept of geotourism which is now located in the school’s wellness garden.
• Copper Coast UNESCO Global Geopark collaboration with Waterford Childcare Committee developed a geology and earth science early years education program including education games about coastal erosion, experiments and field trips. In 2019 as part of Natural Heritage Week the Geopark a public workshop was held on how to make a geological map and promotion of geoparks.

• Fforest Fawr offered two days free training to tourism businesses and local people awarding a Geopark Ambassador Certificate to attendees. There are over 1000 tourism businesses active in the area. Of these the most active are members of Brecon Beacons Tourism (c300) or South Wales Outdoor Activity Providers group (c100). The Geopark management team have established close links with both groups, including regular training events. Training has enabled individual business to incorporate elements of ‘Geopark stories’ into their own offer, whichever sector they are in. Training for guided walk leaders, gorge-walking group leaders and others has been key due to their direct interface with visitors and their potential to develop visitor’s understanding of, appreciation for and valuing of the Geopark’s natural and cultural assets.

• Northern Pennines AONB UNESCO Global Geopark ran a volunteer training course for 15 volunteers in March 2019 on assisting with events, group leadership and geopark promotion.

• University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro held the 3rd International Summer University on “Geoparks, Sustainable Regional Development and Healthy Lifestyles” in July 2019 attracting 42 people from 14 countries.

• The Valleys of Cantabria aspiring geopark delivered Employment Training "Promotion of natural areas and geotourism". The training was structured in two phases during which participants received training based on the Certificate of Professionalism of the “Guide to Low and Medium Mountain Itineraries (level 2), as well as various complementary training and basic and advanced caving courses. The training was delivered between July-December 2018 for 15 students and November 2019 - October 2020 for 15 students. Also, organised the regional phase of the “Olimpiadas de Geologia, 2019 and 2020”.

4.2.7.3 Technical and scientific publications produced

To date 1 scientific paper has been published, however additional papers are due for publishing over the summer 2020. The published paper is entitled “An Emerging Paradigm for the UNESCO Global Geoparks: The Ecosystem’s Health Provision” was published in the Journal Geosciences in 2018.

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5 Geosciences 2018, 8, 100; doi:10.3390/geosciences8030100 www.mdpi.com/journal/geosciences
Section 5

Need and Demand for Future Project Activity
5.1 CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTIVITY

The European Atlantic Geotourism Route project successfully brought an international partnership together for the purposes of establishing and sharing best practice in geopark management, developing international promotion of geoparks for sustainable tourism, delivering activities to engage and offer training to local communities in geotourism and to facilitate the development of ICT

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- UNESCO focus areas encourage conservation of natural and cultural heritage, development of education programmes to increase awareness and effective management based on sound science and an aspiration for sustainable development.
- National and regional strategies emphasise the need to ensure the development of sustainable tourism in special landscapes where nature conservation and protection is prioritised and education and awareness raising activities are undertaken to inform and involve both local communities and visitors.
- Participating geoparks are facing pressures from intensive use of the landscape for economic activities (including tourism, agriculture, extractive industries), weather patterns and climate change and a lack of co-ordination in management policies, funding opportunities and project activities.
- Project participants demonstrated the value in the projects activities in increasing understanding and awareness of the value of geoparks to the wellbeing of their areas and called for a continuation of conservation activities, interpretation and promotion, development and promotion of the cultural aspects of local communities and development of local tourism and business infrastructure.
- Visitor numbers had stayed stable or increased between 2017 and 2019, however, the impact of the Covid-pandemic has prevented the realisation of visitor numbers targets and will require additional support to be offered to local communities to ensure the tourism sector can recover.
tools to enable wider understanding and enjoyment of geoparks. The project partnership was successful in delivering against each of these objectives.

As the project comes to a conclusion however, the question which needs to be considered is whether there is a need for ongoing project activity and, if so, what type and extent of activities should be planned.

In order to answer those questions, it is best to consider the need for additional activity in respect to each of the identified project work packages, namely:

1. Project Management – whether there is a need and benefit for continued formal partnership working between project partners on an ongoing basis.

2. Project Communication – whether there is a need and benefit in continuing to raise the profile of the joint working arrangements and the activities being undertaken by the project partnership.

3. Capitalisation and events – whether there is a need and benefit in delivering local capitalisation events to generate interest and awareness within local communities and promoting the European Atlantic Geotourism Route at non-project specific events.

4. Geo-site management - Whether there is a need to further develop the Management Toolkit, study visits and associated support structures for aspiring geoparks and whether there is support and demand via the expressed strategic priorities and policy objectives of key government and regional agencies for additional project activity and enhanced collaboration in effective geopark management.

5. Transnational marketing and promotion - whether the project has been successful in achieving an increase in visitors as a result of the promotional activities undertaken and on-line marketing tools developed and whether there is a need to further develop visitor numbers, or specific visitor sector in the future.

6. ICT Tools – whether there is a need to maintain and further develop the ICT tools developed.

7. Training and Capacity Building - Whether project participants found the education and training sessions useful in gaining an increased understanding of geoparks, their importance and their sustainable use and whether there is a need and demand for further work in this area.

5.2 EVIDENCE BASE OF SUCCESSES AND LIMITATIONS OF EXISTING ACTIVITIES

5.2.1 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND UNESCO FOCUS AREAS

When considering the need for additional project activity based on strategic and policy requirements it is important to consider both national/regional policy objectives as well as the objectives set out by UNESCO for their Global Geoparks Programme.
5.2.1.1 UNESCO Focus Areas for Global Geoparks

UNESCO identify that there are four fundamental features of a UNESCO approved Global Geopark. They have geological heritage of international value, they are managed by a body with the legal remit to address the management needs of the entire area, they are visible both at a national but also international level and they cooperate not only at local level but also on a regional and international level ensuring collaboration and enhanced understanding.

The Top 10 focus areas for UNESCO Global Geoparks are:

1) Natural Resources - UNESCO Global Geoparks inform people about the sustainable use and need for natural resources, whether they are mined, quarried or harnessed from the surrounding environment, while at the same time promoting respect for the environment and the integrity of the landscape.

2) Geological Hazards - Many UNESCO Global Geoparks promote awareness of geological hazards, including volcanoes, earthquakes and tsunamis, and many help prepare disaster mitigation strategies among local communities.

3) Climate Change - UNESCO Global Geoparks hold records of past climate change and are educators on current climate change as well as adopting a best practise approach to utilising renewable energy and employing the best standards of “green tourism.”

4) Education - It is a pre-requisite that all UNESCO Global Geoparks develop and operate educational activities for all ages to spread awareness of our geological heritage and its links to other aspects of our natural, cultural and intangible heritages.

5) Science - UNESCO Global Geoparks are encouraged to work with academic institutions to engage in active scientific research in the Earth Sciences, and other disciplines as appropriate, to advance our knowledge about the Earth and its processes.

6) Culture - UNESCO Global Geoparks are fundamentally about people and about exploring and celebrating the links between our communities, our practices and the Earth.

7) Women - UNESCO Global Geoparks have a strong emphasize on empowering women, whether through focussed education programmes, or through the development of women’s cooperatives.

8) Sustainable Development - Even if an area has outstanding, world-famous geological heritage of outstanding universal value it cannot be a UNESCO Global Geopark unless the area also has a plan for the sustainable development of the people who live there.

9) Local and indigenous knowledge - UNESCO Global Geoparks actively involve local and indigenous peoples, preserving and celebrating their culture.

10) Geoconservation - UNESCO Global Geoparks are areas that use the concept of sustainability, value the heritage of Mother Earth and recognize the need to protect it.

The progression of collaborative project activity which seeks to ensure: effective management of geoparks; sustainable development including the use of geoparks for tourism activities; increased visibility of geoparks and their natural cultural and built heritage; education and training of local
communities, businesses and visitors; collaboration and sharing of best practice on an international basis; are aspirations supported by these focus areas.

### 5.2.1.2 National/Regional Strategic Priorities

As outlined in Section 3 review of the strategic and policy context in each of the partner countries and associated regions outlines a range of proactive policy objectives and aspirations for the sustainable development of nature conservation and tourism development, namely:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature Conservation and Protection</th>
<th>Tourism development and economic regeneration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The need to maintain, conserve and restore the natural and built heritage of communities in order to promote sustainable tourism.</td>
<td>• Ensuring the sustainable use of the landscape is essential to directly and indirectly sustain local communities, create employment and deliver social benefits in rural communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The need to increase monitoring of heritage assets to enable an evaluation of impacts and ensure long term conservation.</td>
<td>• The need to build on the existing co-operation between the public and private sectors to ensure a holistic and co-ordinated approach to tourism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The need to establish clear criteria for management, protection and conservation of geological heritage which can subsequently be used to guide tourism activities within the area.</td>
<td>• Enhanced geotourism product development and associated branding are priorities for developing effective tourism markets and expanding the tourist season. This should include the promotion of relevant holiday types, iconic products and distinctive destination brands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provision of ranger services are an important aspect of visitor management and geodiversity conservation.</td>
<td>• Effective on-line information sources are key to the development of tourism activity and ensuring that visitors understand the stories which are hidden within the landscape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Projects should encourage a sense of community and place and which emphasise local distinctiveness, culture and history all of which have been shaped by the landscape.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education and awareness</th>
<th>Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The need to increase understanding and awareness of natural heritage, built heritage, cultural heritage and special landscapes to increase public excitement about all aspects of heritage and their appeal as tourism offerings.</td>
<td>• Research is essential to promote the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, fight against desertification, stop and reverse the land degradation and curb the loss of biological diversity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There is a need to enhance information and signage to enable visitors to understand the</td>
<td>• Opportunities exist and should be explored to develop enhanced links with education bodies with an earth sciences interest.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Education and training for the conservation and sustainable use of geodiversity and geological heritage are essential elements to long-term sustainability.

Skills development within the local community (community organisations, businesses and voluntary groups) are a prior to enable local people to take a proactive role in heritage management.

These strategic priorities would therefore support the continuation of project activities in areas related to:

- Conservation of natural, geological and built heritage features.
- Enhanced monitoring of geopark biodiversity, geo-site status and built heritage features
- Implementation of the geo-tourism monitoring system
- On-site management of visitors
- Development of activity and education programmes which link culture, history and landscape
- Geotourism product development and associated branding/interpretation
- Community and business engagement in sustainable tourism development with associated skills development programmes
- Earth sciences research programmes to enable the development of effective conservation practices.

### 5.2.2 GEOPARK MANAGEMENT/ SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

The geoparks within the Atlantic Area face ongoing pressures which affect their potential for long-term protection and sustainable development. While the nature and extent of pressures vary according to geopark location, local demographics, economic activities, weather patterns and visitor numbers, the type of pressures faced by geoparks demonstrates similar issues across the region.

Key pressures include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature/Geological Conservation</th>
<th>Tourism Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Intense use of the landscape for agricultural purposes, puts some pressures and threats related to changes in the soil, soil erosion and impacts on water quality. Impacts of changes in</td>
<td>While tourism is an essential component of the economic vitality of geoparks, the impacts of tourism can have negative consequences and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Agricultural policy and funding can have a resulting impact on landscape features and biodiversity.

- Deteriorating water quality in beaches as a result of human activity.
- Coastal erosion threatening the longevity of geosites and loss of geological heritage.
- Lack of effective land use planning taking into account the special nature of the landscape and the natural, built and cultural heritage it contains, resulting in inappropriate development and potential negative impacts on geosites.
- Geosites in private ownership can lack sufficient state protection to prevent damage as a result of inappropriate land use.
- Illegal dumping of waste in rural areas and along the coastline causing pollution and potential health and safety issues for visitors.
- Mineral and aggregate extraction causing a negative impact on geosites and landscape quality.

Place pressure on valuable landscapes and their heritage features, for example:

- Over-use, or mis-use, of sites by visitors, including walkers, cyclists, rock climbers, canoeists, vehicle users etc. with resulting degradation of landscape and its features e.g. erosion of fragile soils and rock faces and damage to cave features such as stalactites and stalagmites.
- Collecting activity by visitors can result in geological heritage being removed from the landscape e.g. fossil and shell collection.
- Concentration of visitor numbers within a short tourism season which concentrates visitor numbers at key sites.
- Tourism activity is often characterised by a high volume of day trip activities with associated impacts due to traffic volumes and fails to deliver positive economic impacts due to corresponding lower levels of visitor spend.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geopark Management</th>
<th>Education and Awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Fragmented monitoring and collection of tourism data, which leads to difficulties in understanding tourism patterns, pressures on the landscape and priorities for enhanced geosite/visitor management.</td>
<td>• A lack of understanding of the value of geoparks status can lead to local communities and businesses perceiving geoparks branding will result in restriction of their activities, rather than offering opportunities for development and growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Failure to monitor geosite condition can lead to small scale losses in the quality of assets.</td>
<td>• Accidental damage to key geosites and natural heritage locations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Failure to integrate priorities and policies between agencies and sectors which has a negative impact on landscape-scale management through failure to agree shared vision for the area and its features.</td>
<td>• Lack of research into the value of specific geosites and/or natural heritage features (e.g. landscapes, marine/fresh water biodiversity, peat bogs, ancient forests) results in poor understanding of the features and their ecosystems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Haphazard development of heritage projects based on e.g. funding availability, land access, tourism aspirations and resulting lack in co-ordination and complementarity of the projects developed.
• Low levels of interpretation and understanding in local communities and businesses detracts from the potential to enrich the visitor experience and ensure long-term protection of assets.

5.2.3 PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

On-line survey was used to obtain feedback from project participants and communities on the impact of the project and aspirations/need for future activities. The survey was made available between May and June 2020 and captured a total of 123 replies from the 5 partner countries.

The balance of responses were captured as follows:

- Portugal - 38 responses
- Basque Region - 19 responses
- Spain - 11 responses
- UK and Ireland – 55 responses
- France – no responses

The survey was offered in each local language and collected information against 7 key questions. The questions presented and corresponding response patterns were as follows:

1. Are you responding as – private individual, business, community group representative, or other?

The majority of respondents were either responding as private individuals or as representatives of the businesses community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARE YOU RESPONDING AS - (% OF TOTAL RESPONSES)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community group representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Which area are you located in – Azores, France, Ireland, Lanzarote and Chinijo Islands, Northern Ireland, Portugal, Spain, or the United Kingdom?

![Bar chart showing the percentage of respondents from each location.](chart1)

3. How have you been involved with the project?
   a. Participated in business training activities
   b. Participated in community activities (e.g. family activity day, arts, crafts, or natural heritage activities)
   c. Attended walks and talks on geodiversity/natural heritage
   d. Attended an open day/exhibition/talk about the project
   e. Other

The majority of respondents had either participated in business training activities, or attended walks/talks on geodiversity and natural heritage.

![Pie chart showing the percentage of respondents involved in each activity.](chart2)
4. Before involvement with the project how important did you feel geoparks, or achieving geopark status, are to the wellbeing of the area? – Extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not so important, or not at all important.

Prior to involvement with the project the majority of respondents (39.3%) felt that geoparks were very important to the wellbeing of the area, with 30.3% considering geopark status to be extremely important.

5. Since your involvement with the project how important did you feel geoparks, or achieving geopark status, are to the wellbeing of the area? – Extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not so important, or not at all important.

After involvement with the project the perception of the importance of geopark status had changed. An increased percentage of respondents considered that it was extremely important (59.3% - an increase of 29%). Whereas the percentage of people who believed that it was somewhat important or not so important had decreased (from a total of 27.8% to a total of 7.3%).
The project therefore had a positive impact on changing the perspectives of participants on the value of geoparks and the need for enhanced conservation and protection of landscapes and their heritage features.

6. What future activities would you like to see prioritised in your area?
   a. Local business / tourism infrastructure development
   b. Conservation of natural features (geology, biodiversity, landscape quality)
   c. Interpretation and promotion of the area’s unique features
   d. Continued international co-operation to further develop the Atlantic Area Geoparks Route brand and increase international visitor numbers
   e. Development and celebration of the culture, crafts, music, and food traditions of local communities
   f. Community activities
   g. Other

The top four priorities identified by respondents were:

1) Conservation of natural features (geology, biodiversity and landscape quality)
2) Interpretation and promotion of the area’s unique features
3) Development and celebration of the culture, crafts, music and food traditions of local communities
4) Local business/tourism infrastructure development.
Respondents therefore prioritise the protection of the natural environment/cultural heritage of geopark areas and additional interpretation to ensure that visitors and local communities can understand its value.

7. Please offer any additional comments you may have on the project and its future activities.

A total of 42 comments were received in response to this question. A word cloud with the most commonly used words in those responses is outlined below:
Comments were overwhelmingly positive and included:

- *The project has a great potential to ease tourism back in this area and further afield.*
- *A most worthwhile project which not only enhances the local area, but which also promotes the tourist industry*
- *The Geopark concept is a wonderful idea. The Atlantic geoparks must continue to work together.*
- *Good to add education, awareness and promotion of geological aspects of the area to existing efforts on landscape and conservation. Hopefully this can be continued and built upon in due course.*
- *Geoparks need greater exposure to the public. The role of local businesses in promoting the concept and education of the visiting public is crucial.*
- *I believe continuation of this project is important for the local economy and environmental sustainability. Continued funding should be seen as an investment in the future.*
- *It has been of benefit to businesses, individuals both local and visitors and created an environment in which geodiversity has come to the front of thinking at all levels.*

5.2.4 OPERATIONAL FEASIBILITY OF PROJECT ACTIVITY IN CONJUNCTION WITH EXISTING BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

The project has sought to complement and add value to the promotion and development of existing attractions within the geoparks.

Feedback via the on-line participant survey has been analysed to determine the perceptions of the business sector specifically, in relation to the value of the project and perceived priorities for future activity.

Of the 45 business representatives who responded to the survey over half of these participated in business training activities, with an additional 33 having participated in organised walks and talks about geodiversity and natural heritage.
Of those business participants who responded to the survey, there was a significant increase in the perceived value of geopark status following project engagement, as outlined below:
Business representatives therefore considered that the project has value and their interest in the concept and potential of geopark status to deliver economic benefits to the area increased as a result of project activity.

When asked what future activities should be prioritised within their area, business respondents supported the delivery of a range of activity types. They prioritised the following top three activities:

1) Conservation of natural features (geology, biodiversity, landscape quality)
2) Local business / tourism infrastructure development
3) Interpretation and promotion of the area’s unique features

The fourth identified priority was continued transnational co-operation to further develop the EAGR brand as illustrated below.

This feedback demonstrates that the project is not perceived to displace local economic activity, but instead offers an opportunity for local businesses to create offerings around the concept of natural geological heritage and develop tourism offerings of interest internationally.
5.2.5 COMPLEMENTARITY / DISPLACEMENT WITH EXISTING PROJECTS

Review of the projects activities by each project partner has highlighted that the project has offered an opportunity for transnational working for the purposes of collaboration in geopark management, sustainable tourism development and promotion.

While support networks are available through UNESCO designation, these networks offer opportunities for sharing of best practice, as opposed to the development of practical tools for geopark management and promotion, or the implementation of activities and events to engage visitors and local communities. The project has therefore offered the required resource to enable partners to work together to develop collaborative tools to raise the profile and accessibility of the geoparks as a destination of choice at international level, as well as raising awareness of the value of geoparks in local communities.

While other local initiatives exist to promote tourism at a local level the project has afforded a real opportunity to raise the profile of the partnering Atlantic Area Geoparks at a transnational scale and place a higher priority for the inclusion of geoparks as a distinct tourism brand at national level.

The project has been complementary to other EU funded initiatives including:

- **Project Alice (Atlantic Area funded)** – which aims to develop an integrated approach considering the relationships between human activities (social and economic aspects), ecosystem service provisioning and coastal and terrestrial biodiversity. The main goal is to promote sustainable investments in Blue-Green Infrastructure Networks (BGINs) through identification of the benefits of Ecosystem Services delivered at the terrestrial-aquatic and land-sea interface in the Atlantic Region. ([https://project-alice.com/](https://project-alice.com/))

- **AtlanticNetSky (Atlantic Area funded)** – which aims to develop and consolidate a network of natural areas in the Atlantic Area linked to the Astrotourism. Thanks to the use of innovative tools, the project will create distinctive image and brand that will attract a more diverse range of new visitors and, at the same time, will enhance the economic, social and environmental sustainability. ([http://atlanticnetsky.org/](http://atlanticnetsky.org/))

- **AtlanticOnBike (Atlantic Area funded)** - which aims at achieving positive economic outcomes thanks to a transnational cycle tourism strategy based on the natural and cultural assets of the EuroVelo1, one of the fifteen long distance European cycle routes, the Atlantic Route. ([https://atlanticonbike.ie/en/](https://atlanticonbike.ie/en/))

- **Geoparks of Europe (Erasmus+)** - carried out by students and teachers from Poland, Spain, France, Bulgaria, Hungary, Cyprus. It is an interdisciplinary project combining Biology, Geology, Geography, Environmental Science, Language, Arts enabling students and teachers to develop skills and knowledge in geology.

- **Drifting Apart (Northern Periphery and Arctic funded)** – which aims to unearth and strengthen understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the fascinating and interconnected geological heritage of the Northern Periphery and Arctic region, and its many links to natural, built and cultural heritage. The project supports the development of new and aspiring Global Geoparks, the promotion of innovative products and services for social and economic prosperity and builds a strong network of geoheritage destinations in the Northern Periphery and Arctic.
Region. This project brings together partners from Northern Ireland, Scotland, Norway, Iceland, Canada and Russia. (http://driftingapart.ccg.ht.org/)

- Shape (Sustainable Heritage Areas: Partnerships for Ecotourism) (Northern Periphery and Arctic funded) - SHAPE focuses on a transnational set of sustainable heritage areas (SHAs) with diverse experiences of sustainability and regional cooperation involving stakeholders in heritage management, tourism, and governance. In these SHAs, the partners work with local stakeholders, their organizations, and the institutions which support them, and incorporate their activities into regional strategies for sustainable development. (http://shape.interreg-npa.eu/)

5.2.6 IMPACT OF THE PROJECT ON VISITOR NUMBERS

Given the rural nature of the geoparks and the variety of wide open spaces which represent key tourism assets, total visitor numbers to geoparks are unknown due to a lack of verified visitor data. Visitor number trends therefore need to be reviewed on the basis of visitors to specific locations.

Information provided by participating geoparks indicate largely stable and often increasing annual visitor numbers. For example:

- Basque Coast Geopark has experienced an increase in visitor numbers between 2017 and 2019 at specific locations/activities. For example:
  - Guided tour program visitors: 2017- 18,064 people; 2018 – 19,168 people; 2019 – 18,063 people

Of those visitors to the geopark the percentage if international visitors has also been seen to be increasing, for example, guided tours indicate that the percentage of international visitors has increased from 11.7% to 12.8% between 2017 and 2019, this trend is confirmed by tourist offices which have seen an increase from 30.3% to 33.7% in the same period.

- Copper Coast Geopark visitor centre counted around 10k visitors between May and September in 2015. Statistics for the area in the year 2018 to this indicated approximately 30k visitors during the same time period. Anecdotal evidence also shows an increase in visitors to the geopark during the lifespan of the project.

- Fforest Fawr Geopark was visited by approximately 2.97M visitors in 2017, representing a growth of 3.5% on the previous year. Tourism is considered a critical part of the local economy, providing 2255 jobs in the geopark, some 20% of employment in the area.

- Lanzarote and the Chinijo Island have compiled visitor statistics for their key geosites which illustrate a largely stable visitor profile between 2017 and 2019: 2017 – 2,871,547; 2018 – 3,004,611; 2019 – 2,908,337.
• North Pennines AONB and UNESCO Global Geopark also experienced an upward trend in visitors between 2017 and 2019 as evidenced by Bowlees Visitor Centre data which indicates approximate numbers for 2017-2019 were: 2017 – 46,459; 2018 – 49,408; 2019 – 52,155, an increase of approximately 10% over the 2 year period.

The project had aimed to make a significant positive impact on visitor numbers with a target of increasing visitors by 10,000 during the lifespan of the project.

Of those increased visitor numbers identified, it is not possible to directly attribute them solely to project activities and therefore it is unclear what impact the project has had in this regard.

It should be noted that the internationally visible tourism information sources created by the project, namely the promotional website, video and Atlantic Geoparks App only became live at the end of the project lifespan in September/October of 2020. Due to the impact of the corona virus pandemic at that time all visits to the participating geoparks were prohibited and therefore the positive impact of these promotional tools cannot be determined.

What is clear however, is that the participating geoparks depend heavily on tourism as a source of economic activity for local communities and there will be an increased need to stimulate interest in the geoparks, and their potential as a destination of choice, post pandemic.
6 POTENTIAL ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF FUTURE PROJECT ACTIVITY

Tourism offers significant positive economic impacts for the geoparks within the European Atlantic Geotourism Route and therefore continuation of project activity which seeks to increase geopark appeal for international visitors should be economically beneficial. But to what extent?

6.1 ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TOURISM FOR FERMANAGH AND OMAGH DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA

Using the Marble Arch Caves UNESCO Global Geopark as an example, key tourism statistics can be used to explore the potential economic impact of additional tourist numbers.

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) reports⁶ that in 2018 the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area hosted a total of 403,904 overnight trips, with a total of 1,064,561 overnight stays spent. The value of these overnight trips is stated as £72,894,905 to the local economy.

This equates to an average spend of £68.47 per night.

Of the total number of overnight trips hosted in the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area, 56% of those were visiting for leisure/holiday purposes.

NISRA 2018 statistics also highlight that the main activities undertaken by external (non-domestic) overnight visitors were:

- 12% walking/hiking
- 3% mountain biking
- 3% other land-based activities

In comparison the attraction of the natural environment was higher for domestic overnight visitors with 36% hiking/walking stating that they took part in walking/hiking.

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In the 2018 visitor attraction survey – country parks, forests and parks accounted for 42% of all visitors.

The natural environment and the activity opportunities afforded by the geopark are therefore very valuable to the local economy. Of those attractions which measure visitor numbers within the geopark, within the Northern Ireland portion of the geopark, the number of visits hosted in 2018 were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of visits 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marble Arch Caves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quilcagh Mountain Board Walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florencecourt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lough Navar Drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ely Lodge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle Caldwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle Archdale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quilcagh Mountain Summit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lough Navar Lakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magho Viewpoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devenish Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Dog Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures (NISRA) illustrate that the tourism activities within the District accounted for 3,841 jobs in 2017, an increase from 3,524 in 2015.

\[7\] NISRA 2018 - Table 9 Visitor attractions and their number of visitors by Local Government District 2013-2018
6.2 COMPARABILITY OF TOURISM INDICATORS FOR REST OF IRELAND

According to figures compiled by Fáilte Ireland the economic impacts of tourism in Ireland are comparable to the positive economic impacts experienced in Northern Ireland.

The average spend, per person, per day in 2018 was

Overseas tourists €72

&

Domestic overnight trips €71

Figures from Fáilte Ireland also indicate that every €1m of tourist expenditure helps to support 27 tourism jobs, or 1,000 additional overseas tourists support 20 jobs in the tourism industry. In addition, for every 1€ spent on tourism (domestic and overseas) 23c is generated in tax.

When surveyed on the importance of destination issues international visitors were asked – what factors are important when considering Ireland as a destination for their holiday? The following issues were highlighted as being of major importance in choosing Ireland as the destination of choice:

- 93% of overseas visitors surveyed reported beautiful scenery
- 88% good range of natural attractions
- 86% natural unspoilt environment
- 85% interesting history and culture.

For domestic holiday makers the natural environment also plays a huge part in the type of activities undertaken and therefore the economic impacts of domestic tourism activity. Of the activities undertaken

26% engaged in hiking/walking

21% visited national parks

20% participated in water sports

6.3 POTENTIAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ADDITIONAL VISITORS TO GEOPARKS IN THE EUROPEAN ATLANTIC GEOTOURISM ROUTE

The project originally had a target of increasing the number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions by 10,000 across the project area. This target of 10,000 visits was distributed across 11 geoparks within the area.

If the target was applied to overnight trips, i.e. an additional 10,000 overnight trips across the project area this would equate to an additional 909 visits per geopark.

The average duration of an overnight trip is identified by NISRA (Northern Ireland Research and Statistics Agency) as being between 2 and 4 nights duration.

Taking the lower of these figures (2 nights duration) would mean that an additional 10,000 overnight visits would deliver:

€720,000 per annum in revenue achieved from an additional 10,000 overnight trips through increased visitor spend (@ average of €72 euro spend per day).

Over a two and a half year lifespan (the equivalent of the project duration) an additional 10,000 overnight visits would generate tourism spend of €1.8 million within the local economies of the project partners. This would support an equivalent of 19 jobs per annum (as per Fáilte Ireland figures).

The appraiser considers that these figures are conservative when considered against known tourism statistics for the partner areas. For example:

A 10% increase in overnight visitors to the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Area (home to the Marble Arch UNESCO Global Geopark) would account for an additional 40,000 overnight trips. This increase would have the potential to generate an additional €2.88 million for the local economy.

In comparison Fforest Fawr has seen a growth in visitor number by 3.5% to 2.97 million visitors in 2017. A similar rise as a result of increased international promotion of the Geopark through the Atlantic Geotourism Route would account for approximately 100k additional visitors per annum, which (based on a two night trip) would realise €7.2 million of spend for the local economy.

The international promotion of the geoparks as a destination of choice therefore has the potential to make a significant contribution to their local economies and would directly appeal to a significant proportion of visitors who choose their destination and its associated activity offering, based on their ability to engage in outdoor activities in landscapes of high scenic value.
Section 7

Sustaining Project Activity
7 SUSTAINING ACTIVITY

7.1.1 PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

During project development and implementation Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro (UTAD) accepted responsibility to act as lead partner and thereby took responsibility for co-ordinating partner communication/engagement and overall project delivery in line with agreed indicators and budgets. While EU Atlantic Area funding may have concluded, it will be necessary for an organisation within the partnership (potentially UTAD, if agreeable) to continue to act in a co-ordination role to ensure the effective use and continued development of project tools and communication media.

7.1.2 COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING OF THE EAGR BRAND

The European Atlantic Geotourism Route brand has been effectively established during project implementation through:

- Development of the EAGR logo
- Creation of the EAGR website
- Creation of promotional videos
- Development of the project’s social media presence
- Development of the Geotourism digital app for visitors
- Development of the Geoparks Management toolkit.

It is recognised however, that the development of the public facing media presence and branding were completed towards project closure and insufficient time has been available to ensure dissemination and promotion to local communities, regional/national tourism bodies and visitors.

It is therefore recommended that future communication and interpretation strategies should seek to increase brand awareness and utilisation of the route brand and on-line tools for engagement. Appropriate mechanisms for increasing awareness of the brand are outlined within the attached action plan.

7.1.3 GEO-SITE MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION

Each partner geopark and aspiring geopark has identified management and conservation priorities and associated action plans for their locality. The development of the Geopark Management Toolkit and the study visits undertaken during project implementation has afforded partners the opportunity to learn from the experience of others within the field and to establish models of best practice.

The opportunity now exists for localised management plans to be updated and further refined as a result of shared learning, thereby maximising the positive impacts for the conservation of geo-heritage and sustainable management of the protected landscapes which encompass them.
7.1.4 COMMUNITY LINKS / ENGAGEMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

During project implementation project partners identified and delivered project activity for community stakeholders and interested parties in the following ways:

- Links with complementary projects and regional networks
- Development of a series of local events to engage communities, including: family activity days, walking tours, community talks, children’s activities (such as rock detectives), artist in residence events themed around geo-tourism, craft workshops, geopark open days and stands at tourism events.
- Presentation of the project and its benefit at external events, such as: food and drink festivals, international tourism fairs, tourism conferences, handicraft fairs, village fairs and international geoparks conferences.
- Delivery of community engagement and business training activities developed to increase understanding and awareness of geoparks and the need to conserve their unique features.
- Development of training programmes and associated guides for local teachers and students on the importance of geoparks and threats which can compromise their integrity if not appropriately managed.

These activities, in conjunction with the education and promotional tools developed, are deemed to represent a comprehensive package of measures to engage the wider community and key stakeholders. It is clear however, that individual partners have explored some of these options in more detail/to a greater extent than others.

The priorities for future activity are therefore deemed to be in relation to the development of a consistent and complementary series of regular geopark activities across the EAGR route, as opposed to the development of new activity areas. Key options are outlined within the attached action plan.

7.1.5 SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

The project facilitated the compilation of scientific papers and research into geodiversity, conservation, education and effective geopark management. The opportunity exists to expand this research at both local level on geopark specific issues, and transnational level on best practice in geopark management and sustainable tourism. Opportunities to continue this work are outlined in the attached action plan.

7.1.6 PROPOSED ACTION PLAN FOR FUTURE PROJECT ACTIVITY

In order to maximise the value of the Atlantic Geoparks project and increase its impact in supporting and encouraging the sustainable use of geoparks to facilitate tourism and the wellbeing of communities, priority actions have been identified in the attached action plan. The action plan outlined represents the aspirational priorities for action by project partners, however it is recognised that the delivery of these actions will be subject to having access to the required capacity and budget availability.
At the time of writing this report the project partners and their Geoparks were dealing with the economic and tourism impacts of the Void-19 pandemic. The potential budgetary resource availability which may be feasible for future project delivery was highly uncertain within this environment. It was therefore decided not to include specific budgetary figures for the actions outlined in the following table and instead as partners are enabled to move forward with specific actions the resource and budgetary implications of that action would be considered fully at that time.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity lead</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Budget Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Project management, transnational partnership working and networking</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Co-ordinate ongoing communication between the project partners and management of external communications to ensure consistent development and use of the EAGR brand.</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td>Year 1-10</td>
<td>Staffing requirement TBC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|      | • Host virtual co-ordination meetings  
• Minute key actions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |               |        |                                                                                  |
<p>| 2    | Co-ordinate EAGR programme reporting and provide a mechanism for collation of a central database capturing partner activities and impacts of activities in relation to enhanced geo-site management, sustainable tourism figures and EAGR brand awareness for use in external communications and funding bids.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | TBC           | Year 1-10 | Staffing requirement TBC                                                             |
| 3    | Networking activities with UNESCO Global Geoparks Network and attendance at UNESCO events.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | All partners  | Year 1-10 | Regular annual geopark budget.                                                      |
| 4    | Engagement with aspiring geoparks to offer information and guidance on Geopark management and application procedures.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | All partners  | Year 1-3  | Regular annual geopark budget.                                                      |
| 5    | Review and identification of future funding opportunities and agreement as a partnership on priority funding activities and sources.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | All partners  | Year 1-2  | Possible need for external consultancy support for bid preparation.                 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity lead</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Budget Requirement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication and transnational marketing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Consolidate use and thereby public awareness of the EAGR brand, through appropriate use of the EAGR logo.</td>
<td>All partners</td>
<td>Year 1-5</td>
<td>Regular annual geopark budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Review of geoparks promotional media for potential incorporation of EAGR logo and brand</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Inclusion of brand on new printed materials as appropriate (promotional leaflets, media articles, blog posts, social media, exhibition banners, email communications, event invitations etc.)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Review of existing media formats and inclusion of brand at regular update/refresh opportunities (e.g. on-site interpretation, guide-books, education/training materials etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Seek inclusion of the brand and associated logos by regional and national tourism agencies on tourism promotions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Continuation of the EAGR website and ongoing website content management with geopark information elements and activity offerings.</td>
<td>Arouca UNESCO Global Geopark</td>
<td>Year 1-5</td>
<td>£1200 per annum (to be met through partner contributions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Maintain social media presence for European Atlantic Geotourism Route and news items/activities being held within each geopark.</td>
<td>All partners</td>
<td>Year 1-5</td>
<td>Regular annual geopark budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identification of storyline/topic plan on an annual basis highlighting experiences, events, education opportunities and geo-conservation activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Drafting of appropriate content per partner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Activity lead</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 9    | • Publication via social media channels  
      (Linkedin, Twitter and Facebook accounts) | All partners | Year 1-5 | Possible resource needed for advertising |
| 10   | Promotion of the EAGR video and establish links to project website, regional tourism websites and activity/accommodation providers.  
      • Secure acceptance for the EAGR as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe and avail of associated promotional opportunities.  
      • Finalise application documentation  
      • Co-ordinate preparation of any supplementary information required to support application evaluation  
      • Promotion of acceptance, if successful, via website, social media and local/regional media outlets. | PNR Armorique | Year 1-2 | Encompassed within project budget |
| 11   | Host/attend exhibitions to promote EAGR and partner geoparks using roll up banners and promotional material to highlight the route, project benefits and opportunities for sustainable tourism in the Atlantic region. | All partners | Year 1-3 | Regular annual geopark budget. |
| 12   | Development and implementation of the Geotourism digital app, to include:  
      • Content development on geo-itineraries, sites of importance, experiences, VR imagery and activities per geopark.  
      • Promotion of the tool to regional and local tourism agencies, tourism businesses and activity providers. | All partners | Year 1-2 | Regular annual geopark budget. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Budget Requirement</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Site maintenance and upgrade with ongoing evaluation and development of functionality for a 3 year period.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Review on-site interpretation and information sources within partner geoparks and establish a programme for enhancement, incorporating EAGR branding and linking to digital tools such as Geo-cAPPtura.</td>
<td>All partners</td>
<td>Year 2-6</td>
<td>Regular annual geopark budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Review of current interpretation infrastructure cataloguing location, content and condition.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identification of maintenance/upgrade requirements for existing infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identification of information gaps, with particular attention to sites promoted on the Geo-cAPPtura tool and/or via geo-itineraries established for enhanced visitor experiences.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identification of opportunities to incorporate EAGR branding and/or links to EAGR information tools via e.g. QR codes.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Creation and installation of new interpretation infrastructure.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Adoption of the Geodiversity Conservation Charter by each project partner and promotion of the key principles and aspirations which project partners have agreed to commit to.</td>
<td>All partners</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>No Cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Formal signing of the charter by each Geopark</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Inclusion of the charter on Geopark websites.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Promotion via social media that the geopark has committed to charter principles.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Activity lead</td>
<td>Year</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 15   | Develop geo-itineraries / activity offerings which encourage and facilitate overnight/longer duration visits and which stretch the tourism season into shoulder months.  
  - Review arts, crafts, food/drink, cultural, literary and outdoor activity opportunities within the geopark.  
  - Engage with local tourism agencies and private sector providers to explore possible itineraries.  
  - Promotion of itineraries for potential visitors. | All partners | Year 2-6 | TBC |
| 16   | Proactive engagement with regional and national tourism bodies to highlight the EAGR brand, available e-marketing tools and potential benefits in selling the regions as a sustainable tourism destination of choice. | All partners | Year 1-3 | Regular annual geopark budget. |
| 17   | Integration with local / regional tourism events to highlight and promote the EAGR brand. | All partners | Year 1-5 | Regular annual geopark budget. |
| 18   | Review of options for goods/products to carry the EAGR brand e.g. geopark promotional products such as books, pens, badges, clothing etc. | All partners | Year 1-3 | Regular annual geopark budget. |

**Geo-site management and conservation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity lead</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Budget Requirement</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Ensure availability of geopark management / ranger service to enable geo-site monitoring, facilitate delivery of education activities and ensure effective visitor management.</td>
<td>All partners</td>
<td>Year 1-10</td>
<td>Regular annual geopark budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Activity lead</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Budget Requirement</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Provide information on local geodiversity to local authorities, encouraging integration of geodiversity in policy and planning decisions and the designation of geo-sites as protected areas.</td>
<td>All partners</td>
<td>Year 1-2</td>
<td>Regular annual geopark budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Promotion and implementation of the geopark management toolkit with associated guidance on best practice in geopark management.</td>
<td>All partners</td>
<td>Year 1-3</td>
<td>Regular annual geopark budget.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 22   | Identify opportunities to reduce the carbon footprint of tourism / economic activities within the geopark e.g.  
- Opportunities for sustainable transport options (e.g. bag transfer services for cyclists, EV charge points, linking public transport options with key service providers/tourism destinations)  
- Opportunities to encourage energy efficiency/renewable energy sources  
- Promotion of water efficiency, waste reduction and effective waste management for activity and service providers  
- Promotion of leave no trace ethos for visitors. | All partners | Year 2-6 | Cost associated with technical support/concept development - TBC |

**Community engagement, education and training**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity lead</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Budget Requirement</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Continued development and implementation of business engagement activities to raise the profile and understanding of the geopark and its value.</td>
<td>All partners</td>
<td>Year 1-3</td>
<td>Regular annual geopark budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Development of a business mentors network/forum to support and offer information to local businesses on operating sustainability and profitably in a protected landscape.</td>
<td>All partners</td>
<td>Year 2-3</td>
<td>Cost associated with networking events and co-ordination role - TBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Activity lead</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Budget Requirement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify opportunities to develop sustainable businesses utilising geodiversity, including tourism, local products, guiding and interpretation, retail sales and local arts and crafts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Proactive engagement with local accommodation providers to highlight the benefits of the EAGR and link their service offering to activity provision and geo-itineraries.</td>
<td>All partners</td>
<td>Year 1-3</td>
<td>Cost associated with networking events - TBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Establish and participate in a programme of events, geo-tours and festivals to promote the concept of geoparks and awareness of the EAGR for the wider community.</td>
<td>All partners</td>
<td>Year 1-5</td>
<td>Regular annual geopark budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Develop and implement a programme for education through experience for roll out to local community/voluntary groups and schools.</td>
<td>All partners</td>
<td>Year 1-10</td>
<td>Regular annual geopark budget.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Programmes oriented to help local communities and schools to appreciate the connections between</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Geodiversity,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Biodiversity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Land use,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• History</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cultural traditions and oral history</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Food and crafts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Safe and responsible access to sites.</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Review access to geo-sites and work with local landowners to:</td>
<td>All partners</td>
<td>Year 2-6</td>
<td>Regular annual geopark budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Enhance access where appropriate to do so.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
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<td>Activity lead</td>
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<td>Budget Requirement</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Provide advice on maintaining the geodiversity of their land through appropriate management practices working in sympathy with natural processes and landforms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Establish a local action group / volunteering opportunities, to facilitate practical geo-site management and protection to improve the quality of geodiversity sites in the geopark area.</td>
<td>All partners</td>
<td>Year 1-3</td>
<td>Regular annual geopark budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Science and research</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Implementation of the geotourism monitoring system across partner geoparks to evaluate the effectiveness of tourism infrastructure and key priorities for enhancement of the visitor experience.</td>
<td>All partners</td>
<td>Year 1-10</td>
<td>Regular annual geopark budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Identify additional opportunities for visitor number monitoring, to enable evaluation of visitor numbers and impacts on geosites and the wider landscape.</td>
<td>All partners</td>
<td>Year 2-10</td>
<td>Cost associated with visitor monitoring infrastructure and data collection - TBC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|      | • Identify key sites for visitor monitoring per geopark  
|      | • Secure finance for visitor monitoring infrastructure  
|      | • Install infrastructure  
|      | • Establish monitoring frequency and collect data  
<p>|      | • Review trends/impacts and feedback findings to other project partners. | | | |
| 32   | Form partnerships with local geo-conservation groups to audit geodiversity sites and develop geodiversity action plans for sites of interest. | All partners | Year 1-10 | Regular annual geopark budget. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity lead</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Budget Requirement</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Work with landowners to support responsible geodiversity research, and ensure important sites are accessible and safe for study.</td>
<td>All partners</td>
<td>Year 2-6</td>
<td>Regular annual geopark budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Encourage developers to allow access to temporary exposures to record and sample, and to contribute borehole and other factual geological data to national geological surveys.</td>
<td>All partners</td>
<td>Year 1-10</td>
<td>Regular annual geopark budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Establish links with third level education providers with an interest in earth science, ecology, environmental management and ecotoxicology to facilitate scientific research within the geopark and enable evaluation of long-term sustainability priorities.</td>
<td>All partners</td>
<td>Year 2-5</td>
<td>Regular annual geopark budget.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
8 EXTENDING THE REACH OF ATLANTIC GEOPARKS

8.1 SUPPORTING ASPIRING GEOPARKS

During the project two aspiring geoparks were supported in developing applications to UNESCO for Geopark status, Mancomunidad de Municipios Sostenibles de Cantabria in Spain and Armorique aspiring geopark in France.

Supports offered included advice and guidance on geopark management best practice, study visits to experience sites and their management/promotion in practice and support with application documentation, including letters of support.

It is proposed to offer an advisory service in the future, comprised of:

- Identified contact points in each geopark who are available for phone/email enquiry and advice services.
- Offer to meet at regular geopark networking events to offer opportunities to discuss experiences.
- Access to the Geopark Management Toolkit as a source of technical guidance on geopark management issues.
- Access to the geopark tourism monitoring system agreed by the project partners.
- Sign-posting service to national contact points for geopark development/certification.
- The offer of supporting a visit by an aspiring geopark may also be available, depending on location and the capacity of the host geopark to offer staff to host the visit.

These areas if supported in acquiring UNESCO Global Geoparks status could complement and add value to the European Atlantic Geotourism Route.

8.2 EXPANSION OF THE ROUTE TO INCLUDE OTHER DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES

Consideration has been given to the potential and possible value of enhancing the EAGR offering through the inclusion of other designated landscapes and/or cultural areas at a local level for the purposes of maximising the tourism appeal of the areas.

Opportunities can, and should, be explored to maximise the appeal of designated landscapes from an educational and tourism perspective. However, it is considered that the European Atlantic Geotourism Route has a distinct brand and associated brand story which is clear and easily relayed to potential visitors. This brand should be protected and care should be taken not to dilute it with wider messaging related to other forms of landscape designation which may confuse the visitor.
Funding from the EU Atlantic Area programme afforded the project partners a unique opportunity to collaborate on geopark management, conservation and sustainable development at an international level. The project has created a series of outputs which leave a legacy from partnership working. However, the sustainability of these outputs and the continuation of collaborative activity is subject to risks as outlined below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Mitigation Measures</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loss of project co-ordination</td>
<td>Fragmentation of project partnership and lost opportunities to learn/share best practice and collaborate on the further development of joint activities.</td>
<td>Identification of lead partner for continued co-ordination of networking opportunities. Establishment of future virtual meeting schedule and associated agendas for discussion of priority actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of project funding package</td>
<td>Limits imposed on the extent and nature of joint activities which can be undertaken.</td>
<td>Identification of alternative funding sources and development of suitable funding applications. Identification of activities which can be captured within existing local budgets and agreement between partners to progress those actions as appropriate priority activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of maintenance for key online project outputs (website, social media outlets, Geotourism app, Geopark Management Toolkit, promotional video presence)</td>
<td>Project visibility decreases and user satisfaction decreases as a result of out-of-date content thereby impeding the ability to promote the EAGR effectively to increase visitor numbers.</td>
<td>Establishment of maintenance agreements for key digital media sources. Agreement between partners on frequency and extent of content updates required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of community / business / education sector engagement at local level on geoparks</td>
<td>Interest in geoparks and their benefits decreases and lack of commitment to nature</td>
<td>Identification of local engagement activities within participating geoparks and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>issues and concept of EAGR as a sustainable tourism product.</td>
<td>conservation, sustainable tourism ideals. Resulting potential for increased inappropriate use of protected landscapes and their features and/or inappropriate development.</td>
<td>sharing of best practice on novel ways to keep communities interested in geoparks issues and benefits.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of visitor interest/awareness in the EAGR brand</td>
<td>Resulting lack of positive impact on visitor numbers and failure to realise economic potential of the geoparks for the benefit of local communities.</td>
<td>Integration of the EAGR brand in regular geopark activities and continued promotion via on-line channels. Proactive promotion of the brand to national/regional tourism agencies to ensure EAGR is included as a priority destination/promotion in tourism promotional activities at national and international level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAGR promotion too effective and results in increased visitor numbers which exceed geoparks’ capacity.</td>
<td>Tourism activities become unsustainable and cause damage to the integrity of the geoparks, their landscapes, communities and their geosites.</td>
<td>Effective implementation of the geotourism monitoring system and audit of geodiversity sites to track impacts of enhanced visitor numbers and identify appropriate localised mitigating action where necessary and appropriate. Delivery of training for local tourism businesses and tourism promotional agencies to highlight sustainable tourism priorities and means to reduce environmental impacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased visitor pressure causes increased demand for access to sites in private ownership.</td>
<td>Potential for conflict with needs and priorities of private landowners resulting in negative public relations for geopark and EAGR brand.</td>
<td>Identification and promotion of sites which are in public ownership/open access and which can accommodate visitor numbers without conservation concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactive identification of possible contentious sites in private ownership and discussion with landowners to agree access principles where possible and appropriate.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
FRANCE

REGIONAL TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Armorique Geopark is an essential link in the national, regional and local strategies for sustainable development. For example, the regional Town and Country Planning for Sustainable Development plan is a main guiding tool for the public policies in the Breton region. The Armorique Geopark actively participated in its development to integrate its own values about sustainable development. This is why the regional development policies must today respect the objectives assigned with the Geopark in these areas so that they fully comply with the Armorique Nature Park charter.

IRELAND

IRELAND 2040 – OUR PLAN

In Ireland the “Ireland 2040 - Our Plan” document highlights that “Rural communities and particularly those engaged in farming, operate as custodians of the landscape by undertaking agricultural land management at varying scales. However, the viability of many land holdings is such that half of farm families now depend on off-farm income, much of which is focused on urban settlements.”

The document also highlights that “In combination with a strong sense of community and place, Ireland’s rural areas support the fundamental assets upon which critical sectors such as food production, tourism, amenity activities, bloodstock, energy production and small-scale craft manufacturing are based. The enhancement of these unique and distinct assets are critical to planning for Ireland’s future.” Tourism is seen as having the capacity to directly and indirectly sustain communities, create employment and deliver real social benefits for rural Ireland.

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The Tourism Statement of Strategy and Work Plan highlights that Tourism in Waterford has undergone considerable transformation over the past 10 years with investment in flagship tourism attractions and events. It is hoped that an overall improvement in tourism performance will contribute even more significantly to communities throughout Waterford.

“A critical factor in the success of Waterford’s Tourism Statement of Strategy and Work Plan will be to build on the existing co-operation between the public and private sectors to arrive at a ‘whole-of-sector’ approach to tourism.”

One of the key objectives of the strategy is “To maintain, conserve and restore the natural and built heritage of Waterford to promote sustainable tourism.” The plan highlights that a key action in delivering this objective is to harness the potential of the Copper Coast UNESCO Geopark in developing a world class tourism product.

The Waterford Heritage Plan aims to increase engagement with, and access to, all aspects of heritage in Waterford City and County and to promote conservation, best practice, appreciation and enjoyment of shared heritage. The plan’s strategic objectives are:

- Increase public excitement about all aspects of heritage
- Increase physical access to heritage sites
- Increased access to heritage information
- Increase community involvement in heritage projects
- Increase in heritage related tourism
- Increase in appreciation of heritage amongst key stakeholders and the public, and
- Increase in conservation and recording of heritage
- Increase funding for heritage in Waterford.

COPPER COAST OPPORTUNITY STUDY 2019-2024

The Copper Coast Opportunity Study 2019-2024 appraised the current baseline and context for tourism, recreation and amenity development in the Copper Coast area of County Wexford. The study highlights that the County Development Plan 2011-2017 includes strategic priorities related to economic, environmental and social development. These include objectives related to the continued development of a sustainable tourism products, based on natural and cultural heritage, in appropriate locations where they are supported by, and can provide support for, existing communities.

The study identifies that the Copper Coast lacks scale and critical mass in the tourism offering, most particularly in the availability of accommodation, visitor attractions and facilities. This results in poor dwell time and consequent loss of revenue. The area also struggles with tourism seasonality and a concentration of visitor numbers and corresponding revenues within relatively narrow tourist market segments which do not benefit from regional or national tourism promotions.

The Opportunity Study identifies 40 individual development actions and initiatives categorised under 5 distinct pillars to achieve an improved quality of place for residents and visitors alike, namely :-

i. advocacy & representation,
ii. product development,
iii. placemaking,
iv. environmental management,
v. marketing and promotion.

COUNTY CAVAN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2017-2022

The County Cavan Tourism Development Plan identifies that landscape and natural heritage is one of the key strengths of the area for the continuation and future development of tourism activities. Included within the strategic priorities for the destination development are:

- A proposal to explore expansion and development of the Cavan Burren Park as a key site experience. It is considered that this has the potential to become a signature visitor destination for Cavan which will extend visitor dwell time in the area.
- An objective to better define the Geopark designation so there is a clearer understanding of the offerings within it and experiences visitors can avail of. The Geopark is identified as one of Cavan’s highlights with the potential to attract and stimulate greater visitor numbers with increased visibility and enhanced information on its qualities.
PORTUGAL

AROUCA

AGA – AROUCA GEOPARK ASSOCIATION STRATEGIC GUIDELINES (2014-2020)

The Arouca Geopark Association Strategic Guidelines set out a vision to become a destination of excellence in geotourism, in strategic issuing markets and in a territory of science that promotes geoeducation for sustainability and scientific knowledge based on geological heritage and other natural and cultural heritage.

The guidelines have a general objective to develop the classified area in a sustainable way: qualifying and valuing the geological heritage and the rest of the natural and cultural heritage; privileging the performance around Earth sciences, environment, education and Geotourism; contributing decisively to the improvement of the quality of life of its residents involving them.

Specific objectives included within the guidelines are:

- To value the geological heritage and the remaining natural and cultural heritage;
- To dynamize activities and products for a territory of science;
- Promote quality and contribute to planning policies in the area of Environment, Agriculture and Forest;
- Promote education for sustainability;
- Promote a geotourism approach with special emphasis on the qualification, organisation, promotion and marketing of strategic tourism products;
- Promote territorial dynamics, socio-cultural animation and strengthen the sense of belonging;
- Reinforce and stimulate cooperation, partnerships and networking.

AZORES

THE AZORES AUTONOMOUS REGION TOURISM PLAN

The Azores Autonomous Region Tourism Plan defines the strategy for the sustainable development of the tourism sector and the territorial model to adopt to achieve the aims and objectives of that strategy. The strategic priorities are based on the binomial nature/landscape and the respect for the nature conservation, environmental quality, preservation of historical and cultural heritage, and promotion of traditional activities and the local economy.

cultural heritage, quality of touristic products and the identity and differentiation of the tourist offer.

THE AZORES STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN

The Azores Strategic Marketing Plan, aims to promote the Region in key markets (e.g. active tourism and well-being tourism), giving priority to the peculiarities of each island and considering the potential of the archipelago in European and worldwide terms. This document presents a geotourism proposal based on,

i. the development of intra and inter-island routes and,
ii. the existence of promotional measures complemented by monitoring actions.

Among the routes to implement are Volcanic Caves, the Belvederes, the Walking Trails, the Thermal Spas and Science Centres routes.

THE CENTRAL GROUP STRATEGIC PLAN FOR TOURIST ANIMATION

The main purpose of the Central Group Strategic Plan for Tourist Animation is the promotion of the sustainable development of tourism in the five islands of the Central Group of the archipelago based on the endogenous resources and the respect for the natural and cultural heritage, with a focus on tourist animation. This plan has as its main areas of intervention nature tourism and sports, nautical tourism activities, touring and cultural animation, meeting industry and health and well-being.

SPAIN

BASQUE REGION

GEODIVERSITY STRATEGY OF THE BASQUE COUNTRY 2020

The main objective of the Geodiversity Strategy of the Basque Country 2020\textsuperscript{13} is analysis and valuation of the geodiversity of the Basque Country and its Geological heritage as identified in the "Inventory of Places of Geological Interest in the Basque Country". In addition, the strategy

aims to establish criteria and proposals for intervention in the management, protection, conservation and socialization of geological heritage. There are four essential objectives that are pursued:

1. Define an institutional policy and a comprehensive management model for geodiversity and the geological heritage.
2. Guarantee the conservation of the geodiversity and geological heritage of the Basque Country.
3. Promote the sustainable use of geodiversity and geological heritage and promote geotourism.
4. Promote education and training for the conservation and sustainable use of the geodiversity and geological heritage, as well as its dissemination in international settings.

**BASQUE TOURISM STRATEGY 2030 BASQUE TOURISM MARKETING PLAN 2017-2020**

The Basque Tourism Strategy\(^\text{14}\) has as vision, to grow in a sustainable way, to establish itself as a destination of excellence and a reference destination in Europe.

**BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY OF THE BASQUE COUNTRY 2030 AND FIRST 2020 ACTION PLAN**

The Biodiversity Strategy\(^\text{15}\) is aligned with the National Strategic Plan for Natural Heritage and Biodiversity 2011-2017, in addition to the Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development. The main objectives are to “Promote the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, fight against desertification, stop and reverse the land degradation, curb the loss of biological diversity " and to " Protect, conserve and restore our natural capital, preserving the services provided by ecosystems”.

**BASQUE COAST GEOPARK STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2020**

The Basque Coast Geopark strategic plan\(^\text{16}\) is based in five strategic pillars: Science; Education and Culture; Territory and Conservation; Geotourism, Sustainability and Local Development; and Communication and Management.


\(^{16}\) [https://geoparkea.eus/site_media/pdf/Resumen_ejecutivo-1.pdf](https://geoparkea.eus/site_media/pdf/Resumen_ejecutivo-1.pdf)
CANTABRIA

Mancomunidad de Municipios Sostenibles (MMS) is an essential link in the national, regional and local strategies for sustainable development providing input and comment to the key strategies for the region as outlined below:

- Local Development Strategies (Asón Aguera Trasmiera Local Action Group, Valles Pasiegos Local Action Group and Oriental Coastal Action Group)
- Strategy against Climate Change of Cantabria 2018 – 2030
- Tourism Marketing Plan for Cantabria 2020 – 2021
- Cantabria Sustainable Human Development Strategy

LANZAROTE AND CHINJIJO ISLANDS

CANARY ISLES PROMOTIONAL STRATEGY PLAN (2018)

Objectives of the Plan are as follows:

1. Articulate the tourism marketing action strategy to be developed by Turismo deCanary Islands in relation to their area of competence and through their own resources and tools.
2. Establish the ideal strategic framework for the development and enhancement of the brand Canary Islands in order to optimize their contribution to the development of a model competitive tourism and sustainable over time.
3. Involve all tourism, institutional and economic agents in the strategy of the Canary Islands brand marketing so that efforts are aligned and improved the effectiveness of the entire system through cooperation.

UNITED KINGDOM

A GREEN FUTURE: OUR 25 YEAR PLAN TO IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT

The UK Government published “A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan” to Improve the Environment in 2018, setting out a comprehensive and long-term approach to protecting and enhancing natural landscapes and habitats. The plan highlights that government policies will focus on key priorities including “Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes”.

In order to deliver against its key priorities goals include “Safeguarding and enhancing the beauty of our natural scenery and improving its environmental value while being sensitive to considerations of its heritage.”

The plan highlights that “some of England’s most beautiful landscapes and geodiversity are protected via a range of designations including National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). Some landscapes are also internationally recognised through UNESCO World Heritage Site and Global Geoparks status (for example the Lake District, the Cornwall and West Devon mining landscape and the North Pennines). Collectively, they comprise some of our unique, most cherished and valuable natural assets”. The plan states that over the next 25 years the UK Government wants to make sure they are not only conserved but enhanced.

**LANDSCAPES REVIEW 2018**

The UK Government published Landscapes Review\(^\text{18}\) in 2018 to consider the effectiveness of designated national landscapes (National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) in meeting the government’s 25 year Environment Plan objective of improving air quality and protecting our threatened plants, trees and wildlife species. The Report highlights that designated landscapes “National Parks and AONBs are national assets and should represent resilient ecosystems, within which wildlife is flourishing and a range of public environmental goods are provided to residents, local communities and the wider public.” It reflects that the governments 8-point plan for National Parks, published in 2016, asks that they “champion integrated management of the natural environment, showcasing the benefits that national landscapes can bring”.

To ensure that designated landscapes are accessible for visitors, it is highlighted that more needs to be done to support visitors, including:

- Information and signage
- On-line information and websites which provide information on e.g. publicly accessible land, visitor amenities and charging structures
- Ranger services
- Increased relationships with leisure groups and leisure providers.

NORTH PENNINES AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN

The AONB Management Plan\(^\text{19}\) outlines that landscape is more than just being the view, instead landscape is bound to how the land has been used over time, how it has evolved and the stories often hidden within it. The management plan emphasises that a long-term sustainable future relies on understanding and celebrating the role of people in the landscape, both in the past and today. The natural and long-term future for natural and cultural heritage therefore lies in local people caring about it and caring for it. The plan therefore highlights that it is essential to promote the development of skills, knowledge and resources among community organisations, businesses and voluntary groups, so they can take an increasingly skilled and informed lead in heritage management.

VISIT WALES PARTNERSHIP FOR GROWTH

The Partnership for Growth: Strategy for Tourism 2013-2020\(^\text{20}\) Strategy Progress Review prepared in 2016 sets out priority actions to strengthen tourism within Wales and capitalise on new opportunities for growth. These include:

- Evolving the product led approach by promoting relevant holiday types, iconic products and distinctive destination brands
- Becoming digital first: developing an integrated digital gateway for wales, international websites, content ecosystem for Wales and growing social media communities
- Development of flagship attractions with unique experiences which can attract year round visits
- Development of heritage and cultural experiences with investment in the visitor experience and accommodation provision at landmark heritage sites.

BRECON BEACONS MANAGEMENT PLAN 2015-2020

The Brecon Beacons Management Plan\(^\text{21}\) outlines a number of key ambitions to ensure the long term protection and vitality of the area, including the ambition for the National Park to be a living landscape where people can earn a living from the land in an innovative and sustainable manner for the benefit of the environment, economy and local communities. Included within the key actions outlined within the plan are proposals to:

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\(^\text{19}\) https://www.northpennines.org.uk/what_we_do/management-plan/
• Plan and undertake conservation work on sites of geological importance
• Manage Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Special Areas of Conservation (SSSI/SAC) with geological importance to ensure their favourable conservation status.
• Implement a variety of education, information and interpretation strategies.
• Enhance the visitor experience of the Parks wildlife, farming, landscape and environment.
• Provide access information in a variety of formats.
• Deliver an attractive destination website and social media presence.
• Create memorable visitor experiences.
• Provide training and development for businesses and information providers.
• Promote links to tertiary educational bodies with earth sciences interest.
• Encourage projects that promote a sense of community and place, emphasising local distinctiveness, culture and history.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN FOR FERMANAGH AND OMAGH DISTRICT COUNCIL 2016

The Tourism Development Strategy lists the Marble Arch Caves UNESCO Global Geopark as one of the major tourism attractions within the area. In order to develop tourism within the area key objectives include:

• Investment in digital marketing channels for promoting tourism products and a corresponding development of broadband service provision within the area to facilitate access to digital information sources.
• Development of countryside access hubs to facilitate the development of outdoor activities and dispersal of visitor numbers. The proposed hubs include the UNESCO geopark.
• Product enhancement around the themes of natural environment and outdoor activities and UNESCO Geopark. This is proposed to include development of compelling short breaks, integration of the geopark in destination marketing and developing a marketing narrative which has clarity for the visitor.